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# Gender, Personality, and Self Esteem as Predictors of Social Media Presentation

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# Gender, Personality, and Self Esteem as Predictors of Social Media Presentation

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A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Mass Communication

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Professional Communication

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by

Heng Zhang

May 2015

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Dr. Robert Andrew Dunn, Committee Chair

Dr. Stephen Marshall

Dr. Andrew Herrmann

Keywords: gender, social media, self-presentation, personality, self-esteem

## ABSTRACT

Gender, Personality, and Self Esteem as Predictors of Social Media Presentation

by

Heng Zhang

In an age when people make and maintain relationships in online environments, creating and sustaining impressions online becomes equally important. For a better understanding of social networking sites usage, the present study examines the influence of gender, personality, and self-esteem on social media presentation. The goal of this study is to investigate individuals' expressions through social media in order to determine if they reflect the author's gender, personality, and levels of self-esteem. Quantitative analysis was used in this study through survey and SPSS content analysis. The researcher found that neuroticism was related to self-presentation, and agreeableness is related to Facebook friends. Personality traits were generally shown to be a stronger predictor of self-presentation on social media than gender or self-esteem, because the big five personality traits correspond well with functions of social media.

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## CHAPTER1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Gender, Personality, and Self Esteem as Predictors of Social Media Presentation**

Millions of people are living part of their lives on social networking sites. Social networking sites are places where users present themselves to the world. Individuals have the opportunity to mold their images for social purposes online by using social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter (Rosenberg & Egbert, 2011). Social networking sites permit users to create unique profiles to influence how others see them in order to build up the images they desire.

Individuals communicate and engage with others through social networking sites by using the images they created online, revealing personal details and insights into their lives. Personalities and self-esteem are both influential factors of how individuals communicate with others (Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2000; MacIntyre, Babin & Clément, 1999). Many social networking sites allow users to post status updates to express emotions. The posts reflect the ways they present themselves, which can be used to examine their personality and self-esteem in online environments. To understand the relationships between these factors better, the current study assesses how individuals' personality traits and self-esteem impact self-presentation on Facebook. Gender differences in communication have been discussed in many aspects, and personality has been shown to be relevant to many types of interactions (Adrianson, 2001; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012; Simpson & Stroh, 2004). In online communication, people form and manage their online image and interact with each other using different tactics (Aronson, Wilson, Timothy, Akert, & Robin, 2009).

This study explores the relationship between personality and social media usage to

provide a better understanding of the differences in social media usage among men and women based on their personality and self-esteem. The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a connection among gender and personalities in terms of the use of social media. The participants in this study are undergraduate students. The results of this study could be used to gain a deeper understanding of the link between social media usage and personality among young adults. The body of literature on engaging through social media is limited; this research will gain a greater understanding of social trends as well as a better understanding of college students' social media usage by gender, self-esteem, and personality traits.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

For this study, literature from several fields was reviewed including mass communication, communication studies, and psychology. First, the literature on the relative psychological and communication research on gender stereotypes in communication will be discussed. Next, there will be a review of literature on self-presentation and impression management tactics that are used in face-to-face communication and on social networking sites. Finally, prior research on personality and self-esteem will be discussed, as well as the importance of social media in users' lives, followed by hypotheses and research questions for the current study.

#### **Gender Stereotypes in Communication**

**Gender stereotypes in face-to-face communication.** The distinction between men and women is a basic organization principle for every society. Men and women identify their gender during their childhood and continue to behave in ways following prescribed gender stereotypes (Bem, 1981). Gender stereotypes are also displayed in the way men and women communicate. Researchers have spent considerable energy examining gender differences in face-to-face (FtF) communication.

Simpson and Stroh (2004) found that men and women have different ways to display emotions in FtF communication. Women more often tend to follow feminine expression rules, which require the suppression of negative emotions such as anger and frustration. Feminine expression rules also support the simulation of positive emotions such as enthusiasm, warmth, and love. Conversely, men more often adopt masculine expression rules, which dictate the subdual of positive emotions and encourage the expression of negative ones. The researchers also found that emotions that contribute to the maintenance of social relationships, such as

warmth and cheerfulness, tend to be regarded as more appropriate for women, but the expression of positive emotions is generally found to be less desirable for men. The results suggest emotional display patterns in FtF communication are different between men and women.

Crick (1997) indicated that in communication, the expression of anger and aggression are generally seen as acceptable for men but not for women. This is in line with Adrianson's (2001) idea that social judgments were more positive from women than from men, and that women expressed more opinions and agreements in communication than men did.

**Gender stereotypes in online communication.** Gender stereotypes in communication have been examined in both FtF and computer-mediated communication (CMC) environments. There have been many studies conducted about trends based on gender in social media use (Adrianson, 2001; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012; Simpson & Stroh, 2004). Men and women use different amounts of time and have different motivations for using social networking sites (Sheldon, 2008).

Men and women use social networking sites in different ways and for different purposes. In general, researchers have found that women generally use social networking services more often than men and for distinctive social purposes (Simpson & Stroh, 2004). For women, their online behavior tends to be interpersonal in nature, while men are considered to be more task-and information-oriented (Jackson, Ervin, Gardner, & Schmitt, 2001).

Women use many tactics to build their images in computer-mediated communication to gain more socially favorable impressions. Previous studies showed that women spend more time on Facebook (Sheldon, 2008) and use social networking sites more frequently to compare themselves with others. Conversely men are more likely to view other people's profiles and find friends (Haferkamp, Eimler, Papadakis, & Kruck, 2012). These tendencies not only indicate

dissimilarities in the way men and women use social media, but also suggest fundamental differences in the underlying reasons for engaging in social media.

Recent research indicates that the amount of time spent online and the motivations for Internet use are different between men and women (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012). For example, compared with men, women use the Internet more frequently to moderate social interaction and behave in ways that are consistent with feminine stereotypes that promote relationship maintenance. Men are more likely to engaging in more task-focused activities online, such as reading the news and obtaining financial information. Additionally, men have been found to be more likely to behave in ways consistent with masculine stereotypes that promote an achievement-orientation (Adrianson, 2001). With the increasing presence of the Internet in the average person's life, gender expectations for online behavior often shape the way people choose to represent themselves online.

### **Self-Presentation and Impression Management**

Desired impressions are impressions a person wants to display (Leary, 1996). Making desired impressions is a goal both males and females attempt to achieve (Leary, 1996). Desired impressions are manipulated more easily in an online environment than in FtF interactions. Goffman (1959), though writing in a time long before computer-mediated communication, offered insight for understanding the functions and meaning of women's communication in online environments. Before engaging in self-presentation and impression management tactics, people first must decide what impression they hope to make. In this context, developing a favorable impression is thought to be the primary goal. Once the primary goal has been identified, individuals will use self-presentation and the management of impressions to reach the goal.

**Self-presentation.** According to self-presentation theory, self-presentation is a type of

behavior used to create an image of oneself to present to others. Self-presentation is a type of communication; it details motivations in human behavior (Lee, Quigley, Nesler, Corbett, & Tedeschi, 1999). Individuals design an image of themselves to exert their personal identity and present themselves in a way that is consistent with that desired image (Schlenker, 1980).

Through communication behavior people identify the image they want to present to the public then constantly use many tactics to present themselves to the public in order to build up their desired image. Self-presentation researchers have provided a great deal of support for the existence and use of many self-presentation tactics (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Lee et al., 1999). Self-presentation is an important aspect of daily life, and people use self-presentation to lead others to perceive them positively, such as being trustworthy, competent, friendly, and caring. Individuals often employ multiple self-presentation tactics to create a favorable image (as cited in Rosenberg & Egbert, 2011).

**Impression management.** Impression management theory states that an individual or organization must create and maintain impressions that correspond with the perceptions they wish to convey to the public (Goffman, 1959). Goffman asserted that people engage in strategic actions to establish and sustain a desired image. He also wrote that people not only try to convince others to view them as just, respectable, and moral people, but also that people want to maintain the positive impressions they have already established (as cited in Rosenberg & Egbert, 2011). People adopt many different impression management strategies. According to experts (Aronson et al., 2009; Goffman, 1959; Schlenker 1980), the strategies can be divided into three categories. The first is ingratiation, where people use flattery or praise to increase their interpersonal attractiveness by emphasizing their best traits so that others will like them (Schlenker 1980). Intimidation is another impression management strategy, and it involves

aggressively showing anger to get others to listen and obey. The third one is self-handicapping (Aronson et al., 2009). Individuals use self-handicapping when they generate “obstacles” and “excuses” (Aronson et al. 2009, p. 174) for themselves so they can avoid accountability when they fail to succeed. People who self-handicap elect to blame their failures on external causes rather than internal causes, such as their own lack of ability.

**Relationship between self-presentation and impression management.** The terms “impression management” and “self-presentation” are used by social psychologists to describe one’s efforts to make a favorable impression on other people. The line between impression management and self-presentation is hard to draw. Impression management can be seen as a self-presentation technique that revolves around enhancing a person’s image. Self-presentation tactics are defined as “behaviors used to manage impressions to achieve foreseeable short-term interpersonal objectives or goals, while strategic behaviors are directed toward the construction of long-term identities” (Lee et al., 1999, p. 702).

Both self-presentation and impression management are tactics used to achieve socially favorable impressions. Most of these tactics fall into two major categories: one is self-enhancement, which means efforts to increase one’s appeal to others, which includes self-handicapping. The other is other-enhancement, which indicates efforts to make other people feel good, which includes ingratiation and intimidation (as cited in Pandey, Singh, & Singh, 1987). Self-presentation and impression management are both efforts people make consciously to present and display certain behaviors and traits in order to make a desired and designed impression on a target audience (Leary, 1996; Schlenker & Pontari, 2000). Self-presentation and impression management are complementary to each other and depend on each other, so it is hard to separate them.



**Self-presentation and impression management in online environment.** Impression management and self-presentation is applicable not only to FtF interactions, but also online (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). When considering online environments, such as social networking sites, a great deal of convenience is provided for users to interact with each other and maintain relationships. The ease of online communication allows people to interact with more people with less effort expended, which results in individuals maintaining relationships they would be unable to manage face to face.

According to Leary (1996), there are two motivations for the management of impression in online environments. The first is publicity, and the second is the likelihood of future interactions. The public nature of the individual's impression encourages him or her to manage impressions more carefully. In addition, future interactions with a person's social media connections are highly likely to occur, perhaps both FtF and online, which contributes to individuals' motivation to manage their impressions closely.

Social media is used as a public social setting, and users perceive social networking sites as social settings because much information is disclosed on the platform. However, social media also blurs these lines because people are alone when they use it. This may affect the users' expressions on social networking sites. Buck, Losow, Murphy, and Costanzo (1992) presented evidence that the expressions and communication of emotion can be "either facilitated or inhibited by the presence of others, depending on the nature of the emotional stimulus and of the personal or social relationship with the other or others" (p. 967). According to Buck et al. (1992), people's behavior and responses vary depending on if they are alone or in a perceived social environment; when a subject is alone the spontaneous response to emotional stimuli is relatively clear, but in a social setting the response is relatively complicated.

The nature of impression management in general is socially favorable. According to Walther (1996), “people expend considerable social energy attempting to get others to like and to appreciate them” (p. 91). Walther (2007) also mentioned the hyperpersonal model of CMC, which means users utilize the CMC technological aspect to judiciously craft messages in order to manage impressions and build relationships. Messages on CMC are editable, a unique feature not available in FtF communication. Users can revise and refine their content before they publish it with less social awkwardness (Walther, 2007). Manago, Graham, Greenfield, and Salimkhan (2008) suggested that college students use social media to explore their identities, engage in social comparison, and express idealized aspects of themselves that they wish to become. The study also suggested that social networking sites provide meaningful opportunities for emerging adults to explore potential versions of themselves and form desirable impressions. Procuring a desired socially favorable impression is one reason for people’s self-presentation on social networking sites. To achieve the desired impressions, different users with different personalities would present themselves and manage impressions through different ways.

### **Personality and Behavior on Social Media**

The “Big Five” (Benet-Martínez & John, 1998) model of personality traits has been widely used by many researchers in recent years (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003; Golbeck, Robles, & Turner 2011; Qiu, Lin, Ramsay, & Yang, 2012). Many researchers have discussed the relationship between social media usage and personality traits (Hughes, Rowe, Batey & Lee, 2012; Schrammel, Köffel, & Tscheligi, 2009). The “Big Five” model has become a major personality measurement. The “Big Five” personality dimensions include openness to new experiences, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, which are characterized by the following Golbeck et al. (2011) argued that these personality traits come

with their own attributes. Openness to new experiences relates to diversity of personal experience with curious, intelligent, and imaginative. Conscientiousness relates to responsibility toward goals, organized, and persevering. Extraversion relates to socialization, amicable, and assertive. Agreeableness relates to prosocially proclivity, cooperative, helpful, and nurturing. Neuroticism relates to emotional reactivity, anxious, insecure, and sensitive.

Social media is a place where users present themselves to the public and reveal personal details. Users with different personality tendencies use Internet services differently (Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2000). Social networking sites are becoming increasingly popular in peoples' lives. People often use microblogs, such as Twitter, in order to express their opinions and activities; it is reasonable to expect that an individual's microblog will also contain his or her personality-related residue (Qiu et al., 2012). Social networking sites can be used to predict and present users' personality, and there are several studies that attempt to find the relationship between social media and personality. Golbeck et al. (2011) wrote about how social media users' "Big Five" personality traits could be predicted from the information they shared on social media. Social media can also be used to examine personality expressions occurring in writings (Qiu et al., 2012). In this case, many social networking sites allow users to post status updates to express emotions, which can be used to examine personality and also see if the posts actually reflect users' personalities.

In recent years, many researchers have found that men and women belong to different patterns in the relationship between personality factors and Internet use. Men use of social networking sites is not related to loneliness, neuroticism, or extraversion; however, in comparison with men, women who are lonely prefer to use the Internet mostly to avoid loneliness and find group belonging (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003). According to

Correa, Hinsley and De Zuniga (2010), extraverted men and women were both likely to be more frequent users of social networking sites. Women who are more extraverted and open to new experiences are more likely to engage in online interactions. Men who are high in extraversion use social media more often and are more likely to engage in social interaction (Correa, et al., 2010). Generally, gender differences vaguely presents among personalities' differences in social media usage, but there are still slight differences between them.

### **Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem is a self-valuation; it is how people perceive their own value and how valuable they think they are to others (MacIntyre et al., 1999). Many scholars have discussed the relationship between self-esteem and communication behaviors. MacIntyre et al. (1999) indicated that people who are lower in self-esteem are less likely to engage in communication than those who are higher in self-esteem, because they think they may have less to contribute to the conversation and are likely to receive negative feedback from others. Individuals with lower self-esteem are less likely to be involved in FtF communication. Research indicates that individuals with lower self-esteem spend increased time using instant messaging instead of FtF communication because they find communicating with others via technology easier than FtF (Ehrenberg, Juckes, White & Walsh, 2008). Therefore, individuals with lower self-esteem are less likely to take part in FtF communication. However, research is unclear about how lower self-esteem individuals act online compared with those who have greater self-esteem.

## **Social Media Selection and Value**

**Facebook.** At the end of 2014, Facebook remains the No. 1 most popular social media site. Even though the overall growth has decelerated, Facebook acts as the home base for most social media users and overlaps with other social media sites (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Mardden, 2015). Facebook is a flexible and versatile social networking site; users can upload pictures, videos, games, and many other social activities to their profiles, implant information from other social networking sites, and post calendar events among other socialization activities.

Facebook, like many other social networking sites, provide a setting for people to communicate with other individuals. Facebook is specifically known as a friend-networking site, the main purpose of using Facebook is to maintain relationships. Facebook also provides a space for people to communicate with others, present themselves in the way they want, and share selected personal information. Many researches have already conducted research on Facebook and self-presentation. Research has shown that the number of Facebook friends have a positively relationship with individuals' social attractiveness (Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, Westerman, & Tong, 2008). According to Caers and Castelyns (2011), individuals usually believe Facebook profile pictures are providing accurate signals on the profile owner's level of extraversion and maturity, which indicated individuals consider their profile pictures as an important way of self-presentation (Zarghooni, 2007).

**Twitter.** Twitter is particularly popular among those people who are college educated and under 50 years old. Twitter, providing microblogging, is popular among college students. Twitter is a social networking site in which users can use its microblogging functions to share opinions and information (Kwak, Lee, Park, & Moon, 2010). Twitter provides microblogging

foundations, users can use hashtags (#) to indicate keywords of their posts (Boyd, Golder, & Lotan, 2010), and users also can choose to tweet or retweet others' microblogging.

Facebook and Twitter were chosen as the social media platforms for this study, though Twitter was ultimately dropped for failing to yield useful data. However, there are many other social networking sites. All social networking sites enable social interaction, yet they do not all offer the same service or have the same focus (Hughes et al., 2012). For example, LinkedIn is a social networking site that represents real-world professional relationships. LinkedIn users present themselves in a more professional way. Instagram and Pinterest users mostly use visual content to present themselves. While these other social networking sites present a few aspects of their users, Facebook and Twitter profiles provide more information about the users' thoughts and feelings. Facebook allows users to build a profile where they can post certain information to others, and users can participate in other socialization activities. Twitter users post less personal information; Twitter focuses less on who the user is and more on what the user says and presents. The anonymity of Twitter reduces the social pressure for users, which creates a more honest self-expression for researchers to trace (Huberman, Romero & Wu, 2008). Facebook and Twitter are both platforms that allow users to present themselves in many aspects, which makes them the best platforms for this study.

### **Communication in Social Media by Gender**

Gender stereotypes appear both in FtF communication and in online communication. Men and women use self-presentation and impression management tactics to present themselves to the public (Aronson et al., 2009; Goffman, 1959; Schlenker 1980). According to the literature, individuals with different personalities presented themselves in different ways and also have different social networking site use habits (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003; Golbeck et

al., 2011; Qiu et al., 2012; Schrammel et al., 2009). Self-esteem is also a factor, which influences how individuals use social networking sites (Ehrenberg et al., 2008). Despite extensive research on social media use related to gender, impression management, personality, and self-esteem, the nature of young adults' social media expressions' relationship with personalities and self-esteem is still unknown. Furthermore, the gender differences in self-presentation based on social media expression and personality require further research.

According to the literature above, men and women have different patterns in communication and Internet-based communication on social media. Women's Internet-based communication on social media usually exposes their emotions more often than compared with men. In addition, women disclosed more detailed information on their social media sites than men do (Jackson et al., 2001). The goal of the present study is to examine the relationship between social media expressions and personality for men and women. Personality traits and self-esteem are related to users' expression on social media.

## CHAPTER 3

### HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Previous reviews of related literature show that men and women have different patterns in FtF communication and CMC on social media (Adrianson, 2001; Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012; Simpson & Stroh, 2004). Women's CMC on social networking sites more often expose their emotions when compared with men's communication, and women reveal more personal information and details on their social networking sites than men do. According to Schrammel et al. (2009) there are no significant relations between personality traits and information disclosure on social media. There are several aspects connected to the personality and social media usage patterns. For example individuals who are highly extraverted are more sociable and have more online friends than individuals with lower scores on extraversion (Schrammel et al., 2009). According to recent research, men and women tend to have different communication patterns, so the relationship between personality and social media use may differ by gender. Social media allows individuals to display every aspect of their lives, and it can also allow someone to portray himself or herself with a different persona (Correa et al., 2010).

The goal of this research project is to study individuals' expressions through social media reflective of gender, personalities, and levels of self-esteem. The body of literature on engaging through social media is limited; this research will gain a greater understanding of social trends as well as a better understanding of young adult women and college students' social media usage by gender and personality traits.

Extraversion related to being sociable and outgoing. According to Schrammel et al. (2009), individuals high in extraversion have more friends on social networking sites than individuals in low extraversion. Simpson and Stroh (2004) indicated that women who are



extraverted prefer to use social networking sites more than men and for more social purposes. Profile pictures is a way to build individuals' physical attractiveness, women try to receive positive evaluations on social networking sites in comparison with men. In this case, women may try to disclose their appearance by posting more photos than men. Thus, the following H1 and H2 are posed.

**Hypothesis 1:** Women who are highly extraverted will have a greater number of Facebook friends than men who are highly extraverted.

**Hypothesis 2:** Women who are high in extraversion will post more Facebook profile pictures than men who are high in extraversion.

Agreeableness relates to trusting, cooperative, helpful, and tender-minded people who prefer to maintain positive relations (Jensen & Graziano, 2001). According to Simpson and Stroh (2004), men and women have different motivations when using social media, and women tend to use social networking services for social purposes. Women's online behavior is more interpersonally oriented (Jackson et al., 2001), so women high in agreeableness may have more online relationships, thus, the following hypotheses are posed.

**Hypothesis 3:** Women who are high in agreeableness will have more Facebook friends than men who are high in agreeableness.

**Hypothesis 4:** Individuals who are high in agreeableness will have more Facebook friends than individuals who are high in other personality traits.

Neuroticism relates to emotional reactivity, anxiousness, insecurity, and sensitivity. Research has found individuals who are highly neuroticism are highly interested in using the Internet for communication (Amichai-Hamburger, Wainapel, & Fox, 2002). Women are likely to present more personal information than men do on social networking sites (Jackson et al., 2001),

and women usually concentrated on building their online images when using social media (Sheldon, 2008). Thus, H5 is posed.

**Hypothesis 5:** Women who are high in neuroticism will self-present themselves more on Facebook than men who are high in neuroticism.

In order to examine the relationship between neuroticism and self-presentation online, Hypothesis 6 is posed.

**Hypothesis 6:** Individuals who are highly in neuroticism will do more self-presentation on Facebook.

According to research reviewed, gender accounts for differences in CMC communication and self-presentation. Many studies have shown that the effect of gender may be influenced by personality (Correa et al., 2010; Schrammel et al., 2009). It is necessary to examine the personality and self-esteem influences of social media presentation based on gender. Thus, RQ1 is posed.

**Research Question 1:** Will men and women who have similar personality traits, as determined by the Big Five, use different self-presentation and impression management tactics on Facebook?

Research indicates that individuals with lower self-esteem spend more time using instant messaging instead of FtF communication because they find communicating with others via technology easier than FtF (Ehrenberg et al., 2008). Therefore, individuals with lower self-esteem are less likely to take part in FtF communication. Gender differences in self-esteem and social media usage are still unknown. Research is unclear about how lower self-esteem individuals present themselves online compared with those who have greater self-esteem. Therefore, RQ 2 and RQ 3 are posed.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between self-esteem and self-presentation on

Facebook?

**Research Question 3:** Will individuals who are high in self-esteem scores post more gender role expressions?

Haferkamp et al. (2012) indicated the choice of photographs used in social networking sites is related to women's need for self-presentation. Physical attractiveness is an important aspect of self-presentation; women try to receive positive evaluations on social networking sites in comparison with men, so in this case women try to disclose their appearance in detail through photos. The relationship between self-esteem and profile pictures is unknown, thus RQ 4 is posed.

**Research Question 4:** Will women who are high in self-esteem scores post more Facebook profile pictures than men who are high in self-esteem?

Muscanell and Guadagno (2012) wrote about how women are more likely to use the Internet to maintain social interaction and engage in behavior consistent with feminine stereotype that to maintain relationships compared with men. However, the frequency of women who express gender roles compared to men is still unknown, thus the following research question are posed.

**Research Question 5:** Will women present more gender role expressions than men do on Facebook?

**Research Question 6:** What are the relationships between personality traits and gender-role expression?

## CHAPTER 4

### METHOD

In order to examine the personality and social media use habits between genders, an online questionnaire to investigate participants' social media use habits was devised. In this study, participants took a survey to indicate their social media use habits, personality characteristics, and self-esteem levels. The participants were asked to provide their Facebook user names and their Twitter handles so that the researcher could follow them and see their posts and subsequently code them.

#### **Participants and Procedure**

This survey was conducted at the convenience of the participants at East Tennessee State University. The experiment was administered to participants through an online survey. The survey utilized the ETSU Department of Psychology's SONA system, and participants were recruited from undergraduate psychology and mass communication classes. No particular subsets of the population were specifically targeted for recruitment; thus, there was no unequal distribution of risks based on any sampling criteria. A notice of consent was requested for all survey respondents and was offered at the beginning of the online survey. Continuing the survey signified to the researcher that the participant provided consent.

The survey was created and made available between Nov. 28, 2014 and Mar. 1, 2015. Respondents were screened at the beginning of the survey to ensure that they were at least 18 years old, as younger participants were not included in this study. Students either were awarded extra credit points in courses as compensation for their time or were fulfilling class obligations to participate in research. The research selected college students in this study because they generally have a higher level of technological ability and are familiar with social media websites.

A total of 459 participants took the online survey. That included 314 women (68.41%) and 143 men (31.15%). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 58 years old. Participants answered a survey questionnaire that included four parts. The first part was demographic questions concerning age, gender, education, and employment information. The second part featured social media usage questions concerning participants' social networking sites use and online activities. The third part was the 44-item inventory that measures an individual on the Big Five Factors of personality (Benet-Martinez & John, 1998). The last part was levels of self-esteem questions, which were derived from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).

At the end of the survey, participants were asked to provide their Facebook user names and their Twitter handles. The researcher created a Facebook account and a Twitter account related to the project so that the researcher was able to follow participants for one month. Data was then collected including every Facebook post and/or Twitter tweet made by participants; this information was coded for self-presentation expression. The participants' profiles were coded based on a coding sheet (Appendix B). The researcher chose the month of February to code, as it was after the New Year and after the start of school but prior to spring break and any major disruption of normal collegiate life. Participants' status updates on Facebook and tweets on Twitter were coded based on a coding sheet (Appendix D). Only the participants' initial posts were recorded. Any comments or responses from anyone other than participants were not recorded. No personal information from the posts in the research was used; participants are identified only by their codes.

### **Measures of the Online Survey**

A self-developed scale is used to gather demographic questions concerning age, sex, and employment status; and measure Facebook and Twitter usage. The Big Five personality

measures (Benet-Martinez & John, 1998), and the self-esteem Likert scale (Rosenberg, 1965) were collated into a single online questionnaire.

**Social media usage.** The social media usage portion of the survey contained multiple-choice questions and a 7-point frequency scale. The multiple-choice questions examined participants' preferred social networking sites by asking, "Which of the following social networking websites do you currently have an account with?" and "In a typical week, which of the following social networking websites do you use most often?" Participants were also asked to respond questions about the frequency of their use of social media. For example, participants will be asked to report, "How often do you update your status on social media?" and "How often do you check your social media feed?" Participants answered based on a 7-point scale from 1 = Less than once a month to 7 = Many times a day. The social media usage survey is displayed in Appendix A.

**Personality traits.** Openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism were assessed using the 44-item Big Five Inventory (Benet-Martinez & John, 1998). The 44 items include participants' responses to self-examination questions such as, "I see myself as someone who is relaxed and handles stress well." The Likert-scale answers are based on participants' self-examination of feelings about themselves from Disagree Strongly = 1 to Agree Strongly = 5. The Big Five Inventory question is displayed in Appendix A.

**Self-esteem.** A ten-item survey derived from Rosenberg (1965) answered on a 4-point Likert-scale was used to measure self-esteem. The scale had five positive statements and five negative statements, for example, "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself, " and "All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure." Participants chose from a scale of Strongly Agree = 3 to Strongly Disagree = 0. The self-esteem questionnaire is displayed in Appendix A.

## **Coding**

**Profile coding.** Participants' basic information from the questionnaire and profile information from social media was coded using a profile-coding sheet (Appendix B) and its corresponding answer sheet (Appendix C). The profile-coding sheet categorizes the demographics, personalities, and self-esteem of participants. The corresponding answer sheet identifies the number of friends, schools, and companies shown in a Facebook profile. The number of albums and profile pictures is counted. For Twitter, the corresponding answer sheet records the number of tweets, users followed, followers, and favorites.

**Post coding.** To address the concerns of the research questions and hypotheses for this study, a Facebook and Twitter posts coding sheet (Appendix D) and its corresponding answer sheet (Appendix E) were developed. The coding sheet's content was influenced by past researches, which included some but not all of the aspects of this study, such as Capwell (1997) and Kane (2008). On the post-coding sheet, self-presentation and impression management tactics were evaluated (Goffman, 1959). These tactics include how participants use self-presentation and impression management in posts on Facebook and Twitter, such as ingratiation, self-handicapping, intimidation, exemplification, and supplication. Each tactic on the coding sheet has a detailed explanation. The coder determines gender role expressions by selecting from expressions of gender role, such as marriage/family roles, or expressions about femininity or masculinity. Expressions of self-attractiveness related to pictures of beauty, romance/sex, and social life are coded. Other pictures that do not fit in these categories are coded as "Other" with explanations. Expressions of social status, social relationships, inner thoughts and feelings, and mundane experiences were coded in the final section.

For self-presentation and impression management tactics, and gender role expressions, 1

represented “Present”, 0 represented “Not present”, and 99 represented “Cannot tell.”

Expressions of personal life were participants’ ways of choosing chose to display aspects of themselves, such as social life, family roles, etc., as presented in Facebook and Twitter posts.

The code for expression of personal life was, 1 represented “Yes”, 0 represented “No”, and 99 represented “Cannot tell.”

**Coder training and intercoder reliability.** One current graduate student in Mass

Communication Department helped to code the Facebook and Twitter posts for this research.

After a training session, two coders coded participants’ Facebook and Twitter profile information

and post by post for the month of February 2015. An intercoder reliability analysis using the

Cohen’s (1960, 1968) Kappa statistic was executed to define the consistency among coders. A 10% random subsample of coding sheets was used to evaluate the extent to which there was

intercoder reliability. The results of the intercoder analysis are  $Kappa=0.869$  with  $p < 0.001$ . This

measure of agreement is statistically significant. According to Landis and Koch (1977) values of

Kappa from 0.40 to 0.59 are considered moderate, 0.60 to 0.79 are considered substantial, and

0.80 are considered outstanding. The overall intercoder reliability was found to be  $Kappa=0.86$

( $p < .001$ ), indicating almost outstanding agreement among coders.

### **Content Analysis**

The core data for the present study's analysis was collected from the Facebook and

Twitter public timeline from Feb. 1 to Feb. 28, 2015. The data were analyzed using the Statistical

Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

**Variables.** In this study, gender is the major independent variable.

This study also relied on Rosenberg’s (1965) Self-Esteem Scale and Benet-Martinez and John’s Big Five Personality Scale (1998) to determine the covariates such as the self-esteem



score, openness to experiences, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

Because of the lack of any useful data from Twitter, the social media network was dropped from this study. The significance of this is discussed later in this paper. So the dependent variables of this study are the tactics of self-presentation and impression management, gender role expression, and personal life expressions on Facebook. Participants were generally unconstrained in their decisions to create social media posts within normal platform usage guidelines. All of the dependent variables defined by the posts on social media sites were the choice of the participants to use any tactics or make any expressions. Participants were not formally stimulated to use any of them, so all of these can be seen as dependent variables. The number of Facebook friends act as a dependent variable in this study. The coder rated these metrics according to the post-coding sheet. Self-presentation and impression management on Facebook were measured by what tactics were used to establish online identity. Gender role expressions on Facebook were measured by the public image of being masculine or feminine that participants present online.

Cronbach's alpha (1951) was used to evaluate the reliability of all scales. The gender role expression on Facebook have a reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = .90$ . The five items of Facebook self-presentation tactics were reliable measure with a reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = .649$ , this number is acceptable because the sample distribution is uneven among men and women in this research. The self-presentation tactics of Twitter scale  $\alpha = .588$  was below .6, so the self-presentation tactics of Twitter scale was not used in this study.

There were 129 (28%) participants that offered their Facebook account and only 90 (19.6%) participants that provided their Twitter account in the online survey. And two of them declined to answer personality and self-esteem questions. Also, the Twitter data yielded very

little in the way of data for use as dependent variables. Most of the tweets were devoid of the social richness and self-presentation the researcher required for this study. Thus, Twitter was cut dropped from the study, and the researcher only examined the variables of Facebook. Therefore, the number of Facebook friends, Facebook self-expression and Facebook gender role are used as variables in data analyses.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS

This study was aimed to examine the internal relationship of gender, social media usage, self-esteem, and personality. Of the 459 participants who took part in the online survey, 314 (68.41%) of them were women and 143 (31.15%) of them were men. Facebook account information was offered by 131 participants (28.54 %), 101 (77.1 %) of which were women and 30 (22.9%) were men.

#### **Hypotheses Results**

##### **Extraversion**

H1 predicted that women who scored high in extraversion would have more Facebook friends than men who scored high in extraversion. The researcher conducted an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to find the relationship between gender, extraversion, and social connections (See Table 1). The Facebook profiles were examined and no significant relationship was found among gender, extraversion and number of Facebook friends ( $F(1, 127) = .001, p = .97$ ). However the researcher was interested in the relationship between gender and the number of Facebook friends, thus, the researcher conducted a  $t$  test (See Table 2), but no further significant relationships among gender and the number of Facebook friends was found ( $t(129) = 1.50, p = .14$ ). A subsequent Regression test (See Table 3) also revealed no significant relationship between extraversion and number of Facebook friends ( $F(1, 129) = 2.13, p = .15$ ). Thus, H1 was not supported.

Table 1

*Hypotheses ANCOVA Results*

Hypothesis	Mean Square	df	F Value	p Value
H1	476.134	1, 127	0.001	0.971
H2	169.301	1, 127	0.107	0.744
H3	9635.641	1, 127	0.028	0.868
H5	0.319	1, 127	0.015	0.903

Table 2

*Hypotheses t-test Results*

Hypothesis	Df	P Value	t Value	p Value (2-tailed)
H1	129	.02	1.499	0.142
H2	129	0.011	-2.506	0.014
H5	129	0.016	-1.851	0.067

Table 3

*Hypotheses Regression Results*

Hypothesis	R square	Beta	F Value	p Value
H1	0.016	0.127	2.128	0.147
H2	0.001	-0.25	0.82	0.775
H4	0.36	0.19	4.811	0.030
H6	0.33	0.182	4.433	0.037

H2 predicted that women who scored high in extraversion would have more Facebook profile pictures than men who scored high in extraversion. No significant relationships were found among gender, extraversion, and number of Facebook profile pictures ( $F(1, 127) = .11, p$

= .74) (See Table 1). In order to examine the relationship between gender and number of Facebook profile pictures, a *t* test (See Table 2) was conducted but no significant relationship was found ( $t(129) = -2.50, p = .01$ ). There was a statistically significant relationship between gender and the number of Facebook profile pictures. The number of profile pictures provided by women ( $M=34.06, S.D.=43.22$ ) was significantly higher than the number of profile pictures provided by men ( $M=19.37, S.D. = 21.82$ ), therefore women tended to post more Facebook profile pictures than men did. A regression test (See Table 3) also did not reveal significant relationships between extraversion and the number of Facebook profile pictures ( $F(1, 129) = .82, p = .78$ ). Therefore, H2 was not supported. However, the data does indicate that women do post more Facebook profile pictures than men do.

### **Agreeableness**

H3 predicted women who scored high in agreeableness would have more Facebook friends than men who were high in agreeableness. To examine H3, the researcher conducted an ANCOVA to find the relationships between gender, agreeableness, and social connections (See Table 1). No significant relationships were found among gender, agreeableness and number of Facebook friends ( $F(1, 127) = .28, p = .87$ ). Therefore, H3 was not supported.

A regression test was conducted to examine H4, the relationships between agreeableness and the number of Facebook friends ( $F(1, 129) = 4.81, p = .03$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.36. A  $\beta$  of .19 shows a positive relationship (See Table 3). Thus, H4 is supported; the individuals who scored higher in agreeableness tended to have more friends on Facebook.

### **Neuroticism**

H5 predicted women who scored high in neuroticism would make more self-presentation posts on Facebook than men who scored high in neuroticism. The researcher conducted an

ANCOVA to explore the relationship between gender, neuroticism, and self-presentation on Facebook. No significant relationships were found among gender, neuroticism and Facebook self-presentation ( $F(1,127) = .015, p = 0.90$ ) (See Table 1). The researcher was interested in the relationship between gender and Facebook self-presentation; thus, the researcher conducted a  $t$  test ( $t(129) = -1.85, p = .07$ ) but no further significant relationships among the gender and Facebook self-presentation was found (See Table 2). Thus, H5 was not supported.

H6 predicted individuals who scored high in neuroticism would make more self-presentation posts on Facebook. The researcher conducted a regression test to examine the relationship between neuroticism and Facebook self-presentation ( $F(1, 129) = 4.43, p = .04$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .03. A  $\beta$  of .18 shows a positive relationship (See Table 3). H6 is supported; individuals who are higher in neuroticism tended to have more self-presentation posts on Facebook.

### **Research Questions Results**

The research questions in the study sought to explore the relationships between gender and a number of other variables: big five personality traits, self-esteem, self-presentation, profile pictures, and gender role expressions.

#### **Big Five Personality and Facebook Self-presentation**

RQ 1 asked whether men and women with similar big five personality traits would have similar self-presentation on Facebook. The researcher conducted an ANCOVA, and no significant relationships were found regarding personality traits and self-presentation (See Table 4). No significant relationships were found among gender and Facebook self-presentation related to openness ( $F(1,127) = .38, p = .54$ ), conscientiousness ( $F(1,127) = .18, p = .67$ ), extraversion ( $F(1,127) = .31, p = .58$ ), agreeableness ( $F(1,127) = .05, p = .83$ ), and neuroticism ( $F(1,127)$

= .02,  $p = .90$ ). For each of these personality traits the  $F$  value and  $p$  value were statistically insignificant.

Table 4

*RQ ANCOVA Result*

Research Question	IV categorical	IV continuous	DV	df	Mean Square	$f$ value	$P$ value
RQ1	Gender	Openness	Facebook Self-Presentation	1, 127	8.109	0.375	0.541
RQ1	Gender	Conscientiousness	Facebook Self-Presentation	1, 127	3.993	0.184	0.669
RQ1	Gender	Extraversion	Facebook Self-Presentation	1, 127	6.613	0.312	0.578
RQ1	Gender	Agreeableness	Facebook Self-Presentation	1, 127	1.018	0.048	0.827
RQ1	Gender	Neuroticism	Facebook Self-Presentation	1, 127	0.319	0.015	0.903
RQ4	Gender	Self-esteem	Facebook Profile picture	1, 127	974.22	0.625	0.431

**Self-Esteem**

RQ 2 asked the relationship between self-esteem and self-presentation on social networking sites, a regression test was conducted to examine the relationship ( $F(1, 129) = 4.86$ ,  $p = .029$ ), with an  $R^2$  of 0.36. A  $\beta$  of  $-.19$  (See Table 5) indicated a negative relationship between self-esteem and Facebook self-presentation; the lower a person's self-esteem, the more self-presentation individuals did on Facebook.

RQ 3 probed the relationship between self-esteem and gender role presentation on social media. A regression test was conducted to examine the relationship ( $F(1, 129) = 1.76$ ,  $p = .19$ ),

with an  $R^2$  of .01, and a  $\beta$  of -.12 (See Table 5). No significant relationship was found between self-esteem and Facebook gender role expression.

RQ 4 asked whether women who scored high in self-esteem posted more profile pictures than men who scored high in self-esteem. The researcher conducted an ANCOVA to assess the relationship (See Table 4). No significant relationships were found among gender, self-esteem and number of Facebook profile pictures ( $F(1, 127) = .63, p = .43$ ). The researcher was interested in the relationship between self-esteem and the number profile pictures, so a further regression test was conducted to examine the relationship between self-esteem and Facebook profile pictures ( $F(1, 129) = 2.89, p = .15$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .02, and a  $\beta$  of -.13 (See Table 5). No significant relationship was found between self-esteem and the number of profile pictures.

Table 5

*RQ Regression Results*

Research Question	R square	Beta	F Value	p Value
RQ2	0.036	-0.191	4.861	0.029
RQ3	0.013	-0.116	1,764	0.186
RQ4	0,016	-0.126	2.089	0.151

**Gender Role Expressions**

RQ 5 was posed to find the differences between men and women in expression of gender role on Facebook. A  $t$  test was conducted to examine the relationship ( $t(129) = -2.34, p = .021$ ) (See Table 6). Posts that fit gender role expectation for women ( $M = 2.79, S.D. = 4.92$ ) was significantly higher than gender role expectation posts for men ( $M = 1.23, S.D. = 2.47$ ). The results show that women post more gender role expectation expressions on Facebook than men do.



Table 6

*RQ5: Independent t-test Results*

Research Questions	Df	P Value	t Value	p Value (2-tailed)
RQ 5	129	0.008	-2.341	0.021

RQ 6 was posed to examine the relationships between gender role expressions on Facebook and the big five personality traits. The researcher conducted a regression test to examine the relationships between variables (See Table 7). There were no significant relationships between four of the traits and Facebook gender role expression: openness ( $F(1, 129) = .71, p = .40$ ), conscientiousness ( $F(1, 129) = .042, p = .84$ ), extraversion ( $F(1, 129) = .71, p = .40$ ), and agreeableness ( $F(1, 129) = .74, p = .39$ ).

A significant relationship was found between neuroticism and Facebook gender role ( $F(1, 129), p = .02$ ), with an  $R^2 = .04$ , and a  $\beta$  of .20 (See Table 7). The positive relationship indicates that individuals who are higher in neuroticism trait expressed more about gender role on Facebook.

Table 7

*RQ6: Big Five Personality & Gender Role Regression*

Dependent Variable	Predictor	R square	Beta	F Value	P Value
Facebook Gender Role	Openness	0.005	-0.074	0.706	0.402
Facebook Gender Role	Conscientiousness	0.000	0.018	0.042	0.838
Facebook Gender Role	Extraversion	0.005	-0.074	0.708	0.402
Facebook Gender Role	Agreeableness	0.006	-0.076	0.74	0.391
Facebook Gender Role	Neuroticism	0.042	0.205	5.659	0.019

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION

#### **Discussion of Findings**

The body of literature on engaging through social media is limited; the goal of this research project was to study individuals' expressions through social media with consideration of their gender. The study explores the relationship between personality and gender differences in online communication to gain a better understand of young adult men and women's self-presentation on social networking sites.

H1 predicted women who were highly extraverted would have a greater number of Facebook friends than men who were highly extraverted, there are no differences found between men and women in terms of extraversion and social connections. People who score high in extraversion tend to have more human interactions and were more likely to engage in online social interaction, but people who scored high in extraversion may feel more comfortable interacting with people during FtF communication rather than CMC. However, people who are introverted may desire to appear more extraverted on Facebook, because it is likely easier for introverted people to interact in an online environment than in a FtF communication environment. Thus, a leveling of the playing field may be at work here between the extraverts and the introverts. This result is supported by Maldonado, Mora, Garcia, and Edipo's (2001) research, which indicated introverts were more constant than extraverts in an online environment were.

The results of H2 indicated women post more Facebook profile pictures than men do. However, no significant differences between genders were found in terms of extraversion. This result is in line with Schrammel et al.'s (2009) research where women revealed more detailed personal information on their social media sites than men did. No significant relations between

personality traits and information disclosure on social media were found.

H3 predicted women who scored high in agreeableness would have more social connections than men who were high in agreeableness, which was not supported by the results. However, the researcher found individuals who were higher in agreeableness had more friends on Facebook. Regardless of gender, people may be more likely to be friends with other people who exhibit traits of agreeableness in FtF communication and in online communication. And the agreeableness personality trait is one that is marked by friendly connections to others.

H5 predicted women who were high in neuroticism would present themselves more on Facebook than men who were high in neuroticism. This study did not find differences between men and women who were high in neuroticism regarding Facebook self-presentation. While a regression test indicated that individuals who scored high in neuroticism trait would engage in more self-presentation on Facebook, no gender differences existed in terms of neuroticism personality traits and self-presentation. Finding a relationship between neuroticism and self-presentation is supported by some research (Dunn & Guadagno, 2012) and would tend to be in line with the idea that neurotic people may tweak their self-presentations out of insecurities.

One purpose of this study was to investigate how gender differences affected the use of self-presentation tactics to manage impressions online. Based on the RQ1, the research found men and women who have similar personality traits, as determined by the Big Five, did not have any differences in their use of self-presentation tactics on social networking sites. The researcher examined each one of the five personality traits and no significant relationships were found between genders. These findings suggest that gender may not act as a stronger predictor of self-presentation based on personality differences in CMC. There is research indicates that men and

women are different in social media usage (Sheldon, 2008). However, there was no interaction found in this study between gender and personality in terms of social media presentation.

RQ 2 investigated the relationship between self-esteem and self-presentation on social networking sites. The results indicated a negative relationship between self-esteem and Facebook self-presentation; the lower self-esteem is the more self-presentation individuals did on Facebook. People with lower self-esteem obviously did more self-presenting online than people with higher self-esteem. These results may be affected due to the date during which social media data were gathered. The data were collected during February, a time period that includes Valentine's Day. During this holiday, people tend to be concerned about their relationships and self-present more around Valentine's Day than other times of the year. Due to the tendency of people to be especially sensitive to relationship status, activities, and gifts at this time, participants may have posted more during this time than during other months.

RQ3 asked about whether individuals who were high in self-esteem scores post more about gender role expression. No significant relationship was found between self-esteem and Facebook gender role expression. Additionally, based on RQ 4 no significant relationships were found between the level of self-esteem and the number of profile pictures posted on Facebook. The results of this study suggest self-esteem is not a major factor that may influence gender role expressions on Facebook or the number of Facebook profile pictures. This may be related to the desire to display only positive aspects of oneself on social media.

This study explored whether women present more gender role expressions than men do on Facebook in RQ5. The results indicated that women posted more gender role expressions on Facebook than men did. This finding supports Muscanell and Guadagno's (2012) study that found women were more likely to engage in behavior in line with with feminine gender role

expectations that foster relationship maintenance compared with men. Based on the results from this study, women tended post more gender role expressions than men did and engaged in feminine gender role norms. Based on RQ 6, this study also found a positive relationship between neuroticism and Facebook gender role expression. Individuals who scored high in neuroticism expressed more about gender role on Facebook. The findings could suggest that women might post more gender role expressions due to the high gender expectation for women in society. Moreover, because of the pressure to conform to gender role expectations, women might post more about their gender role norms. A positive relationship between neuroticism and gender role expressions was also found in this study, which is logical because individuals who worry a great deal and tend to be more anxious, insecure, and sensitive might try harder to present themselves in an acceptable way on social media by posting more gender role congruent expressions to avoid conflict and receive positive feedback.

### **Conclusion**

The goal of this study was to investigate individuals' expressions through social media with consideration of their personalities, and levels of self-esteem. The results of the study indicated women post more Facebook profile pictures than men do. This result is in line with Haferkamp et al.'s study (2012); the choice of photographs used in social networking sites is related to women's need for self-presentation. Profile pictures are particularly attractive because pictures provide people with the measures to present themselves in a way to obtain valuable social image. Women tend to show more physical attractiveness as one aspect of self-presentation in comparison with men; in this case, women try to disclose their appearance in detail by photos.

Women posted more gender role expressions on Facebook than men. The gender

differences found in this study included the number of Facebook profile pictures and the frequency of gender role expressions. The results indicated women might try to receive positive evaluations on social networking sites by disclosing their appearance and meeting the gender role expectations.

Individuals who are higher in agreeableness have more friends on Facebook. The main motivation for social media use is communication, interaction, and maintaining relationships. Facebook allows individuals to feel informed and involved with others, and maintain relationships. People who are more agreeable tend to be cooperative, helpful, and nurturing, they tend to maintain their relationships online, and they might be more interested in developing a larger number of online friendships.

The research has two findings related to neuroticism. Individuals who are high in neuroticism expressed more about gender roles and did more self-presentation on Facebook. Neuroticism relates to emotional reactivity, anxiety insecurity, and sensitivity. Research has found individuals who are highly neurotic are primarily interested in using the Internet for communication and presenting their real identity (Amichai-Hamburger et al., 2002). So the results of this study are supported by literature, individuals who scored high in neuroticism tended to present themselves more, and tried to build up a desirable image for themselves online to meet the models provided by peer groups because they may be insecure and want to act acceptable online.

The study found the lower individuals' self-esteem, the more self-presentation individuals did on Facebook. People who are lower in self-esteem tend to be less confident; they may not want to take part in FtF communications because they think they are less valuable to others (MacIntyre et al., 1999). The results of the current study are in line with previous research

that has shown individuals with lower self-esteem spend increased time communicating with others via technology instead of FtF communication because they find CMC easier than FtF (Ehrenberg et al., 2008). Individuals with lower self-esteem tend to present themselves in CMC rather than FtF communication, because in CMC they may feel more comfortable doing self-presentation.

The results of this study show that the self-expressions through social media do not actually reflect individuals' personalities and levels of self-esteem. CMC is different than FtF communication; individuals with neurotic personality traits and individuals with a lower level of self-esteem may present themselves online in a way that is contrary to the way they behave in real life.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

Several limitations were presented in the current study. The limitations of this study include the sample, measurement, and research design. First, this study is based on specific populations of East Tennessee State University and the population sample is only undergraduate students from East Tennessee State University. Thus, generalizing the results to a greater population may be difficult. Additionally, the sample consisted mostly of female college students between the ages 18 and 24. If wider age ranges were examined, results might be different. The study did not find many results related to gender differences, and if a larger sample were examined the results might be different. Second, there were not enough male participants for this study; only 22% were men, and the uneven number of men and women may affect the results of the study. Third, the personality and self-esteem data of this study were self-reported, so the possibility exists that participants were not completely accurate in the reporting of the contents and level of privacy of their Facebook page, thus the data collection relied on self-report

information, which may contain errors. In addition, Facebook is constantly adding or deleting new features and capabilities that may significantly change how users decide to utilize the platform. Only one month's posts were considered in the study, and if the posts were coded based a longer period of time the results may vary.

Future research should investigate the difference of Facebook users' self-presentation among age groups. Examining a broader range of social media, among different culture, religion, classes and educational background, will extend and expand upon the findings in this research. This study was conducted solely among undergraduate students; if wider age ranges were examined different patterns may emerge. The survey questionnaire and coding form of this study gathered a great deal of valuable information that was not used in this study, and the researcher intends to make good use of the data for further study. The present study did not look at the interaction between social media users and their friends and other connections. It also did not examine the nature or level of those interactions. Future research should explore these interactions, particularly as they pertain to the differences between interaction among friends and interactions among just acquaintances.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Questionnaire

##### *Demographic Questions:*

**Write your answer in the blanks provided.**

- 1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_**
- 2. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_**
- 3. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, select the highest degree received.**
  - Some high school, no diploma
  - High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent
  - Some college credit, no degree
  - Trade/technical/vocational training
  - Associate degree
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Master's degree
  - Professional degree
  - Doctorate degree

##### *Social Media Usage Questions:*

- 1. Which of the following social networking websites do you currently have an account with? (Check all that apply)**
  - Facebook
  - Twitter

- Youtube
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- Google+
- MySpace
- Tumblr
- Instagram
- VK
- Flickr
- Vine
- Meetup
- Tagged
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**2. What is your primary reason for using online social networks? (Check all that apply)**

- To keep in touch with friends and family
- To meet new people
- To make professional and business contacts
- To share photos, videos, and music
- To play games
- To discover new music, books, films, and other entertainment
- To find information and share feedback about brands and products
- To promote a business or a cause
- To keep up with current events
- To follow celebrities
- To keep up with social trends
- To enter contests
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**3. How often do you check your social media feed?**

- Many times a day



- Once a day
- A few times a week
- Once a week
- A few times a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month

**4. In a typical week, how likely are you to use social networking websites?**

Not at all likely      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Extremely likely

**5. In a typical week, which of the following social networking websites do you use most often? (Check all that apply)**

- |             |                               |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| ▪ Facebook  | ▪ Instagram                   |
| ▪ Twitter   | ▪ VK                          |
| ▪ Youtube   | ▪ Flickr                      |
| ▪ LinkedIn  | ▪ Vine                        |
| ▪ Pinterest | ▪ Meetup                      |
| ▪ Google+   | ▪ Tagged                      |
| ▪ MySpace   | ▪ Other (please specify)_____ |
| ▪ Tumblr    |                               |

**6. How important is social media to your life?**

Very unimportant      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Very important

**7. Which do you value more about social media: the sending/sharing of information or receiving/viewing of information?**

- Sending/Sharing

- Receiving/Viewing
- Value both equally

**8. How often do you update your status on your social media?**

- Many times a day
- Once a day
- A few times a week
- Once a week
- A few times a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month

**9. If you currently have an account with Facebook or Twitter, please leave your account user name to let us follow you on the sites?**

- Twitter: \_\_\_\_\_
- Facebook: \_\_\_\_\_

***Personality Questions:***

**Here are the questions from the Big Five Inventory (BFI) (O. P. John et al., 1991) there are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. Please choose a number for each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. 1 means strongly disagree 7 means strongly agree, please circle an appropriate number based on your feelings about yourself.**

**1. I see myself as someone who is talkative.**

Strongly disagree                      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**2. I see myself as someone who tends to find fault with others.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**3. I see myself as someone who does a thorough job.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**4. I see myself as someone who is depressed or blue.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**5. I see myself as someone who is original, and comes up with new ideas.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**6. I see myself as someone who is reserved.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**7. I see myself as someone who is helpful and unselfish with others.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**8. I see myself as someone who can be somewhat careless.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**9. I see myself as someone who is relaxed, and handles stress well.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**10. I see myself as someone who is curious about many different things.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**11. I see myself as someone who is full of energy.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**12. I see myself as someone who starts quarrels with others.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**13. I see myself as someone who is a reliable worker.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**14. I see myself as someone who can be tense.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**15. I see myself as someone who is ingenious, a deep thinker.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**16. I see myself as someone who generates a lot of enthusiasm.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**17. I see myself as someone who has a forgiving nature.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**18. I see myself as someone who tends to be disorganized.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**19. I see myself as someone who worries a lot.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**20. I see myself as someone who has an active imagination.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**21. I see myself as someone who tends to be quiet.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**22. I see myself as someone who is generally trusting.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**23. I see myself as someone who tends to be lazy.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**24. I see myself as someone who is emotionally stable, or not easily upset.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**25. I see myself as someone who is inventive.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**26. I see myself as someone who has an assertive personality.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**27. I see myself as someone who can be cold and aloof.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**28. I see myself as someone who perseveres until the task is finished.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**29. I see myself as someone who can be moody.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**30. I see myself as someone who values artistic, aesthetic experiences.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**31. I see myself as someone who is sometimes shy, or inhibited.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**32. I see myself as someone who is considerate and kind to almost everyone.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**33. I see myself as someone who does things efficiently.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**34. I see myself as someone who remains calm in tense situations.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**35. I see myself as someone who prefers work that is routine.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**36. I see myself as someone who is outgoing and sociable.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7            Strongly agree

**37. I see myself as someone who is sometimes rude to others.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**38. I see myself as someone who makes plans and follows through with them.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**39. I see myself as someone who gets nervous easily.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**40. I see myself as someone who likes to reflect, or play with ideas.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**41. I see myself as someone who has few artistic interests.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**42. I see myself as someone who likes to cooperate with others.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**43. I see myself as someone who is easily distracted.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**44. I see myself as someone who is sophisticated in art, music, or literature.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

***Self-esteem Questions:***

**Below is a list of statements from The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale dealing with your general feelings about yourself. 1 means strongly disagree and 7 means strongly agree, please circle an appropriate number based on your feelings about yourself.**

**1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.**

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      Strongly agree

**2. At times, I think I am no good at all.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7     Strongly agree

**3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7     Strongly agree

**4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7     Strongly agree

**5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7     Strongly agree

**6. I certainly feel useless at times.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7     Strongly agree

**7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7     Strongly agree

**8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7     Strongly agree

**9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7     Strongly agree

**10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.**

Strongly disagree            1     2     3     4     5     6     7     Strongly agree

## Appendix B

### Profile Coding Form

#### **A. Gender:**

Male—1

Female—0

Decline to answer —99

#### **B. Personality:**

Defined according to the SONA survey.

B1. Openness

B2. Conscientiousness

B3. Extraversion

B4. Agreeableness

B5. Neuroticism

#### **C. Self-Esteem Score:**

Defined according to the SONA survey.

#### **D. Facebook:**

Participant provide Facebook account information

Yes—1

Don't have one—0

Decline to answer—99

#### **E. Twitter:**

Participant provide Twitter account information

Yes—1

Don't have one—0

Decline to answer—99



## **F. Facebook Profile and Basic Information**

1. Friends (total number)
2. Schools (total number)
3. Companies (total number)
4. How many albums (total number – if there are several albums, add them up and report the total)
5. How many pictures are in the profile picture album? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Profile contains photo of the user (not drawing or cartoon)

Yes—1      No—0      Can not tell—99

7. Most of the pictures are group pictures (two or more people in the picture)

Yes—1      No—0      Can not tell—99

8. Most of the pictures are about him/herself

Yes—1      No—0      Can not tell—99

## **G. Twitter Profile and Basic Information**

1. How many tweets: \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many following: \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many followers: \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many favorites: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Profile Coding Sheet Answer Form

<b>ID Code</b>	
<b>A Gender</b>	
<b>B Personality</b>	
<b>C Self-Esteem</b>	
<b>D Facebook</b>	
<b>E Twitter</b>	

#### **F. Facebook Profile and Basic Information**

1. Friends \_\_\_\_\_
2. Schools \_\_\_\_\_
3. Works \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many albums \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many pictures are in the profile picture album? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Profile contains photo of the user \_\_\_\_\_
7. Most of the pictures are group pictures \_\_\_\_\_
8. Most of the pictures are about him/herself \_\_\_\_\_

#### **G. Twitter Profile and Basic Information**

1. How many tweets: \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many following: \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many followers: \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many favorites: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

### Facebook and Twitter Posts Coding Form

ID Code:

#### **A. Self-presentation and impression management tactics**

Mark whether you feel if the following self-presentation strategies (Kane, 2008) are present given the impression you have of the subject's one month's each post. Use information from the picture, graphics, and textual information of the whole month.

1. Ingratiation: A person using this strategy has a goal of being liked by others. Some common characteristics of ingratiation are smiling and inviting, saying positive things about others or saying mildly negative things about oneself, statements of modesty, familiarity, and positive humor.

Present – 1    Not Present – 0    Cannot Tell – 99

2. Competence (self-handicap): The goal of this strategy is to be perceived as skilled and qualified. Common characteristics include claims about abilities, accomplishments, performance, and qualifications. Information about their job, career, aspirations, schooling would demonstrate competence.

Present – 1    Not Present – 0    Cannot Tell – 99

3. Intimidation: Persons using this strategy have power as their goal. Typical characteristics are threats, statements of anger, swear words, and potential unpleasantness.

Present – 1    Not Present – 0    Cannot Tell – 99

4. Exemplification: The goal of this strategy is to be perceived as possessing high moral standards. Characteristics include ideological commitment or militancy for a cause, self-sacrifice, and self-discipline. Examples would be description of religious beliefs, political ideology, and humanitarianism.

Present – 1    Not Present – 0    Cannot Tell – 99

5. Supplication: The goal is nurturance or appearing helpless so that others will come to their aid. Characteristics of this self-presentational approach include entreaties for help and self-deprecation.

Present – 1    Not Present – 0    Cannot Tell – 99

**B. Gender Role Expressions:** Record the emotions that most closely describe the context of the posts and sharing on Facebook and Twitter.

1. Expressions of Gender Role: the public image of being male or female that a person presents to others.

- 01 Presents to be mother/sister/daughter/wife
- 02 Presents to be father/brother/son/husband
- 03 The expressions about femininity
- 04 The expressions about masculinity
- 05 Other\_\_\_\_\_

Present – 1    Not Present – 0    Cannot Tell – 99

If present please verify the code\_\_\_\_\_

2. Expression about Self-Attractiveness

- 01 Pictures to demonstrate physical attractiveness
- 02 Post about self-improvement
- 03 A lot of social life
- 04 Comments on gifts or well wishes
- 05 Other\_\_\_\_\_

Present – 1    Not Present – 0    Cannot Tell – 99

If present please verify the code\_\_\_\_\_

**C. Expressions of Personal Life:** Mark whether you feel if the following personal life expressions are present given the impression you have of the subject's post.

1. Expression of social status:

For example:

- 01 Work
- 02 Company
- 03 School
- 04 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Yes—1    No—0    Can not tell—99

If yes please verify the code\_\_\_\_\_

2. Expressions of social relationship:

For example:

- 01 Relationship between two or more individual
- 02 Users' personal relationships
- 03 Workplace relations with peers, managers and clients
- 04 Engagement and sense of belonging with the community
- 05 Other\_\_\_\_\_

Yes—1      No—0      Can not tell—99

If yes please verify the code\_\_\_\_\_

3. Statements of inner side:

For example:

- 01 Users' inner thoughts
- 02 Self-reflection
- 03 Other\_\_\_\_\_

Yes—1      No—0      Can not tell—99

If yes please verify the code\_\_\_\_\_

4. Expression of mundane:

For example:

- 01 Everyday ordinary not meaningful things
- 02 (For example: A cup of coffee in the morning)
- 03 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Yes—1      No—0      Can not tell—99

If yes please verify the code\_\_\_\_\_



VITA

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