



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### SELF PRESENTATION ON FACE BOOK- CONSTRUCTION OF SELF IMPRESSION IN SOCIAL NETWORKING.

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#### Abstract

This study investigates self-presentation strategies among Face book Participants, exploring how participants manage their online presentation of self in order to accomplish the goal of presenting the impression they desire. Thirty-four individuals participated in semi-structured interviews about their Face book experiences and perceptions of each other profile and were asked to describe the impression being projected and give a adjective to it. This helped in capturing the impression being "given" and "impression being received" by others. Qualitative data analysis suggests that participants attended to small cues online, mediated the tension between impression management pressures and the desire to present an authentic sense of self through tactics such as creating a profile that reflected their "ideal self," and attempted to establish the veracity of their identity claims. This study provides empirical support for Social Information Processing theory in a naturalistic context.

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#### Introduction:-

Social Network Sites (SNSs) have become a popular form of social media. On Facebook millions of users have created a profile including such data as basic demographics, personal tastes and, most importantly, a list of "friends" that the subscriber has chosen to associate with publicly. These profile pages are interesting in that they allow users to "type themselves into being" and to make their social networks visible (boyd & Ellison, 2007). Much research on SNSs has focused on impression management, exploring the kind of signals generated by a user's profile (Donath, 2007). Observers quickly form strong impressions (Gosling et al., 2007; Stecher & Counts, 2008) based on information provided by the owner (e.g. music tastes, Liu, 2007) or more indirect cues (e.g. comments left by friends, Walther et al., 2008). How much and what kind of personal data is revealed can also encourage relationships with others (Lampe et al., 2007).

Profiles tell us how people choose to portray themselves when asked explicitly to do so. However, the more recent phenomenon in which Facebook users post frequent status updates offers the opportunity to understand how people manage impressions as a secondary activity when communicating with others. Through the Facebook News Feed, people provide small snapshots of their activities and thoughts via text, sometimes accompanied by photos, web links, or videos. This increased awareness of others' minute actions may have interesting implications for the way we relate to others and understand ourselves. Using a framework inspired by Goffman (1959) we can interpret each of these updates as a "performance," giving the audience (i.e. friends) a chance to form an impression of the updater,

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whether this impression was intentional or not. The Facebook communities are surely aware of the “impression management game” taking place on social networking services and how projected impressions are.

According to the Social Presence Theory proposed by Short, Williams, and Christie, since Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) users cannot interact directly, the lack of nonverbal cues constrains communication. Hence, CMC users have difficulty in developing interpersonal impressions and relationships. Contrary to the Social Presence Theory, Walther proposed the Social Information Processing Theory, which posits that CMC communication is socially rich in potential cues used to form interpersonal impressions and relationships. Consistent with Walther's theory, recent research indicates that CMC involves not just verbal cues, but also nonverbal cues that can be manipulated to develop interpersonal relationships. Recent studies have investigated the effects of both nonverbal and verbal cues on social-emotional development in CMC.

The study focuses on what attempts are made by Facebook users at the core of SNSs profiles that users create to form an image about themselves. Profiles typically involve sharing a photograph of the user and consist of such information as age, location, personal interests and added details in an ‘About me’ section. This paper wants to outline the core concept “identity” which refers to the way in which users develop their online profiles and list of friends to carry out their online persona.

### **Objective:-**

What kind of identity signals they send out in to their audience through their profile and to what extent they make it private and public.

What are non verbal cues contribute to the identity formation

What are the main identity traits that are achieved and what non verbal cues influence it more. Is there any gender influence between identity formations?

What are the characteristic of the non verbal cues?

### **Measuring Impression management:-**

“On Face Work” (Goffman, 1963), is an image of self, delineated in terms of approved social attributes.” Yet Goffman did not provide a list of tactics people use during face-work, or a taxonomy of impression formation. Nevertheless, others have attempted to characterize the dimensions of impression management. Examples include the work of Jones and Pittman (1982), which defines five tactics used during face-work: ingratiation, intimidation, self-promotion, exemplification (appearing virtuous), and supplication (looking weak to engender help). McClelland (1988) offered three basic social motivations: power, affiliation, and achievement, and Leary (1995) posited that people are motivated to be seen as physically attractive, likeable, competent, capable, and virtuous. The initial inclination was to adopt one of these taxonomies to characterize face-work on Facebook. Upon initial examination of the authors' own News Feeds,

however, most of the dimensions did not seem to apply to most updates. Further, all posts scored high on affiliation because posting an update is in itself an attempt to connect with others. This disparity between posts and existing frameworks for face-work underscored Goffman's insistence on the contextuality of impression management. To proceed further a set of dimensions that would apply to the type of micro-updates presented on Facebook has obtained from a study “Clandestine chats: Self-disclosure in U.K. chat room profiles” by Chris Fullwood, Mike Thelwall, Sam O'Neil used the dimensions and they were

1. Cool – Uncool
2. Uplifting – Depressing
3. Self-deprecating – Self-important
4. Appreciative – Critical
5. Entertaining – Boring

Their study does not claim that these dimensions capture the full diversity of face-work on chat room, but they did capture the impressions our subjects believed to be “given” and “given off” in most status updates, so we felt these dimensions are suitable for our study and adapted them in my method to find out which impression trait was dominant and what factors contribute to form that impression.

**Method:-**

34 individuals were selected out of which 15 were female and 19 were male. The notion was added that all these participants should vary in terms of usage of the Face book (new user , friends lists (more and less), age and gender. A semi structured interview was conducted and each of the thirty four profile, news feeds of the day was distributed and was asked to rate the impression being formed using the dimension and was asked to give reason for their inference. They have to even judge their own profile because this will help the study to find if the impression they wanted to create has been created among others or not.

**Data analysis:-****Selection of picture to their Profile:-**

Out of the 34, the reason for joining the facebook was almost the same where a majority of 28 among them stated that they joined because their friends already had a profile in it. While asked among the 34 of them 22 of them had their own picture on the profile while 6 of them had film stars of their own choice and 4 had pictures of animal and 2 had pictures of baby. When asked the reason they preferred to claim their identity and not to hide them self. Good looks was the most important aspect when choosing the photo for their SNS profile. Although both genders feel a need to upload a photo that is taken in beautiful surroundings that would commemorate an important event like graduation, wedding, etc. in one's life or where significant others (friends, family, acquaintances) are accompanying the profile owner on the photo the abovementioned aspects are far more important for the girls than for the male counterparts. Male consider girl profile with pictures of baby as homily and shy and new user to facebook as cool and self important and boring type. Were as female consider male with profile picture of animal to uncool , self-deprecating type. Thus female participants 12 out of 15 wanted male to revealed their identity in Facebook.

Girls also value highly, photos that reflect their personality (10) the aspect of which is only modestly valued by the boys (9). Nevertheless, both are slightly more interested in selecting photos that would describe their lifestyle. The analysis of the answers in the interview shows that girls are much more conscious of their selection of photos on the profile. They value both the aesthetic (e.g. beautiful surroundings, photo has a nice look in general), emotional (e.g. important moment, "important others"), self reflectors (e.g. photo reflects my essence, describes my lifestyle), as well as aesthetic-symbolical (good photo-processing, famous photographer) aspects of photographing more than their male counterparts while creating their virtual self. Young men, on the other hand, seem only mildly interested in choosing photos where their handsome looks are portrayed.

**No of friends list:-**

Both of the genders equally support the idea that the popularity among one's peers in SNS can be gained if one has large enough network to begin with. Number of friends one has in one's friends list is associated to the positive personality of the person on the SNS. Therefore having hundreds of friends is believed to be a highly valuable asset by the young. These profile was rated as cool, entertaining, uplifting, and appreciative.

**Most influential factor:-**

When asked for the reason for their rating of impression to the profile displayed a grouping of eight non- verbal cues were identified by constant constructive method of grounded theory. The most instant factor that played vital role in impression formation is gender and age and marital status of the profile. Apart from these there are few non verbal cues that play vital role on impression formation on face book. Usage of paralinguistic cues. News feed which has more smileys made the participants consider them to be cool, entertaining, appreciative, uplifting. They are also considered as expressive and extrovert, as emoticons may convey facetiousness on one occasion and sarcasm on another, adding flexibility to otherwise dry communications. But usage of it should be used appropriately too.

Chronemics play a vital role as time taken to respond to the updates or command on the post. The more the time taken is considered to be boring and uncool and self –important. Frequency of messaging, timely response differs in gender in forming the impression. As male consider people who respond frequently as positive personality while female (11) consider them to be negative. Powerful language used in expressing words and attitude, especially computer generated shortcut words. The more they use the more positive image it creates among the participants irrespective of gender.

**Post that created response:-**

To which of the post generally they wanted to response was asked without gender difference majority agreed to entertaining. Subjective experience with Facebook suggests these results could reflect two common commenting patterns: the phatic (Schneider, 1998) "ha ha" or "hilarious!" often seen after an amusing message or offers of

sympathy like “poor you” or “that’s terrible” offered after a participant announces bad news. The “laughs” generated by entertaining updates also illustrate how being funny is one of the “approved social attributes” (Goffman, 1963) that participants want to reinforce through explicit positive feedback in the context of Facebook.

### **Least influential factor**

The discussion show that for instance, education does not play any role in creating impression in SNS as both genders regard it as the least important influence on identity in social network. Belonging to communities also does not play any role in the identity formation of the person. Although the youth consider belonging to the communities as a forms of self-expression - possibility to “show myself the way I am”, to be different, to share wisdom or humor, these types of self-expressions are not recognized as important by the peers. Furthermore, all the other types of creative self-expression that can be performed on the site are also redeemed as second-rate in terms of personality.

### **Conclusion:-**

While limited in scope, these initial analyses shed some light on the kind of “impression management game” played through Face book status updates. The prevalence of cool and entertaining updates suggests these dimensions as highly relevant to successful face-work on SNSs, which is reinforced by their tendency to attract more comments than other types of posts. While users strive (and often succeed) to project a positive image along these dimensions, they underestimate how much certain updates make them look self-important. This finding is well-aligned with a common perception that updates can go “too far” and image that clashes with the light-hearted tone of most SNSs. People also believe their posts express appreciation more than their friends perceive. In a world of perpetual contact (Joinson, 2008) where people form quick and long-lasting impressions of others (Gosling et al., 2007; Stecher & Counts, 2008) our data show that users, now more than ever, need to walk a fine line between the impressions they project on the facebook.

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