A Skeleton in the Cupboard? Real Feelings of Impression Management on Social Media

MSTU 4020

Zhuqian (Karen) Zhou

Teachers College, Columbia University

Fall 2016

Abstract

Impression management in the context of computer-mediated communication (CMC) has been studied for more than twenty years. Most researchers agree on the discoveries hitherto about what features of CMC facilitate such action and how the action influence both impression forming in others’ mind and identity construction of oneself. Basically, those theories and findings presuppose the good nature of impression management and people’s positive attitudes towards it. However, is there something being hidden in the cupboard? Ryan and Deci’s theory of extrinsic motivations suggests a potential dark side of impression management that has seldom been studied yet. Therefore, this paper is going to address this issue by conducting an online survey on the largest social media in China, WeChat, to investigate users’ real attitudes of i and creatively applying a data mining method, classification tree analysis, to examine the relationship between user experience on social media and the tendency of impression management.

*Keywords: impression management, social media, CMC, SNS, self-presentation, identity*

A Skeleton in the Cupboard? Real Feelings of Impression Management on Social Media

**Introduction**

As the most up-to-date representation of computer-mediated communication (CMC), social media around the world are undergoing a rapid growth in the Web 2.0 era (Correa, Hinsley, & de Zuniga, 2010; Lin & Lu, 2011; Powell, 2009; Tapscott, 2008). In the meantime, our awareness of self-presentation on those platforms is also aroused by the importance of online interactive experience that Web 2.0 emphasizes and our increasing ability to control the interaction that CMC affords. While enjoying connections among friends on social media, many users devote their time and energy to designing e-profiles, phrasing posts, and airbrushing photos with the intention of enhancing attractiveness and self-esteem (Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011; Gonzales, 2014; Krämer & Winter, 2008; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). The goal-oriented behaviors as such are termed as *impression management* (Dwyer, 2007; Goffman, 1959), which has been recognized by many researchers as one important reason why users start using social media and keep using them (Krämer & Winter, 2008; Krisanic, 2008; Papacharissi, 2002; Jung, Youn, & McClung, 2007).

However, only a little attention has been paid to the dark side of managing impression in the context of CMC. With the advance of social networking sites (SNSs), it becomes much easier for us to navigate a certain aspect of self to a specific group of the audience by customizing the visibility of our postings. Will the balance be broken between pleasing the audience and accepting the current self if it goes too far? Or will the idea of impression management become too dominant that we may feel obliged rather than willing to post on social media? Potential mental burdens and psychological costs behind the questions should not be overlooked.

Therefore, the goal of this paper is to study the relationship between users’ mental feelings while using social media with their tendency, proficiency, and attitude of impression management. The specific social medium chosen for this study is WeChat, the largest social media in China and around the world with over 700 million active users per month (QuestMobile, 2016).

**Literature Review**

**Impression Management**

In Dwyer’s (2007) study of digital relationships on social media, impression management was defined as “the goal-directed conscious or unconscious attempt to influence other’s perceptions about a person, object or event by controlling or managing the exchange of information in social interaction” (p. 19). Representing our image selectively according to the people around us is almost a natural tendency for us as social beings (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Caplan, 2006; Cupach & Metts, 1994; Goffman, 1959; Goffman, 1967; Schlenker & Leary, 1982), for which the theoretical foundation was built by Erving Goffman (1959) long before social media, even CMC, came into being. No matter when and where it takes place, goal-orientation and presenters’ control, as were indicated in the definition above, are always two major features of impression management.

The first feature, goal-orientation, implies the instrumental value of impression management as a strategy to obtain something, such as a job, an affinity, social approval, or self-esteem. Whether it is for tangible or intangible rewards, the motive is clearly separable from the action of image managing itself. Therefore, considering impression management from the angle of motivations as Goffman did (Krisanic, 2008), it can be located in the domain of extrinsic motivations (i.e. doing something for separable outcome rather than enjoyment *per se*) that was brought out by Ryan and Deci (2000) through their well-known series of studies on motivation types. More specifically, with regard to the four types of extrinsic motivation demonstrated by those studies (see Fig. 1), impression management is very likely to be categorized as the behavior or strategy resulting from *introjected regulation*, the second most external motivation among the four, since what we want from impression management (e.g. jobs and affinities) aligns well with the definition of introjected regulation that an activity is done “in order to enhance or maintain self-esteem and the feeling of worth” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.62). And the reason why we need to be in such detail about the specific type of motivation of impression management be given out later on.

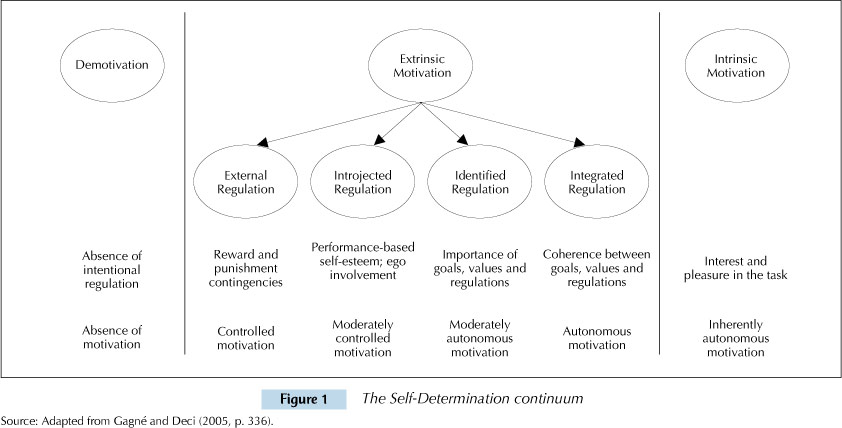


Figure 1 Types of motivation (adapted from Gagne and Deci (2005, p. 336))

In contrast to the first feature that focusing on the trigger of impression management, the second feature, presenters’ control, pertains to how impression management is implemented. As is described in Dwyer’s definition and can be inferred from its synonym *selective self-presentation* (Walther, 2007), purposeful impression management is achieved through one’s control of what to disclose and what to conceal in front of the expected audience. Nevertheless, the impression of the subject not only depends on the information given by the presenter but also relies on how it is perceived. To paraphrase, the control of self-expression is challenged by the possibility that the audience may judge a presenter according to his/her expressions *given off* (e.g. body language and eye contact) (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006). And the environment as an important factor in Goffman’s theory of impression management may well influence such balance between the two groups. Therefore, the next section of the review intends to delineate the characteristics of social media which serve as the environment of impression management that this paper is talking about.

**Impression Management on Social Media**

As a form of CMC, social media inherits lots of features from their antecedents. Essential ones in relation to impression management are “asynchronicity, editability, recordability, and access to an audience” (Toma, 2013, p. 241). According to the hyperpersonal model of CMC (Walther, 1996), such technical affordances empower senders to reallocate their cognitive resources when communicating through computers, like revising their phrases repeatedly before sending, which contributes to the receiver’s inflated impression of the sender (Brody & Peña, 2013). Further, Toma (2013) proposed that it will, in turn, lead to one’s better feeling of self in virtue of self-actualization and self-affirmation.

In spite of both theoretically positive effects on impression formation as Walther suggested and the identity construction as Toma claimed, some researchers, though not many, are aware of the potential negative outcomes of impression management on social media. On the one hand, Brody and Peña (2013) pointed out the face-threatening acts (FTA) on social media will result in impaired self-presentation rather than an ideal image in expectation. On the other hand, Toma’s experiment also reveals that due to psychological benefits (i.e. self-esteem and self-worth) that one can easily attain through impression management on social media, other tasks may become less attractive for the presenter, which to some extent substantiates Sherry Turkle’s (2012) warning of our increasing preference of communication online over face to face. Additionally, some other researchers also pay attention to the delicate balance between being authentic to oneself and presenting polished images (Rosenbaum, Johnson, Stepman, & Nuijten, 2013).

However, even the critical thoughts of impression management on social media are grounded in the same foundation as the positive demonstration that impression management on social media is something worthy to be promoted as long as we learn to keep the balance and pay attention to the malicious acts. What they neglect, indeed, is the endogenously negative effect that is presaged by the natural of impression management as a behavior motivated by introjected regulation.

The so-called skeleton in the cupboard refers to Ryan and Deci’s (2000) statement that “introjected regulation was positively related to expending effort, but was also related to more anxiety and to poorer coping with failures” (p. 63). Did we ever feel nervous or compulsive while wording our posting? Will we become more anxious, vulnerable, or volatile when the empowerment of presenters that social media supply is going to be strengthened? Research on this topic is scarce. Therefore, the rest of the paper is going to make an attempt to address this issue.

**Research Design**

As implies above, this paper focuses on three research questions:

*–RQ1: What are the current tendency, proficiency, and attitude of impression management on a social medium?*

*–RQ2: Is impression management related to users’ feelings when receiving no or negative responses for the posting?*

*–RQ3: Is impression management related to users’ mood swings between receiving positive and negative responses for the posting?*

Research subjects were Chinese users on WeChat. There are three reasons accounting for it. Firstly, WeChat is the mainstream medium in China with the largest monthly active users, which is conducive to the research to get a generalizable result and minimize the sampling bias resulted from the medium selection. Secondly, the availability of Chinese users on WeChat is much greater for the researcher of the current study than any other group of people on any other social media. Thirdly, WeChat is equipped with complete social functions, including contact tags (WeChat, 2014) which allow users to distinguish different groups of the intended audience and post Moments (the name of postings in WeChat) accordingly.

The Research method applied here is online survey (See Appendix A for English version and Appendix B for Chinese version) which includes four blocks: *demographics* (3 questions on gender, age, and level of education), *user experience* (7 questions on basic information of usage, particular user behaviors, and feelings corresponding to different situations on WeChat), *impression management* (2 questions including 7 statements on user tendency of impression management, 2 statements on proficiency of impression management, and 8 statements on user attitudes towards impression management on WeChat), and *feedback* (1 text-entry question for feedback on the whole questionnaire).

In particular, the scale for the tendency of impression management was adapted from Nezlek and Leary’s (2002) impression management scale with 5-point Likert-type response ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5).

More specifically, descriptive statistics was applied to answer RQ1 and classification tree analysis (CTA) was applied for RQ2 and RQ3. Reasons for choosing classification tree analysis is that firstly, Pearson correlation analysis may be statistically illegal for this research since most of the research data are ordinal data derived from Likert scale though there are disputes on whether a Likert-type scale is ordinal or interval (ResearchGate, 2014); secondly, it is a popular data mining method of nonparametric regression which does not require variables to be linearly dependent on each other as the assumption of the classic method, multiple linear regression (MLR). Additionally, CTA can be done easily with only one function in R (a nonproprietary language especially suitable for data analysis) which can automatically select variables out of what we put into the model that are highly related to the one variable we choose to be explained (See Appendix C for the script of CTA, including short italic sentences beginning with “#” to explain the meaning of codes).

**Data Analysis and Results**

A total of 126 participants took the online survey, among which 49 are male and 77 are female. Most of the participants (89.68%) are at age of 18 to 30. And almost all (96.03%) have received or is receiving higher education.

With regard to RQ1, 79.36% of participants have clear tendency of impression management on WeChat, which is in accordance with the aforementioned consensus among researchers that human beings are generally motivated to engage in impression management. Besides, according to self-reported proficiency, 58.73% participants regarded them as good at managing their impressions on WeChat. Another measure of proficiency is the frequency of the implementation of an advanced skill of using contact tags to present Moments to selected friends, of which results vary. The mean frequency of it is 0.31, which means on average 3 out of 10 postings are not public but for an intended group of contacts. Yet interestingly, the standard deviation of this measure is 0.36 that is even great than the average, which reflects the huge variance of proficiency in terms of tag using among participants. And on attitudes towards impression management, like most of the researchers, most participants (69.05%) agree such thing is desirable on WeChat. However, there are also nearly half of the participants (44.44%) think that managing impression is demanding. It may be a signal of the possible over-empowerment of presenters on WeChat though it cannot be substantiated by this single indicator.

With respect of RQ2 and RQ3, 11 (i.e. 7+3+1) classification trees were built in order to discover relationship among impression management measured by adapted Nezlek and Leary’s scale with 7 statements, and user feelings ranging from “extremely nervous” (1) to “extremely happy” (5) respectively when facing the following 3 situations: receiving likes or positive comments (Q10\_3), no likes or comments (Q10\_4), and negative comments (Q10\_5). Again, as is mentioned in RQ3, user mood swings is also an important variable that should also be taken into account. It was derived from the grade of the feeling of positive feedback minus the grade of the feeling of negative feedback (Q10\_3- Q10\_5). For instance, if someone is extremely happy (5) when receiving positive feedback (i.e. desirable comments) and is extremely nervous (1) when receiving negative feedback (i.e. undesirable comments), then his/her measure of the mood swing equals 4 (=5-1); if he/she is somewhat happy (4) and somewhat nervous (3) with respect to those two scenes, then his/her measure of the mood swing equals 1 (=4-3). As can be inferred, the higher the grade of mood swings the more emotional or volatile the person is.

In light of impression management as introjected regulation which is likely to result in “poorer coping with failure”, three hypotheses related to RQ2 and RQ3 are reasonable as follows:

*–H1: The feeling of receiving no responses (Q10\_4) is highly related to some indicators of impression management (Q11\_1 ~ Q11\_10).*

*–H2: The feeling of receiving negative responses (Q10\_5) is highly related to some indicators of impression management (Q11\_1 ~ Q11\_10).*

*–H3: The mood swing (Q10\_3- Q10\_5) is highly related to some indicators of impression management (Q11\_1 ~ Q11\_10).*

An index of whether the hypotheses are testified is redistribution error rate (RER) that is computed by multiplying the root node error (RNE) with the relative error (RE) put out by CTA (See Appendix D for details of each classification tree and Appendix E for the diagram of each tree). The lower the RER the higher the validity of the hypothesis is. Generally, for a fair model, the RER should be at most 50%.

Now, focus on “c.tree 9”, “c.tree 10” and “c.tree 11” (See Fig. 2 extracted from Appendix D below) that may directly testify H1, H2 and H3. “c.tree 9” with the lowest RER of 26.96% among all eleven models supports H1 that the feeling of receiving no responses significantly relates to some indicators of impression management, i.e. participants’ awareness of impression management on WeChat (Q11\_1), participants’ tendency of showing competency as the strategy of impression management on WeChat (Q11\_5), and participants’ self-reported proficiency of impression management on WeChat (Q11\_9).

“c.tree 10” with the RER of 34.19% supports H2 that the feeling of receiving negative responses significantly relates to some indicators of impression management, i.e. friends’ proficiency of impression management on WeChat perceived by participants (Q11\_10), participants’ tendency of being likable as the strategy of impression management on WeChat (Q11\_2), participants’ tendency of being socially desirable as the strategy of impression management on WeChat (Q11\_4).

Unfortunately, “c.tree 11” with the RER of 56.35% over the threshold 50% fails to support H3 directly. That is, we cannot predict participants’ mood swings (“emo.swi”) by his/her tendency of impression management. Inversely, however, participants’ mood swings can be used to predict their awareness of impression management on WeChat (Q11\_1), their tendency of being likable as the strategy of impression management on WeChat (Q11\_2), their tendency of being friendly as the strategy of impression management on WeChat (Q11\_3) according to “c.tree 1”, “c.tree 2” and “c.tree 3” of which the RER are all below 50%. Given these results, it seems that it is not the concern of impression management that affects one’s mood swing, but one’s fluctuant emotionality that influences his/her tendency of impression management. This result may indicate that there are some hidden factors, such as one’s stable personality, that will influence the tendency of impression management. But data in hand cannot verify this speculation.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | Explained variable | Explanatory variables | RNE | RE | RER |
| c.tree1 | Q11\_1iMa.awa | emo.swi | 0.42857 | 0.92593 | 39.68% |
| c.tree2 | Q11\_2iMa.lik | emo.swi | 0.45238 | 0.92982 | 42.06% |
| c.tree3 | Q11\_3iMa.fri | emo.swi | 0.39683 | 0.88 | 34.92% |
| c.tree9 | Q10\_4emo.0Fb | Q11\_1iMa.awa, Q11\_5iMa.com, Q11\_9iMa.pro.self,  Q2age,  Q3edu,  Q4lon,  Q5fPo,  Q7noC | 0.38261 | 0.70455 | 26.96% |
| c.tree10 | Q10\_5emo.nFb | Q11\_10iMa.pro.fri, Q11\_2iMa.lik, Q11\_4iMa.des,  Q1gen,  Q2age,  Q4lon,  Q5fPo,  Q7noC | 0.57265 | 0.59701 | 34.19% |
| c.tree11 | emo.swi | Q11\_1iMa.awa, Q11\_2iMa.lik, Q11\_9iMa.pro.self,  Q4lon | 0.6746 | 0.83529 | 56.35% |

Figure 2

**Conclusions**

On RQ1, the result of survey generally supports researchers’ consensus that most people are willing and motivated to manage their impressions on social media. But proficiency of doing so varies from person to person. What’s more, not a few participants agree that managing impressions on WeChat is demanding, which may indicate the potential mental burden resulting from the power of presenters being over-reinforced by social media.

On RQ2 and RQ3, the significant relationship between participants’ feelings of receiving no or negative responses and tendency of impression management is proved and visualized by CTA while the relationship between mood swings and the tendency is not. The findings buttress the prediction derived from Ryan and Deci’s theory that impression management as introjected regulation will have significant impacts on one’s mentality when facing negative outcomes. But frankly speaking, although two hypothesized relationships have been proved, indicators of impression management that are involved in the two models still differ, which reflects no general rules found of how feelings are affected by the tendency of impression management specifically.

To summarize, although users are overall optimistic about impression management on social media, the potential negative effects of it on our mental health are revealed to some extent.

**Implications**

Future researchers are encouraged to keep an eye on the development of the situation since currently all users are not skilled enough in applying functions (e.g. “contact tags” which was released in September, 2014) on social media specially designed for impression management and things may change when users grow to be more experienced on it. That is, long-term studies are necessary to unveil the change of our mental status with the evolution of social media. Also, Facebook as a larger platform with users from multicultural backgrounds is an ideal place to conduct further studies in order to confirm or refine the results of the current research.

Moreover, for social media developers, it is time to think about whether it is always worthwhile to facilitate more and more delicate impression management, which may be accompanied by the cost of users’ mental experience in the long run. Put differently, providing users with more control of the content is not the guarantee of the increase of user satisfaction. For users, this study may also prompt them to reflect on their motivations for using social media and be aware of the different outcomes that different motivations may lead to.

**Reflection**

This is my first time to design a whole questionnaire independently. I have learned a lot from unexpected accidents happening during the pilot study and even after the formal issue. For example, in order to make the response more accurate, I use the slider in Q9 to help participants indicate their frequency of some behaviors. However, this setting makes the rough estimation too serious that some participants question the necessity of using the slider there. Accuracy is not always a good thing.

Also, phrases in some questions are a little difficult for technology laggards to understand. There was someone asking me what contact tags are since she had never used this function, yet. So notes to explain some terms had better be included in similar questionnaires next time.

Last but not the least, during the whole process of conducting this research, I got a wonderful chance to look back on what I learned so far in this semester. Many concepts are connected together miraculously, such as CMC, SNS, identity, motivation theories and much more. Going into details of how human beings may change together with the development of technology, I come to have a deeper understanding of technological determinism. Just as the identity of a man is constructed by his relations and interactions with objects and people around him, the new technology around us provide a new relationship that may influence our identity forming accordingly. That may be how technology determines our lives. But relations and interactions here seem more important than the technology itself. And as the last section implies, designers and users are able to reflect on such relations and make efforts to change them if they like, which seems to be ignored by technological determinists.

References

Brody, N., & Peña, J. (2013). Face threatening messages and attraction in social networking sites: reconciling strategic self-presentation with negative online perceptions. In C. Cunningham (Ed.), *Social networking and impression management* (pp. 205-226). Lanham: Lexington Books.

Brown, P., & Levinson, S.C. (1987). *Politeness: some universals in language use*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Caplan, S. E. (2006). Relations among loneliness, social anxiety, and problematic Internet use. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, *10*(2), 234-242.

Cheung, C. M., Chiu, P. Y., & Lee, M. K. (2011). Online social networks: Why do students use facebook?. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *27*(4), 1337-1343.

Correa, T., Hinsley, A. W., & de Zuniga, H. G. (2010). Who interacts on the web? The intersection of users’ personality and social media use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *26*, 247–253.

Cunningham, C. (2013). *Social networking and impression management* (1st ed.). Lanham: Lexington Books.

Cupach, W.R., & Metts, S. (1994). *Facework*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dwyer, C. (2007, January). Digital relationships in the "myspace" generation: Results from a qualitative study. In *System Sciences, 2007. HICSS 2007. 40th Annual Hawaii International Conference* on (pp. 19-19). IEEE.

Ellison, N., Heino, R., & Gibbs, J. (2006). Managing impressions online: Self-presentation processes in the online dating environment. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *11*(2), article 2.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City, NY: Double Day.

Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual*. New York: Doubleday.

Gonzales, A. L. (2014). Text-based communication influences self-esteem more than face-to-face or cellphone communication. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *39*, 197-203.

Jung, T., Youn, H., & McClung, S. (2007). Motivations and self-presentation strategies on Korean-based “Cyworld” weblog format personal homepages. *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, *10*, 24–31.

Krämer, N. C., & Winter, S. (2008). Impression management 2.0: The relationship of self-esteem, extraversion, self-efficacy, and self-presentation within social networking sites. *Journal of Media Psychology*, *20*(3), 106-116.

Krisanic, K. (2008). *Motivations and impression management: Predictors of social networking site use and user behavior* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri--Columbia).

Lin, K. Y., & Lu, H. P. (2011). Why people use social networking sites: An empirical study integrating network externalities and motivation theory. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *27*(3), 1152-1161.

Nezlek, J. B. & Leary, M. R. (2002). Individual differences in self-presentational motives in daily social interaction. *PSPB*, *28*(2), pp. 211-223.

Papacharissi, Z. (2002). The self online: The utility of personal homepages. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *46*, 346–368.

Powell, J. (2009). *33 Million people in the room: How to create, influence, and run a successful business with social networking*. NJ: FT Press.

Quan-Haase, A., & Young, A. L. (2010). Uses and gratifications of social media: A comparison of Facebook and instant messaging. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, *30*(5), 350-361.

QuestMobile. (2016, October), *QuestMobile Top 2000 Chinese Apps Rankings*. Retrieved December 14, 2016, from <http://www.questmobile.com.cn/blog/en/blog_64.html>

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary educational psychology*, *25*(1), 54-67.

Schlenker, B. R., & Leary, M. R. (1982). Social anxiety and self-presentation: A conceptualization model. *Psychological bulletin*, *92*(3), 641.

Rosenbaum, J. E., Johnson, B. K., Stepman, P. A., & Nuijten, K. C. (2013). "Looking the Part" and "Staying True": Balancing Impression Management on Facebook. In C. Cunningham (Ed.), *Social networking and impression management* (pp. 35-60). Lanham: Lexington Books.

ResearchGate. (2014, June). *Is a Likert-type scale ordinal or interval data?*. Retrieved December 14, 2016, from https://www.researchgate.net/post/Is\_a\_Likert-type\_scale\_ordinal\_or\_interval\_data

Tapscott, D. (2008). *Grown up digital: How the next generation is changing your world*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Toma, C. L. (2013). Psychological benefits and costs: a self-affirmation framework for understanding the effects of facebook self-presentation. In C. Cunningham (Ed.), *Social networking and impression management* (pp. 227-245). Lanham: Lexington Books.

Turkle, S. (2012). *Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. Basic books.

Walther, J. B. (1996). Computer-mediated communication impersonal, interpersonal, and hyperpersonal interaction. *Communication Research*, *23*(1), 3-43.

Walther, J. B. (2007). Selective self-presentation in computer-mediated communication: Hyperpersonal dimensions of technology, language, and cognition. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *23*(5), 2538-2557.

WeChat. (2014, September). *New WeChat 5.4 for Android Released*. Retrieved December 16, 2016, from http://blog.WeChat.com/2014/09/10/new-WeChat-5-4-for-android-released/

Appendix A

Q1 Please indicate your gender

* Male (1)
* Female (2)
* Others (3)

Q2 Please indicate your age

* <18 (1)
* 18~30 (2)
* 31~40 (3)
* 41~50 (4)
* 51~60 (5)
* >60 (6)

Q3 Please indicate the highest level of education you have received or is now receiving

* Graduate and above (1)
* Undergraduate or equal (2)
* High school or equal (3)
* Middle school or equal (4)
* Below middle school (5)

Q4 Please indicate in which year you started to use WeChat(Note: WeChat was first released in January, 2011)

* 2011 (1)
* 2012 (2)
* 2013 (3)
* 2014 (4)
* 2015 (5)
* 2016 (6)

Q5 Please choose the most appropriate description of how often you post Moments on WeChat

* several times every day (1)
* several times every week (2)
* several times every month (3)
* several times every year (4)
* less than all of above (5)

Q6 Please choose the most appropriate description of how often you read Moments on WeChat

* several times every day (1)
* several times every week (2)
* several times every month (3)
* several times every year (4)
* less than all of above (5)

Q7 Please indicate how many WeChat contacts you keep(Note: to check this you can go to the bottom of your Contacts page)

* 0~100 (1)
* 101~200 (2)
* 201~300 (3)
* 301~400 (4)
* 401~500 (5)
* 501~600 (6)
* 601~700 (7)
* 701~800 (8)
* 801~900 (9)
* 901~1000 (10)
* >1000 (11)

Q8 Please indicate how many tags you have for your WeChat contacts

* 0 (1)
* 1~10 (2)
* 11~20 (3)
* 21~30 (4)
* 31~40 (5)
* 41~50 (6)
* >50 (7)

Q9 Please indicate the proportion of the following behaviors to all of your posting attempts on WeChat

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Post the Moment to selected friends (i.e. use "Share List" or "Do Not Share List") (1)

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Post the Moment to the public but have intended audience in mind (2)

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Revise the wording or edit photos repeatedly before posting the Moment (3)

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Review the Moment repeatedly after posting it (4)

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Receive likes or desirable comments on the Moment (5)

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Delete the Moment with seldom or no likes or with undesirable comments (6)

Q10 Please indicate your general feelings while doing the following things

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Extremely nervous (1) | Somewhat nervous (2) | Neither happy nor nervous (3) | Somewhat happy (4) | Extremely happy (5) | Not applicable (6) |
| Revise the wording or edit photos before posting the Moment (1) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Review the Moment after posting it (2) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Receive likes or desirable comments on your Moment (3) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Receive no likes or comments on your Moment (4) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Receive undesirable comments on your Moment (5) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Delete the Moment with seldom or no likes or with undesirable comments (6) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Skim or read others' Moments (7) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Finish skimming or reading others' Moments (8) |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q11 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly disagree (1) | Somewhat disagree (2) | Neither agree nor disagree (3) | Somewhat agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
| I care about my image in WeChat Moments (1) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I want the audience perceive me as likable (2) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I want the audience perceive me as friendly (3) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I want the audience perceive me as socially desirable (4) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I want the audience perceive me as competent (5) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I want the audience perceive me as skilled (6) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I want the audience perceive me as intelligent (7) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am satisfied with my current image(s) in WeChat Moments (8) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am good at managing my impression(s) in WeChat Moments (9) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Many of my WeChat friends are good at managing their impressions in WeChat Moments (10) |  |  |  |  |  |

Q12 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly disagree (1) | Somewhat disagree (2) | Neither agree nor disagree (3) | Somewhat agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
| I think impression management in WeChat Moments is desirable (1) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I think impression management is easier to achieve in WeChat Moments than face to face (2) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I think impression management in WeChat Moments is disingenuous (3) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I think impression management in WeChat Moments is demanding (4) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am likely to start or is conducting impression management in WeChat Moments consciously due to its advantages (5) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I will conduct impression management in WeChat Moments if many of my WeChat friends do so (6) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am likely to stop or not start conducting impression management due to its disadvantages (7) |  |  |  |  |  |
| I will not conduct impression management if seldom of my WeChat friends do so (8) |  |  |  |  |  |

Q13 If you have any other thoughts/comments/feedback on this survey, feel free to include them below. Thank you for finishing this questionnaire!

Appendix B

Q1 您的性别

* 男 (1)
* 女 (2)
* 其他 (3)

Q2 您的年龄

* <18 (1)
* 18~30 (2)
* 31~40 (3)
* 41~50 (4)
* 51~60 (5)
* >60 (6)

Q3 您的受教育程度（包括已经接受及正在接受的教育）

* 硕士、博士及以上 (1)
* 本科或同等学力 (2)
* 高中或同等学力 (3)
* 初中或同等学力 (4)
* 初中以下 (5)

Q4 请问您何时开始使用微信？（注：微信发布于2011年1月）

* 2011 (1)
* 2012 (2)
* 2013 (3)
* 2014 (4)
* 2015 (5)
* 2016 (6)

Q5 您发微信朋友圈的频率是

* 每天若干次 (1)
* 每周若干次 (2)
* 每月若干次 (3)
* 每年若干次 (4)
* 低于上述所有 (5)

Q6 您查看微信朋友圈的频率是

* 每天若干次 (1)
* 每周若干次 (2)
* 每月若干次 (3)
* 每年若干次 (4)
* 低于上述所有 (5)

Q7 请选择您的微信联系人总数（注：划至微信通讯录底部可以查看该数字）

* 0~100 (1)
* 101~200 (2)
* 201~300 (3)
* 301~400 (4)
* 401~500 (5)
* 501~600 (6)
* 601~700 (7)
* 701~800 (8)
* 801~900 (9)
* 901~1000 (10)
* >1000 (11)

Q8 请选择您微信通讯录中创建的标签数

* 0 (1)
* 1~10 (2)
* 11~20 (3)
* 21~30 (4)
* 31~40 (5)
* 41~50 (6)
* >50 (7)

Q9 请移动滑块来显示如下行为在您所有朋友圈发送中所占的比例

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 发送特定朋友可见的朋友圈（即使用“部分可见”或“不给谁看”功能） (1)

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 发送所有朋友可见的朋友圈，但心里有目标受众 (2)

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 发送朋友圈前反复修改措辞或调整图片 (3)

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 发送朋友圈后反复回顾那则状态 (4)

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 所发状态收获点赞或合意的评论 (5)

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 删除只有零星点赞、没有点赞或有不合意评论的朋友圈状态 (6)

Q10 请选择您在进行如下行为或面对如下情况时通常的情绪状态

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 非常压抑 (1) | 有点压抑 (2) | 既不开心也不压抑 (3) | 有点开心 (4) | 非常开心 (5) | 无此行为 (6) |
| 发送朋友圈前修改措辞或调整图片 (1) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 发送朋友圈后回顾那则状态 (2) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 所发状态收获点赞或合意的评论 (3) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 所发状态未收获任何点赞或评论 (4) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 所发状态收获不合意的评论 (5) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 删除只有零星点赞、没有点赞或有不合意评论的朋友圈状态 (6) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 浏览或阅读他人的朋友圈状态 (7) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 完成一次朋友圈浏览或阅读 (8) |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q11 请选择您对如下表述的认可程度

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 非常反对 (1) | 有点反对 (2) | 既不同意也不反对 (3) | 有点同意 (4) | 非常同意 (5) |
| 我在乎我在微信朋友圈中的形象 (1) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 我希望看到我朋友圈状态的人认为我是令人喜爱的 (2) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 我希望看到我朋友圈状态的人认为我是友善的 (3) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 我希望看到我朋友圈状态的人认为我是符合社会期待的 (4) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 我希望看到我朋友圈状态的人认为我是有竞争力的 (5) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 我希望看到我朋友圈状态的人认为我是有特长的 (6) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 我希望看到我朋友圈状态的人认为我是有智慧的 (7) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 我对我在微信朋友圈中目前的形象感到满意 (8) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 我善于管理我在微信朋友圈中的形象 (9) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 我的许多微信好友善于管理他/她们在微信朋友圈中的形象 (10) |  |  |  |  |  |

Q12 请选择你对如下表述的认可程度

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 非常反对 (1) | 有点反对 (2) | 既不同意也不反对 (3) | 有点同意 (4) | 非常同意 (5) |
| 我认为在微信朋友圈中进行自我形象管理是值得的 (1) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 我认为在微信朋友圈中比面对面时更容易进行自我形象管理 (2) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 我认为在微信朋友圈中进行自我形象管理是不真诚的 (3) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 我认为在微信朋友圈中进行自我形象管理是花费精力的 (4) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 由于在微信朋友圈中进行自我形象管理的优点，我可能会开始或正在这么做 (5) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 如果很多微信好友都在朋友圈中进行自我形象管理，那么我也会这么做 (6) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 由于在微信朋友圈中进行自我形象管理的缺点，我可能会停止或不准备这么做 (7) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 如果很少有微信好友在朋友圈中进行自我形象管理，那么我也不会这么做 (8) |  |  |  |  |  |

Q13 如果您对这份问卷有任何的想法、评论或反馈，欢迎写在下面。非常感谢您接受本次问卷调查！

Appendix C

library(rpart) *# upload the package “rpart” in R*

a2 <- read.csv("03\_ctree.csv", header = TRUE, sep = ",") *# upload the data*

c.tree1 <- rpart(Q11\_1iMa.awa ~ Q10\_3emo.pFb + Q10\_4emo.0Fb

+ Q10\_5emo.nFb + emo.swi, method="class", data=a2)

*# find the relationship between the awareness of impression management (Q11\_1) and feelings when receiving likes or positive comments (Q10\_3), no likes or comments (Q10\_4), and negative comments (Q10\_5) of one’s posting*

c.tree2 <- rpart(Q11\_2iMa.lik ~ Q10\_3emo.pFb + Q10\_4emo.0Fb

+ Q10\_5emo.nFb + emo.swi, method="class", data=a2)

c.tree3 <- rpart(Q11\_3iMa.fri ~ Q10\_3emo.pFb + Q10\_4emo.0Fb

+ Q10\_5emo.nFb + emo.swi, method="class", data=a2)

c.tree4 <- rpart(Q11\_4iMa.des ~ Q10\_3emo.pFb + Q10\_4emo.0Fb

+ Q10\_5emo.nFb + emo.swi, method="class", data=a2)

c.tree5 <- rpart(Q11\_5iMa.com ~ Q10\_3emo.pFb + Q10\_4emo.0Fb

+ Q10\_5emo.nFb + emo.swi, method="class", data=a2)

c.tree6 <- rpart(Q11\_6iMa.ski ~ Q10\_3emo.pFb + Q10\_4emo.0Fb

+ Q10\_5emo.nFb + emo.swi, method="class", data=a2)

c.tree7 <- rpart(Q11\_7iMa.int ~ Q10\_3emo.pFb + Q10\_4emo.0Fb

+ Q10\_5emo.nFb + emo.swi, method="class", data=a2)

c.tree8 <- rpart(Q10\_3emo.pFb ~ Q1gen + Q2age + Q3edu + Q4lon + Q5fPo + Q6fRe + Q7noC + Q8noT + Q11\_1iMa.awa + Q11\_2iMa.lik + Q11\_3iMa.fri + Q11\_4iMa.des + Q11\_5iMa.com + Q11\_6iMa.ski + Q11\_7iMa.int + Q11\_8iMa.sat + Q11\_9iMa.pro.self + Q11\_10iMa.pro.fri, method="class", data=a1)

*# find the relationship between the feeling when receiving likes or positive comments (Q10\_3) with other variables collected in the questionnaire, including those indicators of impression management (Q11\_1 ~ Q11\_10)*

c.tree9 <- rpart(Q10\_4emo.0Fb ~ Q1gen + Q2age + Q3edu + Q4lon + Q5fPo + Q6fRe + Q7noC + Q8noT + Q11\_1iMa.awa + Q11\_2iMa.lik + Q11\_3iMa.fri + Q11\_4iMa.des + Q11\_5iMa.com + Q11\_6iMa.ski + Q11\_7iMa.int + Q11\_8iMa.sat + Q11\_9iMa.pro.self + Q11\_10iMa.pro.fri, method="class", data=a1)

c.tree10 <- rpart(Q10\_5emo.nFb ~ Q1gen + Q2age + Q3edu + Q4lon + Q5fPo + Q6fRe + Q7noC + Q8noT + Q11\_1iMa.awa + Q11\_2iMa.lik + Q11\_3iMa.fri + Q11\_4iMa.des + Q11\_5iMa.com + Q11\_6iMa.ski + Q11\_7iMa.int + Q11\_8iMa.sat + Q11\_9iMa.pro.self + Q11\_10iMa.pro.fri, method="class", data=a1)

c.tree11 <- rpart(emo.swi ~ Q1gen + Q2age + Q3edu + Q4lon + Q5fPo + Q6fRe + Q7noC + Q8noT + Q11\_1iMa.awa + Q11\_2iMa.lik + Q11\_3iMa.fri + Q11\_4iMa.des + Q11\_5iMa.com + Q11\_6iMa.ski + Q11\_7iMa.int + Q11\_8iMa.sat + Q11\_9iMa.pro.self + Q11\_10iMa.pro.fri, method="class", data=a1)

Appendix D

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | Explained variable | Explanatory variables | RNE | RE | RER |
| c.tree1 | Q11\_1iMa.awa | emo.swi | 0.42857 | 0.92593 | 39.68% |
| c.tree2 | Q11\_2iMa.lik | emo.swi | 0.45238 | 0.92982 | 42.06% |
| c.tree3 | Q11\_3iMa.fri | emo.swi | 0.39683 | 0.88 | 34.92% |
| c.tree4 | Q11\_4iMa.des | emo.swi,  Q10\_4emo.0Fb | 0.54762 | 0.95652 | 52.38% |
| c.tree5 | Q11\_5iMa.com | emo.swi,  Q10\_5emo.nFb | 0.57143 | 0.875 | 50.00% |
| c.tree6 | Q11\_6iMa.ski | emo.swi,  Q10\_3emo.pFb, Q10\_4emo.0Fb, Q10\_5emo.nFb | 0.53175 | 0.83582 | 44.44% |
| c.tree7 | Q11\_7iMa.int | - | 0.48413 | 1 | 48.41% |
| c.tree8 | Q10\_3emo.pFb | Q11\_2iMa.lik,  Q5fPo,  Q7noC | 0.54839 | 0.66176 | 36.29% |
| c.tree9 | Q10\_4emo.0Fb | Q11\_1iMa.awa, Q11\_5iMa.com, Q11\_9iMa.pro.self,  Q2age,  Q3edu,  Q4lon,  Q5fPo,  Q7noC | 0.38261 | 0.70455 | 26.96% |
| c.tree10 | Q10\_5emo.nFb | Q11\_10iMa.pro.fri, Q11\_2iMa.lik, Q11\_4iMa.des,  Q1gen,  Q2age,  Q4lon,  Q5fPo,  Q7noC | 0.57265 | 0.59701 | 34.19% |
| c.tree11 | emo.swi | Q11\_1iMa.awa, Q11\_2iMa.lik, Q11\_9iMa.pro.self,  Q4lon | 0.6746 | 0.83529 | 56.35% |

Appendix E

