

# Online Impression Management: Personality Traits and Concerns for Secondary Goals as Predictors of Self-Presentation Tactics on Facebook

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*This study investigates the utility of personality traits and secondary goals as predictors of self-presentation tactics employed by Facebook users. A structural equation model of self-presentation tactics on Facebook was proposed and tested. Although fit of the initial model was good, the final model, eliminating three paths and adding two others, yielded a significantly better fitting model. Findings show that personality traits predicted concern for secondary goals ( $N = 477$ ) and that secondary goals predicted the use of various self-presentation tactics used on Facebook. Results indicated that these personality traits and secondary goals are both theoretically and empirically sound components for the conceptualization of online impression management.*

**Key words:** self-presentation, impression management, Facebook, secondary goals, structural equation model.

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In a day and age where relationships are often initiated and maintained in online environments, the formation and management of online impressions has gained importance in recent years and become the subject of numerous studies (e.g., Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Tong, Van Der Heide, Langwell, & Walther, 2008; Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, Westerman, & Tong, 2008; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). With social networking sites such as Facebook and twitter, and online dating sites like Match.com and eHarmony, individuals have the ability to create images of themselves for social purposes without being constrained by time or space. Internet users visit social networking sites and create strategic profiles to influence how others perceive them. Understanding how impression management functions in an online environment is imperative for researchers who are interested in the dynamics of modern interpersonal relationships. In an attempt to attain a better understanding, the current study examines how individuals' personality traits and concern for secondary goals impact self-presentation tactics employed on Facebook.

Goals-planning-action theory links personality traits to goals, which previous studies have not addressed (Dillard, Anderson, & Knobloch, 2002). The relationship between the personality traits of self-monitoring, Machiavellianism, and affinity-seeking will be examined and linked to individuals'

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concern for secondary goals. Finally, one's concerns for secondary goals (identity goals, interaction goals, personal resource goals, and arousal management goals) will be investigated as they relate to Facebook users' self-presentation tactics.

## Impression Management

Individuals spend most of their lives interacting with others. These interactions shape people's views of themselves, which are then reflected in the ways they present themselves during interactions. Symbolic interactionism captures the ongoing processes between one's self, one's social interactions, and their links to developing meaning (Blumer, 1986). The reciprocal relationship between interactions and self-identity is difficult to determine; however, researchers examining self-presentation and impression management have been investigating this relationship for more than 5 decades (e.g., Goffman, 1959; Jones & Pittman, 1982; Leary, 1996; Pontari & Schlenker, 2006; Snyder, 1974).

One of the first authors to argue that interactions serve a function of presenting an image of the self was Goffman (1959), who asserted that people engage in strategic actions to create and maintain a desired image. Goffman (1959) believed that individuals not only try to convince others to see them as just, respectable, and moral individuals, but also that people want to maintain established positive impressions. For the purpose of this study, the terms impression management and self-presentation will be used interchangeably as others have done so in the past (e.g., Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Lee, Quigley, Nesler, Corbett, & Tedeschi, 1999).

Individuals engage in various self-presentation tactics to present themselves in favorable ways. Researchers concerned with self-presentation have provided ample support for the existence and use of various self-presentation tactics (e.g., Jones & Pittman, 1982; Lee et al., 1999; Lewis & Neighbors, 2005). Self-presentation tactics are defined as "behaviors used to manage impressions to achieve foreseeable short-term interpersonal objectives or goals" (Lee et al., 1999, p. 702). Individuals do not only seek to manage their impression face-to-face, but also in computer-mediated environments (Zhao et al., 2008). When considering online environments, specifically the social networking site Facebook, two motivations for impression management, namely publicity and likelihood of future interactions are especially pertinent (Leary, 1996). The public nature of one's impression will motivate people to manage their impressions more carefully. Also, future interactions with one's Facebook "friends" are highly likely, which will increase one's motivation to monitor his or her impressions more closely.

## Facebook and Impressions

Social networking sites, such as Facebook, are particularly interesting to communication researchers because they are dedicated specifically to forming and managing impressions, as well as engaging in relational maintenance and relationship-seeking behaviors (Tong et al., 2008). Numerous researchers have recognized Facebook's potential for studying communication behaviors and have investigated the social networking site (Ellison et al., 2007; Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007; Ross et al., 2009; Zywicki & Danowski, 2008) and how it is related to impression formation (Tong et al., 2008; Walther et al., 2008; Zhao et al., 2008). For instance, the physical attractiveness of one's Facebook friends and comments made by those friends were found to be related to ratings of the profile owner's physical and social attractiveness, as well as his or her credibility (Walther et al., 2008). Research has also shown that the more Facebook friends a profile owner had, the more socially attractive he or she was perceived to be (Walther et al., 2008). Interestingly, further results showed that ratings of a profile owner's extraversion were highest with a moderate number of friends (Tong et al., 2008). Fewer studies have examined the profile owners' strategies used to create an image of themselves. The overall conclusion was that one's Facebook identity tends to be highly socially desirable and difficult to attain offline (Zhao et al., 2008).

Self-presentation and impression management are both conscious efforts to control selected behaviors to make a desired impression on a particular audience (e.g., Leary, 1996; Schlenker & Pontari, 2000). Desired impressions, according to Leary (1996), are defined as impressions an individual wants to portray and making a desired impression on an audience is a goal individuals attempt to achieve. However, before engaging in self-presentation tactics, individuals first have to establish what their desired impression is. In this context, the formation of a favorable impression is considered the primary goal.

## Goals and Impressions

It is largely agreed upon that human action is generally goal-directed and that human cognition is shaped by individuals' goal-directed behavior (Berger, 2002). Dillard (1990) defines goals as "future states of affairs which an individual is committed to achieving or maintaining" (p. 43). In general, there are two types of goals: influence goals (also known as primary goals) and secondary goals (Dillard, 1990). The main distinction between the two types of goals is their centrality to the influence attempt and their causal relationship to one another. Primary goals are related to an individual's desire to cause behavior change in another person when engaging in interpersonal influence attempts (Dillard, Segrin, & Harden, 1989). Scholars have identified a variety of types of primary influence goals, including initiating a relationship, obtaining permission, gaining assistance, escalating a relationship, giving assistance, protecting a right, and normative requests (for further discussion see Cody, Canary, & Smith, 1994). However, in the context of this study, the authors propose that the influence goal can also be the desired impression the actor seeks to achieve, given that self-presentation and impression management tactics are the foci of this study. Primary goals, also known as influence goals, will be referred to as "impression goals" in this study to take into account not only the context of the study, but also the notion of impression management as goal-directed behavior.

**Secondary goals.** Secondary goals are ongoing concerns to which individuals attend during persuasive episodes and can be viewed as constraints that shape how the influence attempt is approached and enacted (Dillard, 1990). To be successful, social actors have to manage the constraints related to their impression management behavior (Marwell & Schmitt, 1967). Secondary goals are recurring motivations in an individual's life and include identity goals, interaction goals, personal resource goals, and arousal management goals (Dillard et al., 1989). More precisely, secondary goals "act as a counterforce to [the influence episode] and as a set of dynamics that help to shape planning and message output" (Dillard, 1990, p. 46).

Secondary goals are either self-oriented or are directed toward both interactants (actor as well as target; Dillard et al., 1989). For the purpose of this study, two types of secondary goals have been identified, namely interaction-oriented secondary goals (consisting of interaction and identity goals) and self-oriented secondary goals (consisting of personal resource and arousal management goals). *Interaction goals* are related to the social appropriateness of one's actions. These goals focus on an individual's desire to increase or maintain attention, emotional support, as well as to engage in social comparison (Dillard, 1990). Whereas interaction goals are concerned with the actor as well as the target, *identity goals* are primarily related to an individual's self-concept (Dillard et al., 1989). *Personal resource goals* are the desire to maintain or increase material, physical, mental, and temporal assets (Dillard, 1990). Finally, *arousal management goals* are based on the notion that individuals like to maintain certain boundaries, within which they feel comfortable.

Individuals consider the ways in which they ought to behave to achieve the desired impression. This process is the basis for goal-oriented behavior and fundamental to this line of research (Berger, 2002). Primary goals are directly related to the desired outcome, whereas secondary goals are constraints that shape an individual's plans and action as to how to achieve a particularly goal

(Dillard, 1990; Dillard et al., 1989). It is hypothesized that the self-presentation tactics chosen by Facebook users will be influenced by the kinds of constraints (secondary goals) individuals abide by when attempting to achieve their impression (primary) goal.

H1: Interaction-oriented (identity & interaction) and self-oriented (personal resource & arousal management) secondary goals will be positively related to self-presentation tactics (manipulation, self-promotion, damage control, and role-modeling) used on Facebook.

As mentioned above, goals-planning-action theory links personality traits to goals to help understand why certain individuals would choose various tactics over others (Dillard et al., 2002). Personality traits have been identified as predictors of impression management and self-presentation. Based on literature on impression management, the functions of self-monitoring, Machiavellianism, and affinity-seeking are considered and further explored for their potential relationship to secondary goals and how they ultimately impact self-presentation strategies used on Facebook.

### Personality Traits and Impressions

**Self-monitoring.** Individuals differ in the extent to which they monitor (regulate, control, and observe) the selves they display in interpersonal relationships and social situations (Snyder, 1987). One of the most studied personality traits in association with impression management is self-monitoring (e.g., Fandt & Ferris, 1990; Leone & Corte, 1994; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). Self-monitoring refers to the process whereby individuals regulate their own behavior to showcase traits that are desirable and perceived favorably by others (Snyder, 1974).

Being particularly concerned with the social and situational appropriateness of their behavior, high self-monitors engage in social comparison more frequently than low self-monitors (Snyder, 1987). Social appropriateness is also central to interaction goals, as these goals involve one's desire to manage impressions successfully while avoiding face-threats to either party (Dillard, 1990). Avoiding face-threats to either party involves a greater repertoire of social roles as well as scripts, which is characteristic of high self-monitors (Leone & Corte, 1994; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). High self-monitors are attentive to what others do and are skilled at controlling images of themselves and adapting to social situations (Daly, 2002). Their greater sensitivity to social contexts allows high self-monitors to tailor their images in ways that best serve their (impression) goals (Snyder, 1987). Generally, individuals scoring high on self-monitoring are more likely to manipulate information to present a more desirable image of themselves (Fandt & Ferris, 1990).

Individuals scoring low on self-monitoring are less sensitive to social cues, and therefore are less skilled at assessing appropriate behaviors and self-presentation in various situations. Unlike high self-monitors, individuals scoring low on self-monitoring tend to have a limited repertoire of self-regulatory skills and choose actions and words in accordance with their dispositions (Leary, 1996). Overall findings suggest that individuals who score high on self-monitoring are more skillful in their self-presentation endeavors by being able to assess social situations and adjust their behavior accordingly (e.g., Berscheid, Graziano, Monson, & Dermer, 1976; Dabbs, Evans, Hopper, & Purvis, 1980; Jones & Baumeister, 1976). Therefore, it is hypothesized that high self-monitors are more likely to pay close attention to secondary goals governing the self-presentation tactics they use on Facebook.

H2: Self-monitoring will be positively related to the use of interaction- and self-oriented secondary goals.

However, skilled impression management is not exclusive to high self-monitors. Individuals high in Machiavellianism are also skilled impression managers, although they manage their impressions for different purposes (Ickes, Reidhead, & Patterson, 1986).

**Machiavellianism.** People who are manipulative and willing to fabricate impressions of themselves are known as Machiavellian, or “high Mach” (Christie & Geis, 1970; Leary, 1996). Individuals scoring high in Machiavellianism have a tendency to be calculated and strategic in their actions, and are therefore more likely to cheat or lie to attain their goals. Further, Machiavellians may employ skillful strategies to exploit situations and people for their personal benefit (Grams & Rogers, 1990), as they tend to share the belief that there are no moral values that apply to all situations (Leary, Knight, & Barnes, 1986).

Despite the fact that both high self-monitors and Machiavellians are skilled in presenting themselves in a certain light, their motives are vastly different (Leone & Corte, 1994). High self-monitors are other-oriented and therefore accommodating, whereas individuals scoring high on Machiavellianism tend to be self-oriented and assimilative (Ickes et al., 1986). These Machiavellian traits suggest that high Machs might be more concerned with self-oriented secondary goals (personal resource and arousal management goals) and less concerned with interaction-oriented secondary goals (identity and interaction goals).

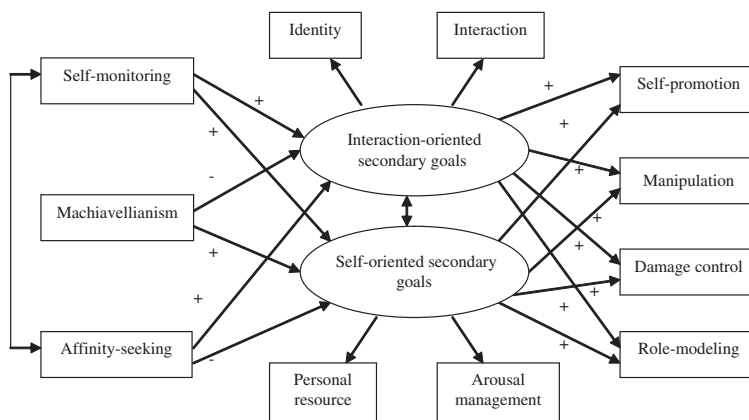
H3: Machiavellianism will be negatively related to interaction-oriented and positively related to self-oriented secondary goals.

**Affinity-seeking.** Regardless of how aware individuals are of the impressions they are making and how skilled they are at creating desired impression by employing various self-presentation tactics, impression management itself can be traced back to individuals’ inherent need to be accepted and included (Leary, 1996). Liking is often the underlying factor when engaging in behaviors that are meant to facilitate acceptance and inclusion. These behaviors are nonverbal and verbal communicative efforts through which individuals try to get others to like them (Daly & Kreiser, 1994). Therefore, the subsequent section will discuss affinity-seeking and its relationship to secondary goals.

Affinity-seeking is based on the notion that individuals want others to like them, which is one of the most basic, and possibly even most defining, characteristics of human beings (Daly & Kreiser, 1994). The concept of affinity seeking is defined as “the active [and strategic] social-communicative process by which individuals attempt to get others to like and to feel positive toward them” (Bell & Daly, 1984, p. 91). Individuals need to be liked by others and therefore use various affinity-seeking strategies to enhance others’ affect towards them (R. B. Rubin, A. M. Rubin, & Martin, 1993). Self-presentation and impression management are conscious attempts to control behaviors to make a desired impression on a particular audience by employing various self-presentation tactics (e.g., Leary, 1996; Schlenker & Pontari, 2000). The ultimate goal of affinity-seeking is to maintain or enhance liking between one person and another (Daly & Kreiser, 1994). In communication research, the desired outcome of persuasion is attitude or behavioral change. When considering affinity-seeking, liking is the desired outcome and persuasion is the way to achieve this goal (Daly & Kreiser, 1994). Furthermore, liking can be achieved by creating a desirable impression of oneself.

Bell and Daly (1984) identified 25 commonly used affinity-seeking strategies, including presenting an interesting self, self-concept confirmation, similarity, and so forth. The application of these strategies can impact significantly how well an individual is liked by others. Therefore, it is hypothesized that as affinity-seekers are primarily concerned with being liked by others, they are more likely to pay attention to interaction-oriented, as opposed to self-oriented secondary goals.

H4: Affinity-seeking will be positively related to the use of interaction-oriented and negatively related to the use of self-oriented secondary goals.



**Figure 1** Proposed Model of Self-Presentation Tactics on Facebook

The purpose of this study is to assess the relationship between personality traits (self-monitoring, Machiavellianism, and affinity-seeking) and interaction- and self-oriented secondary goals and the various self-presentation tactics used on Facebook (see Figure 1). To do so, the following model is proposed and tested using structural equation modeling (SEM).

## Methodology

### Sample and Procedures

Given the exploratory nature of this study, a cross-sectional survey was used (Metts, Sprecher, & Cupach, 1991). The population for the study consisted of individuals who maintain a personal Facebook profile. Participants joined a Facebook group created for the purpose of this study. The group's page contained a brief description of the purpose of the study and a link to the online survey.

Participants were recruited using a snowball sampling method. The researchers contacted their Facebook friends with an invitation to join the group. The invitation asked them to forward the group invitation to their Facebook friends, who, in turn, forwarded it to their friends. The principle investigator's Facebook friends were specifically asked not to complete the survey so as to avoid socially desirable responses. In addition to recruiting participants on Facebook ( $N = 357$ ), an e-mail containing a link to the online survey was sent to individuals subscribed to the Communication Research and Theory Network (CRTNET), which is managed by the National Communication Association (NCA). The remaining 120 participants were recruited using this method for a total of 477 respondents.

The final sample consisted of 477 participants. Out of the 477 participants who completed the survey, 75.6% were female and 23% were male (1.4% of the participants chose not to answer this question). The sample was predominantly Caucasian (88.9%) with less than 2% being African American (1.2%), Asian American (1.8%), Hispanic (0.4%), and Native American (1%). The mean age of the sample was 33.14 years of age ( $SD = 10.81$ ).

### Instruments

The survey consisted of five measures: self-presentation tactics, secondary goals, self-monitoring, Machiavellianism, and affinity-seeking. In addition to the five measures, respondents were also asked to provide basic demographic information along with information related to their Facebook use.



**Self-presentation tactics.** The self-presentation tactics scale was used to assess the various tactics associated with impression management (Lee et al., 1999). The self-presentation tactics scale consists of statements which respondents are asked to rate using a 9-point Likert-type scale. The overall Cronbach's alpha of the 64-item scale was reported as .89 (Lee et al., 1999). Given the limited use of the self-presentation tactics scale in past research, the lack of alternative measures for self-presentation tactics, and varying results derived from factor analyses (Lee et al., 1999; Lewis & Neighbors, 2005), as well as the modifications made to the scale to assess behaviors displayed on Facebook, an exploratory factor analysis was used. This initial unrotated factor analysis ( $n = 477$ ) revealed 11 factors with eigenvalues of at least 1. The scree plot was consulted, suggesting that only four factors should be retained for a second factor analysis. Twenty-four items were eliminated following this process, and a second factor analysis was conducted. The second exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted on the remaining 39 items. The second exploratory factor analysis revealed four factors in the rotated factor structure. The final 4-factor solution contained 38 items and accounted for 63.18% of the variance: *manipulation* accounted for 40.90% of the variance (eigenvalue = 15.54,  $\alpha = .97$ ; see Table 1 for means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alphas for all tactics), *damage control* (eigenvalue = 4.29,  $\alpha = .88$ ) explained 11.30% of the variance, *self-promotion* (eigenvalue = 2.27,  $\alpha = .87$ ) explained 5.99% of the variance, and *role-modeling* (eigenvalue = 1.89,  $\alpha = .88$ ) accounted for 4.99% of the variance in the final solution. Upon examination of the mean for the manipulation dimension ( $M = 1.32$ ), it was concluded that respondents clustered near the lowest possible score, suggesting the occurrence of a floor effect (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). The floor effect likely occurred due to social desirability and transforming the variable using a mean-split did not solve the problem the floor effect presented. Despite efforts to retain the factor (i.e., through data transformation), the manipulation dimension had to be eliminated.

**Table 1** Means, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach's Alphas for all Variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	$\alpha$ (reliability)
Self-Monitoring (averaged, 1–7)	5.15	.67	.87
Machiavellianism (averaged, 1–7)	3.49	.66	.71
Affinity-Seeking (averaged, 1–7)	4.83	.77	.87
Secondary Goals Dimensions (averaged, 1–5)	3.20	.45	.86
Identity Goals (averaged, 1–5)	3.96	.66	.69
Interaction Goals (averaged, 1–5)	3.81	.70	.84
Personal Resource Goals (averaged, 1–5)	2.14	.83	.84
Arousal Management Goals (averaged, 1–5)	2.03	.65	.70
Self-Presentation Tactics			
Manipulation (averaged, 1–9)	1.32	.84	.97
Damage Control (averaged, 1–9)	2.40	1.68	.88
Self-Promotion (averaged, 1–9)	3.00	1.64	.87
Role-Model (averaged, 1–9)	3.81	2.14	.88
Demographic Information			
Gender (Male 0, Female 1)			
Age (18–84)	33.14	10.81	
Facebook Logins per Week (1–300)	18.66	22.98	
Facebook Friends (2–1800)	255.35	261.20	

**Secondary goals.** To assess an individual's concern during impression management episodes, various goals scales (outlined below) were used (Dillard et al., 1989). The goals scale consisted of statements which respondents were asked to rate using a 5-point Likert-type scale. The 25-item measure consisted of six dimensions, including an influence scale, an identity scale, interaction scale, a relational resource scale, a personal resource scale, and an arousal management scale.

Dillard and colleagues (1989) reported Cronbach alphas obtained from two distinct samples ranging from .85 to .87 for the influence scale, .76 to .78 for the identity scale, .71 to .72 for the interaction scale, .71 to .76 for the relational resource scale, .71 to .80 for the personal resource scale, and .75 to .76 for the arousal management scale. These scales were modified to fit the context of the present study. First, all items in the original scales were written in past tense and therefore had to be changed to present tense. Finally, as the secondary goals scale asked respondents to rate a recent influence attempt, the items were adapted to fit the goal of the current study, which was to explore general tendencies of respondents, rather than a specific event.

Given the considerable changes made to the original measure, a pretest was administered to a sample of 83 undergraduate students enrolled in a communication course at a large university in the Midwestern United States. The pretest revealed a Cronbach's alpha of .85, which is similar to the alphas reported by Dillard and colleagues (1989). Upon testing the various dimensions—*influence* (.84), *identity* (.69), *interaction* (.84), *personal resource* (.84), *arousal management* (.70), and *relational resource* (.48)—the relational resource scale consisting of three items was not included in the final data analysis due to its low reliability.

**Self-monitoring.** Self-monitoring was assessed using the revised self-monitoring scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984). Snyder's (1974) original self-monitoring scale has been criticized for lack of construct validity, as it is difficult to determine what the scale as a whole might be measuring (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984; O'Cass, 2000). Unlike the original true/false scale of Snyder (1974), the revised self-monitoring scale is comprised of a 6-point bipolar format, rating from "*certainly always false*" to "*certainly always true*". A Cronbach's alpha of .86 was reported for the entire revised scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984) and the data for this study confirmed the reliability of the scale with a Cronbach's alpha of .87.

**Machiavellianism.** Machiavellianism was assessed using the Mach IV scale (Christie & Geis, 1970). The Mach V scale, which suffers from low internal consistency, problems associated with scoring, an unclear factor structure, as well as high correlations with measures of social desirability (Fehr, Samson, & Paulhus, 1992). The Mach IV scale consists of 20 statements which individuals rate using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from "*strongly agree*" to "*strongly disagree*." Christie and Geis (1970) reported a .79 mean split-half reliability across 9 samples. This study revealed a Cronbach's alpha of .71.

**Affinity-seeking.** Affinity-seeking was assessed using the Affinity-Seeking Instrument (ASI; Bell, Tremblay, & Buerkel-Rothfuss, 1987), rather than the Affinity-Maintenance Scale (Bell, Daly, & Gonzalez, 1987), as the latter focuses on specific strategies, whereas the ASI consists of only two subscales—including affinity-seeking competence and strategic performance. Bell et al. (1987) reported alphas ranging from .85 to .89, which coincides with the Cronbach's alpha of .87 found in this study. The affinity-seeking instrument has internal consistency along with a stable factor structure, as well as concurrent and discriminant validity (Bell et al., 1987). The instrument consists of 13 items and respondents used a 7-point Likert-type scale.

## Overview of Analyses

To test the model proposed in Figure 1, structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized (EQS 6.1, Bentler, 2006). SEM tests all components of the model simultaneously while also modeling measurement



error. Preliminary examination of the data revealed that all of the assumptions of linear regression and SEM (e.g., linearity, multivariate normality, random residuals) were met. Examination of the bivariate correlation matrix also did not reveal any problems with multicollinearity (see Table 2).

## Results

Two tables were created to help describe the data in this sample. Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alphas for all continuous variables. Table 2 presents bivariate correlations between all continuous variables in this study. To test the model, the data were analyzed using a partial structural model. Gender, age, number of Facebook friends, and number of Facebook logins per week were included as exogenous variables and left initially free to affect all other variables. When none of these variables were found to be significantly associated with any of the study variables, they were subsequently removed from the model.

Using EQS, interaction-oriented and self-orientated secondary goals were defined as latent factors. The interaction-oriented secondary goals factor consisted of identity and interaction goals; the path for identity goals also was fixed at 1.0, as it accounted for the most variance in the latent factor. The self-oriented secondary goals factor consisting of personal resource and arousal management goals; the path for personal resource goals was fixed at 1.0, as it accounted for the most variance in the latent factor. Maximum likelihood (ML) estimation method was used, as the multivariate normality assumption was not violated.

Based on the sample size recommendations by Bentler (2006), the present sample size ( $N = 477$ ) is sufficient to test the proposed model including covariates with a 10:1  $N:q$  ratio (where  $q$  represents the number of free parameter estimates)—the recommended ratio is between 5:1 and 10:1 (i.e., 5 to 10 cases for every parameter estimates). The  $N:q$  ratio is considered a good assessment of power because it considers the complexity of the model to be estimated, rather than simply the number of observed/measured variables in the model (Jackson, 2003). Finally, the model was properly overidentified, with 2 known parameters to 9 unknown parameters.

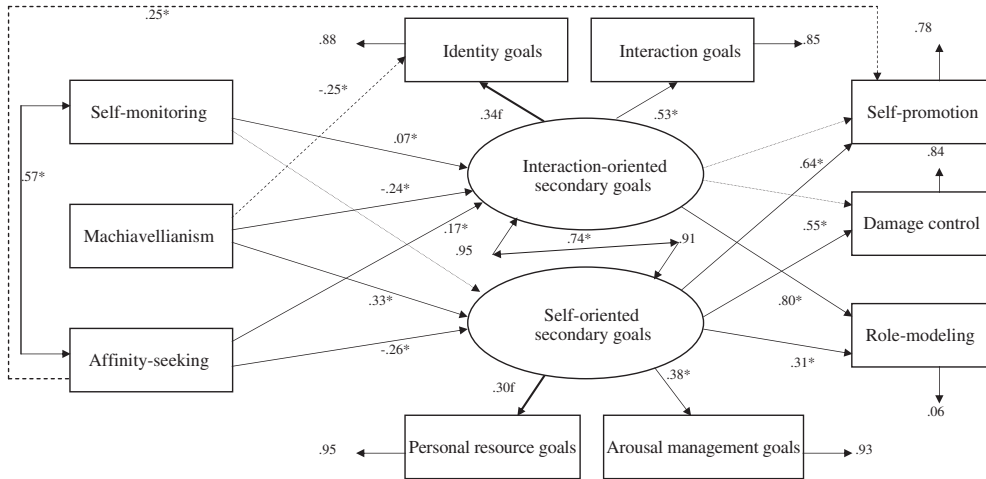
The hypothesized model moderately fit the data,  $\chi^2(22, N = 477) = 131.28, p = .00, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .10$  ( $CI = .08, .12$ ). The path from self-monitoring to self-oriented secondary goals, and the paths from interaction-oriented secondary goals to damage control strategies and self-promotion were not significant (shown in Figure 2 as dotted lines). In addition, the output indicated a direct path between affinity-seeking and self-promotional strategies and yet another direct path from Machiavellianism to identity secondary goals (shown in Figure 2 as dashed lines). In the revised model, the paths between self-monitoring and self-oriented secondary goals, as well as interaction-oriented secondary goals and self-promotion strategies and damage control strategies, were eliminated. Direct paths from Machiavellianism to identity secondary goals and from affinity-seeking to self-promotional strategies used on Facebook were added. The revised model fit the data better than the original model,  $\chi^2(23, N = 477) = 49.80, p = .00, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .05$  ( $CI = .03, .07$ ). In this final model, the change in chi-square from the initial model is significant ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 81.48, p < .001$ ), suggesting a significant improvement in fit. Additionally, the comparative fit index (CFI) is above .90 and the root-mean-squared error approximation (RMSEA) is .05 (with the lower bound of the RMSEA confidence interval close to 0 and the upper bound not above .10), which are all indicative of a good fit. The standardized estimates for the final trimmed model are shown in Figure 2.

Interaction-oriented secondary goals (identity and interaction goals) were positively related to role-modeling strategies used on Facebook, however they were not related to either self-promotional or damage control strategies. On the other hand, self-oriented secondary goals (personal resource

**Table 2** Correlations Among all Continuous Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Gender	—										
2. Age	-.04	—									
3. Facebook Logins per Week	.01	-.08	—								
4. Facebook Friends	-.05	-.27**	.21**	—							
5. Self-Monitoring	-.01	.00	.03	.02	—						
6. Machiavellianism	-.08	-.20**	.16**	.05	-.08	—					
7. Affinity-Seeking	.04	-.04	.00	.11*	.57**	.02	—				
8. Identity Goals	.17**	.19**	-.02	-.02	.13**	-.32**	.07	—			
9. Interaction Goals	.16**	.04	.06	.03	.20**	-.07	.13**	.54**	—		
10. Personal Resource Goals	-.02	-.02	.07	.09*	-.05	.17**	-.08	.05	.18**	—	
11. Arousal Management Goals	-.01	-.01	.07	-.01	-.06	.20**	-.11*	.08	.27**	.48**	—
12. Damage Control	-.10*	.04	.19**	.05	-.03	.10*	-.11*	.04	.13**	.20**	
13. Self-Promotion	-.04	-.11*	.25**	.15**	.03	.22**	.10*	.02	.22**	.20**	
14. Role-Model	.01	.15**	.10*	.12**	.09	-.09*	.08	.36**	.50**	.17**	
	11	12	13	14							
11. Arousal Management Goals	—										
12. Damage Control	.22**	—									
13. Self-Promotion	.17**	.49**	—								
14. Role-Model	.23**	.43**	.43**	—							

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .001$ .



**Figure 2** Final Model of Self-Presentation Tactics on Facebook

**Notes:** In accordance with identification procedures, the pathways between *Interaction-oriented secondary goals* and *Identity goals*, and between *Self-oriented secondary goals* and *Personal resource goals* were fixed, as they accounted for the most variance in the latent factors. All error terms between *Interaction-oriented* and *Self-oriented secondary goals* were allowed to correlate. Standardized parameters estimates are presented in the model; significance levels for these paths are based on the unstandardized estimates as EQS does not provide standard errors to conduct significance tests for standardized estimates. Parameters with a significance of  $p > .05$  were deleted from the final model (and are represented by the dotted lines). \* $p \leq .05$

and arousal management goals) were positively related to self-promotional, damage control, and role-modeling strategies used on Facebook, as predicted (H1). Self-monitoring was positively related to interaction secondary goals, however did not show a relationship with self-oriented secondary goals in the final model (H2). Machiavellianism was negatively related to interaction-oriented secondary goals and positively related to self-oriented secondary goals, as predicted (H3). Finally, affinity-seeking was positively related to interaction-oriented secondary goals and negatively related to self-oriented secondary goals, which also confirmed predictions (H4). The following sections provide a more in-depth interpretation of results, theoretical and practical implications, as well as limitations and directions for future research.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how secondary goals may be adapted from a social influence context to one of impression management. The popular social networking site, Facebook, provided an intriguing setting for this investigation due to the site's many options for users' self-presentation in online context. The personality traits of self-monitoring, Machiavellianism, and affinity-seeking were included to assess their role in the process of impression management. The original model proposed that these personality traits would influence secondary goals (interaction-oriented and self-oriented), which would then impact which self-presentation tactics were chosen by Facebook users. Although this proposed model was only a moderate fit to the data, dropping three paths and adding two others

resulted in a revised model that fit the data quite well. The following section discusses these results and their implications, as well as suggestions for the further development of this promising line of research.

The first hypothesis was that interaction-oriented secondary goals (identity goals & interaction goals) and self-oriented secondary goals (personal resource & arousal management goals) would be positively related to self-promotion, damage control, and role-modeling tactics on Facebook. This hypothesis was partially supported. Although in the initial model the paths between self-oriented secondary goals and the tactics of self-promotion and damage control were small but significant, the model fit better when these paths were dropped, suggesting that although the statistical power was sufficiently strong to demonstrate significant relationships between these variables, the relationships did not represent the “big picture” of the data very well. On the other hand, the relationship between interaction-oriented secondary goals and role-modeling tactics was supported by a strong path coefficient (.80). Thus, Facebook users are strongly driven to utilize role-modeling tactics out of concern for their self-concept (identity goals) or the social appropriateness of their communication (interaction goals), but these two goals are not strongly related to the use of self-promotion or damage control tactics on Facebook.

Interaction-oriented secondary goals were significantly and positively related to the use of role-modeling tactics used on Facebook. Facebook users who score high on either self-monitoring or affinity-seeking, or score low on Machiavellianism, employ role-modeling tactics on Facebook. Although a significant, positive relationship was found between self-monitoring and both self-oriented and interaction-oriented secondary goals, the path between self-monitoring and interaction-oriented secondary goals was very small (less than .01 in the initial model), and the data fit the model better when that path was deleted altogether, suggesting little relationship between the two variables; one’s propensity for self-monitoring is not related to a concern for interaction-related goals on Facebook. In other words, individuals who are concerned with showcasing desirable and favorable behaviors (Snyder, 1974), namely high self-monitors, are likely to show greater concern for interaction-oriented secondary goals (H2). Subsequently, they are likely to use role-modeling tactics, which allow them to showcase desirable traits and behaviors and reach a larger audience, given the context of Facebook.

Facebook users who have a strong desire to be liked by others, high affinity-seekers (Daly & Kreiser, 1994), showed more concern for interaction-oriented secondary goals (H4) and were likely to use role-modeling tactics. High affinity-seekers are known to use various strategies to enhance positive affect toward them (R. B. Rubin et al., 1993), and using role-modeling tactics used on Facebook is likely to achieve this secondary goal. By using tactics that are seen as positive and worth replicating (role-modeling tactics), individuals are likely to be seen in a positive light, which can increase others’ affinity toward them.

Interestingly, individuals who are manipulative and tend to exploit situations and people for their personal benefit, also known as high Machiavellians (Grams & Rogers, 1990), do not show concern for interaction secondary goals (H3), and therefore are not likely to employ role-modeling tactics on Facebook. A possible explanation for this finding could be that individuals scoring high in Machiavellianism have a tendency to be assimilative and self-oriented (Ickes et al., 1986), generally showing little concern for others, and may therefore not be interested in serving as a role models.

The first hypothesis further predicted that the self-oriented secondary goals (identity goals & interaction goals) would be positively related to self-promotion, damage control, and role-modeling tactics on Facebook. This hypothesis was supported by the data, as individuals who are more concerned with themselves use various self-presentation tactics on Facebook. The relationships between self-oriented secondary goals and self-promotion tactics, damage control tactics, and role-modeling tactics were supported by strong path coefficients (ranging from .31 to .64 in the final model). Thus, Facebook users were driven to utilize all of these tactics out of concern for their personal resources or their personal boundaries (meeting their arousal management goals) of their communication. The notion

that individuals like to maintain certain boundaries in which they feel comfortable (arousal management goals), and the fact that they are concerned with maintaining and increasing assets (physical, material, temporal, and mental; Dillard, 1990), provides explanation for why a wider variety of self-presentation tactics are used on Facebook. Because these individuals are highly concerned with personal goals, they are likely to choose whichever self-presentational tactic they deem as most effective—possibly even trying out various tactics to determine which one works best in any given situation.

In addition, the study revealed that self-oriented secondary goals were significantly and positively related to all three self-presentation tactics used on Facebook (self-promotion, damage control, and role-modeling). Facebook users who scored high on self-monitoring did not show concern for self-oriented secondary goals (H2), likely because of their greater sensitivity to social cues (Snyder, 1987), which shows greater concern for the interaction, as opposed to the self. Machiavellians, on the other hand, showed greater concern for themselves (self-oriented secondary goals), as opposed to for the interaction (H3), likely due to their self-oriented and manipulative streak (Christie & Geis, 1970; Ickes et al., 1986). Affinity-seeking was found to have a negative relationship with self-oriented goals (H4) due to commonly used strategies employed by high affinity-seekers, including presenting a desirable self and seeking confirmation of their self-concept (Bell & Daly, 1984). In other words, high affinity-seekers are more concerned with being liked by others and are therefore more concerned with eliciting positive affect (R. B. Rubin et al., 1993).

Overall, personality traits predicted concerns for different types of secondary goals (self-oriented and interaction-oriented), which in turn predicted the use of specific self-presentation tactics. Even though the notion of secondary goals was originally proposed and applied in the context of persuasive attempts (Dillard et al., 1989), the concept of secondary goals appears to be useful in the study of other communicative contexts, such as impression management. Although impression management is not a single persuasive attempt, as conceptualized in the persuasion literature, other authors have pointed out the persuasive nature of self-presentation and impression management (Buss & Briggs, 1984). At first sight, secondary goals may appear to not only be related to impression management, but may reflect self-presentational efforts during persuasive episodes. This study serves as evidence for the usefulness of exploring secondary goals in the study of impression management, as well as for the fact that rather than tapping into the same dimensions, secondary goals aid in efforts of self-presentation.

Studying impression management in computer-mediated environments, such as the social networking site Facebook, has become increasingly important, as the use of such sites continues to increase exponentially. The findings of this study aid in creating supportive online communication environments and determining which types of individuals are mainly communicating online for self-centered, less supportive. As the use of computer-mediated communication continues to increase, the presence of individuals who are not only aware of their actions and their effects, but are also dedicated to creating and maintaining positive online communities, will continue to grow in significance.

### Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the study's findings and implications, there were some limitations to consider when interpreting these conclusions. The limitations of this study concern the research design, measurement, and sample. Cross-sectional survey methods are limited in that data collection occurs at one point in time, rather than over a longer period of time as in longitudinal studies (Metts et al., 1991). Content analysis of the actual pages of Facebook users over a period of time would provide an interesting avenue to address the limitation of this cross-sectional design and extend the results of this conceptual model.

Another limitation associated with this study is related to the measurements used to assess secondary goals and self-presentation tactics. Upon testing the reliabilities of the various dimensions

of the secondary goals measure, one of the dimensions—relational resource goals—had to be deleted to maintain the overall reliability of the scale. This outcome could be related to the modifications that were made to the measure to make it applicable to the context of Facebook. The limited application of the self-presentation tactics scale in previous studies and the modifications applied to the measure required a factor analysis that diverged somewhat from previous factor analyses. Because all necessary measures were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of results, the manipulation dimension had to be omitted from the final analyses due to a floor effect, which also speaks to the limited use of the self-presentation tactics scale.

Another limitation of the study is the use of self-report data. Rather than just asking participants about their self-presentation tactics on Facebook, coding and evaluating Facebook profiles would add more predictive and explanatory value to the research. Similar to the work of Walther and colleagues (2008), coding and evaluating Facebook profiles could include exploring profile pictures, amount and type of information provided by the individual, as well as frequency and types of disclosures by others on the public Facebook “wall.”

Future researchers interested in self-presentation on Facebook should also consider studying the effect of audience segmentation and how individuals deal with problems of multiple audiences having access to their profile and being witnesses to their activity on Facebook, such as friends versus family members (e.g., Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2006, 2007; Stutzman, 2006). When parents add their children as their Facebook friends, for instance, the child may experience uncertainty related to how he or she is perceived by their parents based on the information and the interactions occurring on Facebook. Self-presentation on Facebook provides promising ground for future research, especially as the social networking site continues to grow in popularity.

## Conclusion

The information gained from this research serves as evidence to the utility of persuasion theory to self-presentation and impression management. The conceptual model proposed in this study indicates that persuasion may be central to self-presentation, and despite the fact that scholars have discussed the persuasiveness of self-presentation in their writings (e.g., Leary, 1996), little empirical evidence can be found to support this relationship. This study attempted to bridge this gap and could serve to encourage investigation of self-presentation and impression management further from a persuasion perspective.

Given the rapid growth of new technologies and the growing complexity and flexibility of social networking sites, it is crucial for scholars to build upon previously-established theoretical foundations. For instance, the goals-planning-action model, which suggests that formulating goals leads to planning, which in turn leads to actions intended to accomplish goals (Dillard, 1990), is a heuristic and rich framework for investigating online impression management and can be further explored in this context. Even though technologies continuously change and alter the ways in which individuals communicate, traditional theoretical approaches can still aid in the exploration of new communication contexts. In the case of Facebook, research exploring various aspects of the social networking site is only now beginning to surface (Tong et al., 2008; Walther et al., 2008; Zhao et al., 2008).

Facebook has gained popularity in recent years and has become the preferred mode of communication for many people. This study provides evidence that impression management is an integral part of communication occurring on Facebook and that Facebook users ought to be more aware of their own, as well as others', self-presentation tactics. First and foremost, Facebook is a semipublic platform, meaning that individuals' information is public, however users have to option of determining who can



see the information. Given the nature of Facebook, this choice can have serious effects on individuals' private, as well as professional, lives. Understanding that one's Facebook friends have self-presentational goals when communicating on the social networking site, users should be more conscious of their friends' activities and the ways in which they choose to respond, as these choices can have an indirect effect on how they themselves are viewed by others.

Even Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg has recognized the strategic communication taking place on the social networking site and recently launched the introduction of a new profile format in December of 2010. The new profile format is geared to aid individuals in creating profiles that align with how they want their friends to see them; the page layout was reorganized, enabling users to create more desirable pages for themselves and emphasize similarities and shared interests among users (Fager, 2010). As changes are being made to Facebook that are structured around the persuasive nature of impression management, researchers studying self-presentation in these new environments should perhaps shift their foci as well. The overall goal of this study was to shed light on the intrapersonal and social processes that shape self-presentation on Facebook, and thus provides a first step toward a theory of self-presentation that takes both cognitive and social components into consideration.

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