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# **How Do Youth Present Themselves on Social Media? Online Self-Presentation Strategies and Demographic Attributes among Saudi Youth**

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**Abstract:**

The purpose of this study is to assess the self-presentation strategies that Saudi youth utilizes on social media and whether these strategies are associated with human characteristics. By using the Revised Self-Presentation Scale (RSPS), an electronic survey was designed to measure the self-representation strategies, which Saudi youth use mainly to present themselves on social media platforms. A total of 712 undergraduate students from various Saudi regional universities completed the survey questionnaire. The results show that the most frequently used strategy among the self-presentation strategies is '*exemplification*' (role modeling), followed by '*ingratiation*', then '*self-promotion*'. The other strategies, '*supplication*' and '*intimidation*', were rarely used. There are statistically significant differences between the averages of practicing '*exemplification*' strategy between male and female respondents. There was also statistically significant differences between the averages of practicing '*exemplification*' strategy between the respondents from different regions in Saudi Arabia.

**Keywords:** Saudi Arabia, Saudi youth, Self-presentation, Self-presentation strategies, Social media

## Introduction

The concept of self-presentation has been used to evoke images of social competitiveness and deception, with people exaggeratedly seeking social position and acceptance while hiding their actual identities (Statista Research Department, 2022). Various studies on self-representation have endorsed this limit view (Schlenker & Wowra, 2003, p. 871); however, over the last quarter century, research has supported the idea that self-presentation is a pervasive factor of social activity and could be regarded as the goal-directed activity of controlling information to influence the other impressions formed by an audience about oneself. This idea does not insist that people should be consciously aware of the goal used to build this representation. Hence, the activity does not have to be deceptive (Schlenker & Wowra, 2003, p. 871).

Studies focus on Middle Eastern users' online self-presentation and identity formation, focusing on the complex relationship between cultural norms, gender roles, and social media engagement. Ahmed et al. (2022) examine UAE users' self-presentation strategies and digital identity enactment. Stanger et al. (2017) examine youth social media use, suggesting a wider study of digital identities among younger generations. Mishra and Basu (2014) examine how young Indian Muslim women balance family honor, cultural norms, and online expression in their visual self-presentation on social media. Basabain et al. (2021) examine Saudi female athletes' self-presentation and athlete branding, offering a unique perspective on personal branding and cultural constraints. Alruwaili (2017) examines female students in the U.S. and how social media helps diasporic women negotiate self-identity and community. Using Consumer Culture Theory, Balelah (2020) examines how social media affects Saudi women's modesty in mixed-gender spaces and public social media accounts. This demonstrates a strong interest in understanding online identity construction in a traditional and culturally rich region. As described in the hyper-personal model (Walther & Whitty, 2021, Walther, 1996), social media and other computer-mediated communication allow people to conceal undesirable characteristics and extensively display desirable characteristics to the public more than in face-to-face communication.

The users of digital environments create multiple identities through digital appropriation and manipulation of text, images, icons, and hyperlinks (Nguyen & Alexander, 1996). These “*digital selves*” are related to one another or to the identities of real life (Ahmed, 2022; Cheung 2000; Turkle 1995; Wynn and Katz 1997). The communication technologies help them to convey their image in idealistic ways through moderating and optimizing their digital content carefully by selecting or editing it before its exposure. In addition, social media platforms offer a number of features for ideal self-presentation, such as providing interactive contact with the masses (Ahmed, 2022), which guarantees giving them immediate impressions of their virtual appearance, and thus enables them to modify this appearance in a positive manner (Hjetland and Finserås, 2022).

Self-presentation could be identified as “*an individual's process in managing others' impressions in everyday life and their abilities in changing people's views according to how they want to be seen, perceived, and evaluated by others*” (Terry, Sweeny & Shepperd, 2007). In addition, self-representation is a combination of processes or activities in which people represent themselves, and this representing of self can be divided into three subgroups: (1) depicting oneself to oneself, (2) depicting oneself to others, and (3) evaluating oneself according to one's own standards (Thagard & Wood, 2015, p.2-3). However, the model of self-representation we will be focusing on in this study is the second one: depicting oneself to others.

The rapid development of social media has significantly influenced the progress of youth's social life and enable them to become social changers and effective participants in their community (Ahmed, 2022; Stanger et al., 2017). Social networking sites provide a variety of privileges to people who perform to build desired characteristics and provide selected information about themselves in order to manage feedback and other impressions (Alruwaili, 2017; Dominick, 1990). Self-presentation on social network sites offers features that are easily modified to users, thus allowing them to present themselves selectively (Bargh, McKenna & Fitzsimmons, 2002). Online self-penetration on the most of the social media platforms among Saudis reached 93% of the total population (Al-Arabiya, 2016).



Saudi people are globally among the most active users of social media sites (General Authority for Statistics, 2019). Statistically, Saudi population reaches 35 Million people, 67.02% of them are youths in the age group under 35 years old (Statista Research Department, 2022). WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and recently TikTok were on the top-list of the most used social media applications between both genders of young Saudi individuals. They use social network sites to communicate with their families and friends, spend their free time, promote their social images, and to follow the latest news and information (General Authority for Statistics, 2019). Based on the previous literature about youth online self-presentation, this paper focuses mainly on investigating the self-representation strategies used by the sample and the relationship between these strategies, their demographical aspects, and the way they use social media. The limitation of studies that deeply address Saudi youth participation in social media outlets was the main reason for conducting this study to add new information about Saudi Arabian social changes.

## Literature Review

### Self-presentation

Goffman's Dramaturgy Theory (1959) argues that the primary motivator in self-presentation is to present an idealized image of oneself that aligns with cultural expectations and norms. To successfully create the desired impression on an audience, individuals need to strategically control the information they disclose (Balelah, 2020; Leary and Kowalski, 1990). According to Goffman (1959)' dramaturgical model, the main purpose of self-presentation is to present quixotic image of a person to create preferred impression on an audience. In addition, Leary (1996) defined self-presentation as *"the process by which people convey to others that they are a certain kind of person or possess certain characteristics"* (p. 17). According to Leary (1996), self-presentation occurs consciously and unconsciously to manage other individual' impressions during social interactions. Self-presentation is an important process of self-impression management when the presenter is planning to achieve specific goals (Mishra & Basu, 2014) and images by starting and improving relationships with others (Leary, 1996).

Dominick (1999) also defined self-presentation as *"the process in which individuals attempt to control the impressions others have of them"* (p. 647). Goffman (1959) in his book utilized a dramatic metaphor to clarify how individuals present themselves in social interactions. Goffman (1959) assumed that people act as *"performers"* who present specific impressions of themselves to their *"audience"* by producing particular personal characteristics and cues, and concealing others (Stanger et al., 2017). The performer aims to deliver an impression to the audience that is consistent with their desired goals (Goffman, 1959). Additionally, self-presentation theory and Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical approach are emerged and developed before the public online era and the objectives were to explain self-presentation behaviors in face-to-face communication. Goffman's (1959) approach has been developed and applied to online communication and other interactional situations (Dominick, 1999; Papacharissi, 2002; Kane, 2008).

### Self-presentation and social media

On social media platforms, feedback often comes in the form of likes, comments, and other indicators of approval or disapproval, such as having the contents shared by others (e.g., "retweets") or losing followers on social media platforms. In order to elicit more favorable responses, people engage in strategic self-presentation (Ahmed, 2022), such as editing or deleting content that does not receive the desired number of likes (Nesi, 2018). Self-presentation on social media, which is motivated by getting positive feedback, refers to as feedback-seeking or status-seeking, with negative outcomes such as depressive symptoms (Nesi & Prinstein, 2015), lower self-satisfaction, and lower well-being (Jarman et al., 2021).

Feedback seeking also influences some people to present themselves on social media in a way that does not correspond with their offline personality or physical appearance (Ahmed, 2022). In-authentic self-presentation on social media has been associated with elevated levels of social anxiety and lower self-esteem (Twomey & O'Reilly, 2017). To present an ideal self-image for achieving desired rewards, many self-presentation strategies including ingratiation, intimidation, self-promotion, exemplification, and supplication were commonly used (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Those strategies that have been found for face-to-face communication have been recently developed and used for online self-impression management in social media (Papacharissi, 2002; Kane, 2008).

### Self-Presentation Strategies



Jones and Pittman (1982) defined strategic self-presentation, as *"those features of behavior affected by power augmentation motives designed to elicit or shape others' attributions of the actor's dispositions"* (p. 233). In addition, Jones and Pittman (1982) defined self-presentation strategies as the assertive tactics used by individuals to create and manage a desired image /invoke a desired response from others. They categorized these strategies into 5 common strategies which are used in public interaction by presenters in order to achieve desired social goals. The strategic types are ingratiation, intimidation, self-promotion, exemplification, and supplication (Jones & Pittman, 1982).

The original purpose of Jones and Pittman's (1982) strategic approaches were mainly to explain face-to-face communication; however, they have been utilized and developed to describe calculated self-presentation in online communication and other communication zones.

Dominick (1999) has defined Jones and Pittman's (1982) five strategies as follows:

- 1) **Ingratiation:** This strategy means that a person tries to please others by showing humor, familiar and pleasant things (Huang, 2014, p.417). A person using this strategy has a goal of being liked by others. Some common characteristics of ingratiation are saying positive things about others or saying mildly negative things about yourself, statements of modesty, familiarity, and humor (Jones & Pittman, 1982, p. 648).
- 2) **Self-promotion:** The goal of this strategy is to be perceived as skilled and qualified. Common characteristics include claims about abilities, accomplishments, performance, and qualifications (Jones & Pittman, 1982, p. 648). People utilize this strategy in order to *"present themselves as competent and self-sufficient, and earn others' respect"* (Boz & Guan, 2017, p.26-27). On social media platforms, this strategy is demonstrated primarily in the personal information and personal identifiers that are selected to present people as *'positive'*. Motives and tendencies of self-promotion vary in different cultures (Heine et al., 1999). For instance, modesty is more highly valued than self-promotion in East Asian compared to Western cultures (Hofstede, 1980). Saudi culture could be characterized as more similar to East Asian culture and hence, self-promotion is less among the sample.
- 3) **Intimidation:** Persons using this strategy have power as their goal. Typical characteristics are threats, statements of anger, and potential unpleasantness (Jones & Pittman, 1982, p.648). Intimidation can be defined as *"a collection of behaviors aimed at presenting oneself as intimidating and dangerous"* (Boz & Guan, 2017, p.27). Through intimidation strategy, individuals attempt to acquire social power by presenting themselves as a threat to transform others' behavior in a preferred direction, rather than being perceived as a good person by others (Boz & Guan, 2017, p.27).
- 4) **Exemplification:** The goal of this strategy is to be perceived as morally superior or possessing high moral standards. Characteristics include ideological commitment or militancy for a cause, self-sacrifice, and self-discipline (Jones & Pittman, 1982, p. 648). Exemplification strategy includes behaviors that primarily involve the presentation of moral qualities, where a person aims to present an image of high morals and an adaptation of these moral standards (Ahmed, 2022). This strategy includes behaviors that involve ideological attachment, expression signaling, self-sacrifice for a sacred purpose, religious beliefs, political views, expressions of charity and philanthropy, or elements involving ambition and discipline (Boz and Guan, 2017, p.26).  
More importantly, *"regardless of the extent to which they follow their self-set social standards in their individual lives, social networking sites users consume sanctioned norms and present them as signals to others of their own moral code"* (Boz & Guan, 2017, p.26). Cultural identity and audience characteristics are two crucial factors that shape the presentation of idealized values (Hofstede, 1980; Maltz & Borker, 1982). According to this explanation, exemplification as a strategy that focus on moral norms could be one of the most used strategies among users in Saudi Arabia, as a Muslim country.
- 5) **Supplication:** The goal of this strategy is to present oneself as weak or helpless to elicit assistance so that others come to aid (Cheng, Pan & Ni, 2019). Characteristics of this self-presentational approach involve entreaties for help and self-deprecation (Jones & Pittman, 1982, p. 648). Unlike other self-presentation strategies that rely on promoting and presenting a positive image of the self to achieve a desired impression, supplication is the only strategy that utilizes self-need and weakness to achieve a desirable self-image. Supplication is a way to present *"one's dependence to solicit help ... by stressing his inability to fend for himself or emphasizing his dependence of others"* (Jones & Pittman, 1982, p. 247). This strategy is *"less desirable tactic due to its association with the perception of people powerless, weakness and obedient during self-presentation"* (Schlenker, 1980) and therefore it receives less attention by researchers than other strategies.



Paulhus et al. (2013) stated that the match between self-presentation tactics and context could lead to positive consequences. From the view of the social norms, people have a responsibility to help those who cannot help themselves; supplication self-presentation could still be worked in the online context (Cheng, Pan & Ni, 2019, p.8). However, supplication strategy is unlikely to be more effective than other strategies. Actually, using supplication tactics often have negative consequences such as decreased self-esteem and supplicants more likely to suffer from mental issues, isolation, and sadness (Gove, Hughes, & Geerkin, 1980). Supplicants try to persuade other people of their weakness and needs by exaggerating their lack of competence or extending appreciation to the other assistance that could help them to attain their goals (Jones & Pittman, 1982).

According to numerous studies, ingratiation appears as one of the most used self-presentation strategies by social media users (Chu & Choi, 2010, Cheng, Pan & Ni, 2019; Huang, 2014). While other studies found that "self-promotion" (i.e., competence strategy) was one of the most used strategies (Jung, Youn & McClung, 2007; Chu & Choi, 2010; Boz & Guan, 2017). Other research suggests that supplication and intimidation are the less used strategies (Bolino & Turnley, 2001). Unfortunately, previous studies did not find address the Saudi Arabian youth usages of self-presentation strategies on social media platforms; thus, we proposed the first research question:

### *Explication strategy*

Kacmar and Tucker (2016) studied the effect of regulatory focus on the impression management in the workplace. Results revealed that prevention-focused individuals use exemplification impression management tactics as a specific type defensive self-presentation tactics; they behave in a way to be perceived as moral and ethical. Besides, promotion focused individuals use supplication and exemplification tactics as a specific type of assertive self-presentation tactics (Mishra & Basu, 2014). Kacmar and Tucker (2016) also tested the moderating effect of supervisor 's behavioral integrity on the relationship between regulatory focus and impression management.

**RQ1: What are the most used self-presentation strategies by Saudi youth on social media sites?**

### **3. Self-Representation and demographical variables**

Demographical variables (including age, gender, family socioeconomic status, and type of study) have been found related to self-presentation (e.g., Chen, 2010; Hargittai, 2007; Lewis, Kaufman & Christakis, 2008; Michikyan et al., 2014); therefore, they were critical variables to be examined in this study. Gender norms affect the self-disclosure and expression of these strategies in online spaces (Haferkamp, et al., 2012; Lee et al., 1999; Manago et al., 2008; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Strano, 2008). For example, males show higher intimidation and females show higher self-promotion, ingratiation and supplication (Boz & Guan, 2017, p.28). Studies show differences in the use of strategies between genders. For example, in the study of Boz and Guan (2017), males were more likely than females to adopt ingratiation, self-promotion and supplication.

The participants reported their gender, region of residence, which type of study they attended, year of study, economic level and GPA. The economic level was assessed using the subjective socioeconomic status (SES), which was measured through following question: "How well off do you consider your own family's economic status to be compared to others?" The response categories ranged from 1 ("Very low") to 10 ("Very high"). SES was recorded to a tripartite variable of low SES (scores 1–4), medium SES (5–7), and high SES (8–10) (Hjetland, et. al, 2022).

The student's GPA was also a considered as a variable which was recorded as quadrilateral of: Acceptable (2 < 2.75) good (2.75 < 3.75), very good (3.75 < 4.5), excellent (4.5 <= 5). The type of study was taken into account (Humanities and Social studies, Science and Engineering, Management, Health).

The demographical variables are:

- Gender
- Region
- Year of study
- SES
- GPA
- Type of study



Based on prior studies, we expected to find the relationship between demographical variables and the self-presentation strategies applied by the participants. Therefore, we proposed the second research question:

**RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between self-presentation strategies used by Saudi youth and their demographical variables?**

## Research Methods

### Participants

An online survey was used to collect data from Saudi undergraduate students in Saudi governmental and private universities. A Snowball sampling survey approach was used to recruit participants for this study. This method was used to reach Saudi undergraduate students ( $N = 715$ ) in Saudi colleges and universities who were actively using social media. First, professors and lecturers from different cities were kindly asked to distribute the link of the survey among their students. Then, the students who consented to the study were asked to distribute it among their classmates. This combination of instructors' recruitment and snowball sampling was used to increase the sample size of the study and reach active social media users.

### Measures

#### Self-Presentation Scale

For self-presentation strategies, a modified Revised Self-Presentation Scale (RSPS) was used. Participants completed a self-presentation scale revised from Lee et al. (1999) that was modified by Boz and Guan (2017) to capture adolescent strategy usage on social media (See Appendix). However, some items were modified and rephrased to more cultural-appropriate and acceptable.

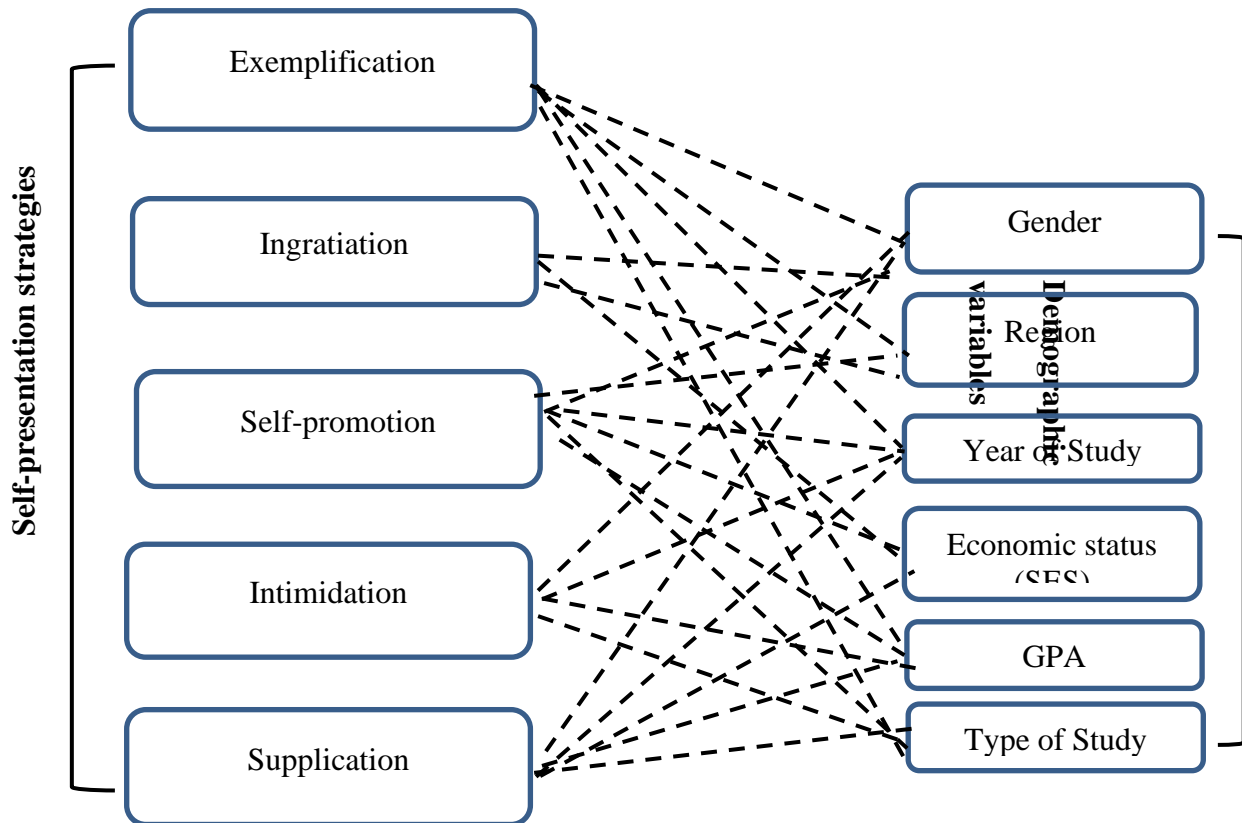


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework



## Results

### *Sample Distribution*

The sample consisted of N=715 Saudi undergraduates from all the main 5 regions around the Saudi Arabia and from more than 40 public and private universities. The survey was sent to students in more than 40 universities using personal relations with students and staff members. The process of data collection took about two weeks during November 2022. The respondents reported their gender, age, year of study, GPA, region of residence and their subjective social-economic status.

The survey had a much higher female participation rate, with 70.1% of respondents being female and 29.9% male. A gradual increase in representation from the 1st year (11.6%) to the 5th year (26.2%) suggests a higher retention or availability of older students in the sample. This may indicate that higher-year students in the sampled institutions are more engaged or interested in the survey topics that are more students in higher years. Over half of the respondents (51%) are from the Humanities and Social Sciences, indicating a strong preference for these fields. Science (23.6%), Health and Medicine (13.1%), and Management (12.2%) follow, showing a diverse academic interest but a clear preference for Humanities and Social Sciences. The GPA distribution shows that 48.7% of students rate their performance as Excellent and 35.4% as Very good, indicating a high academic achievement sample. A geographic concentration of respondents is seen in the Central region (55%), followed by the Southern region (18.3%). The majority of respondents (57.7%) are middle-class, with 30.9% being high-class. This demographic profile highlights the female dominance, strong representation of humanities and social sciences, high academic achievement, and concentration in the Central region with middle to high SES.



Table 1. Demographic information

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	Male	214	29.9%
	Female	501	70.1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Year of Study</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> year	83	11.6%
	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	123	17.2%
	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	147	20.6%
	4 <sup>th</sup> year	175	24.5%
	5 <sup>th</sup> year	187	26.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Type of Study</b>	Humanities and Social Management	365	51%
	Science	87	12.2%
	Health and Medicine	169	23.6%
		94	13.1%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>GPA</b>	Excellent	348	48.7%
	Very good	253	35.4%
	Good	102	14.3%
	Satisfactory	12	1.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Region</b>	Central	393	55%
	Eastern	70	9.8%
	Western	69	9.7%
	Southern	131	18.3%
	Northern	52	7.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>SES</b>	Low	83	11.6%
	Middle	411	57.7%
	High	221	30.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>100%</b>

Regarding the number of followers, the majority of the sample (51%) reported that they have less than (100) followers in their primary account, and only a small percentage (1.8%) reported having more than (10k) followers. The majority of the sample (85%) reported that they do go anonymous in their social media accounts either by using a fake name (17.5%), initials, or part of their names (67.3%), while only 15% reported that they have social media accounts with their real names. About the time spent on the usage of social media, only 15.2% reported using social media for less than 1 hour, while half of the sample 50% reported using it for 2-5 hours and 40% reported using a high level of usage time of more than 5 hours.



Table 2. Descriptive statistics

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
<b>Number of followers</b>	Less than 100 followers	369	%51.6
	100-500 followers	232	%32.4
	600- 1000 followers	72	%10.1
	2000 – 10k followers	29	%4.1
	More than 10k	13	%1.8
	<b>Total</b>		<b>715</b>
<b>Name of Account</b>	Use real name	109	%15.2
	Part of name	481	%67.3
	Fake name	125	%17.5
	<b>Total</b>		<b>715</b>
<b>Time of usage</b>	Low	63	%8.8
	Medium	364	%50.9
	High	288	%40.3
	<b>Total</b>		<b>715</b>

Social media usage was primarily negative for 49.7% of respondents. This suggests that nearly half of the survey population views their social media use as negative, which could include excessive use or harmful content. 28% of respondents report positive social usage, including beneficial social interactions and community building, indicating that many participants value their social media interactions. 22.4% of participants report positive non-social usage, such as educational, informational, or personal growth. This distribution shows a complex relationship between users and their social media habits, with a strong lean toward negative perceptions of social media impact despite its positive social and non-social potentials.



Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Pattern of Usage	Positive Social	200	28%
	Positive Non-social	160	22.4%
	Negative	355	49.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q1:** *What are the most used self-presentation strategies by Saudi youth on social media?*

In Table 4, exemplification is the most popular self-presentation strategy on social media among Saudi youth, with a mean score of 3.31 and a medium response rate. This implies that Saudi youth prefer to present themselves positively, demonstrating their moral and ethical qualities to impress. Gratitude and self-promotion follow with mean scores of 2.74 and 2.55, respectively, and medium response rates. These strategies involve flattery and highlighting one's accomplishments to gain favor. Saudi youth are less likely to appear needy or dominant and forceful, with lower mean scores (2.33 and 1.85) and low response rates. This pattern favors positive self-presentation over vulnerability or aggression.

**Table 4.** Self-presentatin strategies used by the sample

Self-presentation Strategy	Mean	Std. Deviation	Response Rate	Rank
<b>Exemplification</b>	3.31	1.044	Medium	1
<b>Ingratiation</b>	2.74	1.121	Medium	2
<b>Self-promotion</b>	2.55	1.112	Medium	3
<b>Supplication</b>	2.33	1.123	Low	4
<b>Intimidation</b>	1.85	1.206	Low	5

**Q2:** *Is there a significant relationship between self-presentation strategies used by Saudi youth and their demographical aspects?*

**Gender**

To find the differences between self-representation strategies used by the sample and the gender, the independent (Independent sample T-test) was utilized for two independent groups to indicate the differences on the total score for the domains and for all items according to the gender variable. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the results of the (T-test) for differences in the responses of the sample towards the use of self-representation strategies on social media, according to the gender variable, and according to the value of the (t) test and the levels of significance, we find the following:

There are statistically significant differences at the level of 0.05 between the averages of the sample about the use of exemplification strategy on social media platforms, based on the gender variable. In addition, by comparing the averages of the two gender categories, the study finds that the differences came in favor of the male category, which averaged (3.4252) at the expense of the female category, which averaged (3.2640), which means that males use



exemplification strategy on social media more than females. There are no statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) among the averages of the sample about the reality of using (self-promotion strategy - ingratiation strategy - intimidation strategy - supplication strategy) on social media platforms, according to the gender variable.

**Table 5.** T-test of the relationship between self-presentation strategies and gender

Dependent Variables		Mean	Std. Deviation	T-Test	.Sig
<b>Exemplification</b>	Male	3.4252	1.08105	<b>1.895</b>	<b>0.058</b>
	Female	3.2640	1.02497		
<b>Self-promotion</b>	Male	2.5570	1.17646	<b>0.137</b>	<b>0.891</b>
	Female	2.5441	1.08439		
<b>Ingratiation</b>	Male	2.8272	1.19742	<b>1.302</b>	<b>0.194</b>
	Female	2.7033	1.08558		
<b>Intimidation</b>	Male	1.9369	1.23884	<b>1.219</b>	<b>0.223</b>
	Female	1.8169	1.19154		
<b>Supplication</b>	Male	2.4171	1.14082	<b>1.344</b>	<b>0.179</b>
	Female	2.2939	1.11403		

*Year of Study*

To find out the differences in the responses of the sample about the self-representation strategies they use and the year of study variable, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. The one-way ANOVA results in Table 6 show no statistically significant differences between the participants' self-presentation strategies and their years of study. This is supported by the high significance (Sig.) values assigned to each self-presentation strategy: exemplification (0.423), self-promotion (0.920), ingratiation (0.737), intimidation (0.926), and supplication (0.239). These values exceed the commonly accepted threshold for statistical significance ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the variation in self-presentation strategies across academic years is not statistically significant. In other words, the year of study has no significant impact on how Saudi youth present themselves on social media, implying that their self-presentation strategies are likely influenced by factors other than academic progression. This finding suggests that Saudi youth may use similar self-presentation strategies regardless of their higher education level.

**Table 1.** One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for differences between self-representation strategies and the years of study variable.

Dependent Variables		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Exemplification</b>	Between Groups	4.232	4	1.058	.971	0.423
	Within Groups	773.873	710	1.090		
	Total	778.105	714			
<b>Self-promotion</b>	Between Groups	1.157	4	0.289	0.233	0.920
	Within Groups	881.627	710	1.242		
	Total	882.785	714			



Variable	Group	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Ingratiation</b>	Between Groups	2.513	4	0.628	0.499	0.737
	Within Groups	894.431	710	1.260		
	Total	896.944	714			
<b>Intimidation</b>	Between Groups	1.303	4	0.326	0.223	0.926
	Within Groups	1037.642	710	1.461		
	Total	1038.944	714			
<b>Supplication</b>	Between Groups	6.948	4	1.737	1.381	0.239
	Within Groups	893.075	710	1.258		
	Total	900.023	714			

### Type of Study

To find out the differences in the responses of the sample about the reality of their use of self-representation strategies they use and the field of study variable, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was used. The one-way ANOVA results in Table 7 show no statistically significant differences in self-presentation strategies among Saudi youth based on their field of study. This is demonstrated by the significance (Sig.) values for exemplification (0.356), self-promotion (0.261), ingratiation (0.145), intimidation (0.702), and supplication (0.467), all of which exceed the traditional threshold of 0.05 to determine statistical significance. These findings indicate that Saudi youths' choice of self-presentation strategy on social media is unaffected by their academic discipline, whether humanities and social sciences, management, science, or health and medicine. The lack of significant differences suggests a consistent approach to self-presentation across different fields of study.

Furthermore, ingratiation (0.145) comes closest to statistical significance among these variables, implying that, while not statistically significant, there may be a slight tendency to use ingratiation as a self-presentation strategy to vary more by field of study than the other strategies. Because none of the F-values reached statistical significance, it is clear that this type of study has no significant impact on Saudi youth's self-presentation strategies on social media. This consistency across disciplines indicates a shared cultural or generational approach to social media use transcending academic specialization.

**Table 7.** One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for differences between self-representation strategies and type of study variable.

Dependent Variables		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Exemplification</b>	Between Groups	3.537	3	1.179	1.082	0.356
	Within Groups	774.569	711	1.089		
	Total	778.105	714			
<b>Self-promotion</b>	Between Groups	4.952	3	1.651	1.337	0.261
	Within Groups	877.833	711	1.235		
	Total	882.785	714			
<b>Ingratiation</b>	Between Groups	6.770	3	2.257	1.803	0.145
	Within Groups	890.174	711	1.252		
	Total					



		Total	896.944	714			
<b>Intimidation</b>	Between Groups	2.066	3	.689	0.472	0.702	
	Within Groups	1036.878	711	1.458			
	Total	1038.944	714				
<b>Supplication</b>	Between Groups	3.215	3	1.072	0.850	0.467	
	Within Groups	896.808	711	1.261			
	Total	900.023	714				

### GPA

To find out the differences in the responses of the sample about the reality of their use of self-representation strategies they use and the GPA variable, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the results of the analysis of variance test (ANOVA) for the differences in the responses of the sample about the strategy of self-representation they use and the GPA average variable, and according to the value of (q) and levels of significance, we find the following:

There are no statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) between the average responses of the sample about self-representation strategies (self-promotion - intimidation - supplication) they use and the GPA variable.

**Table 8.** One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for differences between self-representation strategies and GPA

Dependent Variables		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Exemplification</b>	Between Groups	14.926	3	4.975	4.635	0.003
	Within Groups	763.179	711	1.073		
	Total	778.105	714			
<b>Self-promotion</b>	Between Groups	7.710	3	2.570	2.088	0.100
	Within Groups	875.074	711	1.231		
	Total	882.785	714			
<b>Ingratiation</b>	Between Groups	10.002	3	3.334	2.673	0.046
	Within Groups	886.942	711	1.247		
	Total	896.944	714			
<b>Intimidation</b>	Between Groups	3.202	3	1.067	.733	0.533
	Within Groups	1035.742	711	1.457		
	Total	1038.944	714			
<b>Supplication</b>	Between Groups	5.416	3	1.805	1.435	0.231
	Within Groups	894.608	711	1.258		
	Total	900.023	714			

There are statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) between the average responses of the sample about self-representation strategies (exemplification - ingratiation) that they use on social media, and the GPA variable. To determine the differences in the strategies for each of the GPA categories, the LSD test was used, and the results were as follows:

### Exemplification

According to the (LSD) test (**Error! Reference source not found.**), the differences in exemplification strategy came in favor of the GPA category (good), (very good), and (excellent) at the expense of the category (acceptable). This



indicates that the sample with averages of good or more use exemplification strategy on social media more than those with an acceptable GPA does.

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**Table 2.** LSD test of the relation between exemplification strategy and GPA

Categories	N	Mean	Satisfactory	Good	Very good	Excellent
<b>Satisfactory</b>	12	2.2917				
<b>Good</b>	102	3.4044	-*1.11275			
<b>Very good</b>	253	3.3765	-*1.08482	0.02793		
<b>Excellent</b>	348	3.2737	-*0.98204	0.13070	0.10278	

**Ingratiation**

According to LSD test (10), these differences in ingratiation strategy came in favor of the GPA category (good), (very good), and (excellent) at the expense of the category (acceptable). This indicates that the sample with averages of good or higher GPA use ingratiation strategy on social media more than students with a satisfied GPA.

**Table 3.** LSD of the relation between ingratiation strategy and GPA

Categories	N	Mean	Satisfactory	Good	Very good	Excellent
<b>Satisfactory</b>	12	1.9167				
<b>Good</b>	102	2.7630	-0.84637*			
<b>Very good</b>	253	2.8156	-0.89891*	-0.05253		
<b>Excellent</b>	348	2.7075	-0.79080*	0.05557	0.10810	

**Region**

To find out the differences in the responses of the sample about the reality of their use of self-representation strategies that they use social media and the region variable, the one-way analysis of variance test (ANOVA) was used. The one-way ANOVA results in Table 11 show statistically significant differences in self-presentation strategies among Saudi youth based on regional background. The significance values for exemplification (0.018), self-promotion (0.003), ingratiation (<0.001), intimidation (<0.001), and supplication (0.002) are all lower than the conventional significance threshold of 0.05. These findings suggest that the region in which Saudi youth live significantly affects how they present themselves on social media. In particular, strategies such as ingratiation and intimidation differ the most across regions, as evidenced by their extremely low significance values, implying distinct regional cultures or norms that influence the preference for these strategies. The significant F-values associated with these strategies (ingratiation: 6.856, intimidation: 5.588) highlight the variation in self-presentation tactics across geographical areas in Saudi Arabia.

These findings emphasize the importance of considering regional context when studying social media behavior in Saudi Arabia. The differences in self-presentation strategies suggest that Saudi youth from different regions may have distinct cultural or social influences that shape their online identities. For example, the greater importance of ingratiation and intimidation strategies may reflect regional differences in social hierarchy, values, or



the emphasis on community and social status. This regional variation in self-presentation strategies highlights the complexities of social media behavior, demonstrating that it reflects individual choices and larger societal and cultural dynamics.

**Table 4.** One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for differences between self-presentation strategies and region

Dependent Variables		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Exemplification</b>	Between Groups	12.985	4	3.246	3.012	0.018
	Within Groups	765.121	710	1.078		
	Total	778.105	714			
<b>Self-promotion</b>	Between Groups	19.775	4	4.944	4.067	0.003
	Within Groups	863.010	710	1.216		
	Total	882.785	714			
<b>Ingratiation</b>	Between Groups	33.354	4	8.339	6.856	0.000
	Within Groups	863.590	710	1.216		
	Total	896.944	714			
<b>Intimidation</b>	Between Groups	31.711	4	7.928	5.588	0.000
	Within Groups	1007.234	710	1.419		
	Total	1038.944	714			
<b>Supplication</b>	Between Groups	21.742	4	5.435	4.394	0.002
	Within Groups	878.281	710	1.237		
	Total	900.023	714			

**LSD tests for self-presentation strategies with regions**

The tests for self-presentation strategies across regions thoroughly examine how regional differences influence how Saudi youth present themselves on social media. The analysis of five strategies—exemplification, self-promotion, ingratiation, intimidation, and supplication—reveals significant differences that reflect the nuanced interaction of cultural, social, and possibly economic factors unique to each region.

For example, in the strategy where individuals strive to present themselves as role models or morally upright, the Southern region had the highest mean score (3.5573), significantly higher than the Central region. This suggests that youth in the Southern region place a greater emphasis on demonstrating positive moral values and achievements. The negative differences with the Central region, particularly the significant difference of \*-0.34288, point to a strong regional influence on the importance of exemplification as a self-presentation strategy.

There is also a noticeable regional variation in self-promotion, where people highlight their accomplishments and capabilities. The Southern region has the highest mean (2.8840), significantly higher than the Central region, with a difference of \*-0.44682. This could imply that young people in the Southern region are more likely to highlight their accomplishments and skills. This strategy is motivated by cultural or social reasons to stand out or excel among their peers.



Ingratiation, which aims to make oneself more likable or agreeable through flattery or conformity, differed significantly in the Southern region, with a mean score of 3.1504. The significant difference of  $*-0.55611$  from the Central region indicates a regional preference for social harmony and a desire to be perceived as agreeable or likable. This strategy's popularity in the Southern region may reflect cultural values that value social relationships and community cohesion.

Intimidation, a less common strategy that involves displaying dominance or superiority to influence others, exhibited significant regional differences. The Southern region again had the highest mean score (2.2214), with a significant difference of  $*-0.52735$  from the Central region. This suggests a regional variation in the acceptance or application of power dynamics in social presentation, which could reflect differences in social hierarchies or the value placed on authority and strength.

Supplication, in which people present themselves as needy or deserving of sympathy to elicit help or empathy, revealed significant differences, especially in the Southern region, which had the highest mean score (2.6584). The difference of  $*-0.45165$  from the Central region indicates a regional tendency to display vulnerability to connect with others or gain support, which may be related to regional norms regarding community support and empathy.

Overall, the LSD tests revealed significant regional differences in self-presentation strategies among Saudi youth on social media. Compared to the Central region, the Southern region consistently uses exemplification, self-promotion, ingratiation, intimidation, and supplication more frequently. These differences are likely due to deeper cultural, social, and economic differences between regions, influencing how people navigate and construct their online identities. Understanding these regional differences provides valuable insights into the complex landscape of social media behavior and how young Saudis interact with and through these platforms.

**Table 12.** LSD tests for self-presentation strategies with regions

Strategies	Region	N	Mean	Difference with Central	Difference with Eastern	Difference with Western	Difference with Southern
<b>Exemplification</b>	Central	393	3.2144	-	-	-	-
	Eastern	70	3.4429	-0.22848	-	-	-
	Western	69	3.2645	-0.05012	0.17836	-	-
	Southern	131	3.5573	*-0.34288	-0.11439	-0.29276	-
	Northern	52	3.3221	-0.10774	0.12074	-0.05762	0.23514
<b>Self-promotion</b>	Central	393	2.4372	-	-	-	-
	Eastern	70	2.5314	-0.09428	-	-	-
	Western	69	2.5246	-0.08749	0.00679	-	-
	Southern	131	2.8840	*-0.44682	-0.35254	-0.35933	-
	Northern	52	2.5923	-0.15516	-0.06088	-0.06767	0.29166
<b>Ingratiation</b>	Central	393	2.5943	-	-	-	-
	Eastern	70	2.6284	-0.03415	-	-	-
	Western	69	2.7583	-0.16399	-0.12983	-	-
	Southern	131	3.1504	*-0.55611	*-0.52195	*-0.39212	-
	Northern	52	2.9387	*-0.34438	*-0.31023	-0.18039	0.21173
<b>Intimidation</b>	Central	393	1.6940	-	-	-	-
	Eastern	70	1.7679	-0.07384	-	-	-
	Western	69	1.9855	-0.29149	-0.21765	-	-
	Southern	131	2.2214	*-0.52735	*-0.45352	-0.23587	-
	Northern	52	2.0625	*-0.36848	-0.29464	-0.07699	0.15887
<b>Supplication</b>	Central	393	2.2067	-	-	-	-



Eastern	70	2.2500	-0.04326	-	-	-
Western	69	2.4493	-0.24253	-0.19928	-	-
Southern	131	2.6584	*-0.45165	*-0.40840	-0.20912	-
Northern	52	2.3942	-0.18749	-0.14423	0.05504	0.26417

### Socio-Economic Status (SES)

To find out the differences between the responses of the sample about the reality of their use of self-representation strategies that they use on social media, and the socio-economic status variable, the one-way analysis of variance test (ANOVA) was used. The ANOVA test results, which examine the relationship between self-presentation strategies and socioeconomic status (SES) among Saudi youth, show a statistically significant difference in exemplification strategies based on SES, with a significance level of 0.048. This suggests that socioeconomic status influences how people present themselves on social media, potentially reflecting differences in values, aspirations, or social expectations between SES groups. Other self-presentation strategies, such as self-promotion, ingratiation, intimidation, and supplication, showed no statistically significant differences (p-values 0.625, 0.491, 0.333, and 0.769, respectively). This indicates that individual' socioeconomic backgrounds, implying that, aside from exemplification, self-presentation strategy on social media is relatively consistent across different SES groups, do not significantly affect these strategies.

**Table 13.** ANOVA test of the relation between the self-presentation strategies and socio-economic status

Dependent Variables		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Exemplification</b>	Between Groups	6.607	2	3.303	3.049	0.048
	Within Groups	771.499	712	1.084		
	Total	778.105	714			
<b>Self-promotion</b>	Between Groups	1.165	2	0.582	0.470	0.625
	Within Groups	881.620	712	1.238		
	Total	882.785	714			
<b>Ingratiation</b>	Between Groups	1.791	2	0.896	.712	0.491
	Within Groups	895.152	712	1.257		
	Total	896.944	714			
<b>Intimidation</b>	Between Groups	3.208	2	1.604	1.103	0.333
	Within Groups	1035.736	712	1.455		
	Total	1038.944	714			
<b>Supplication</b>	Between Groups	.665	2	.332	0.263	0.769
	Within Groups	899.358	712	1.263		
	Total	900.023	714			



There are significant differences in how people from different socioeconomic backgrounds use exemplification on social media, according to the LSD test. High SES individuals have a higher mean exemplification score (3.4536) than low ( $*0.15844$ ) and middle ( $*0.21396$ ) SES groups. This suggests that those with higher economic status use social media to demonstrate positive traits, possibly due to greater resources or social expectations.

**Table 14.** LSD test of the relation between exemplification strategy and economic status

Exemplification	N	Mean	Low	Middle	High
Low	83	3.2952			
Middle	411	3.2397	0.05552		
High	221	3.4536	$*0.15844$	$*0.21396$	

### Discussion

This research sought to answer the questions: What are the self-presentation strategies most used by the sample on social networking sites? Is there a statistically significant relationship between the self-presentation strategies used by the sample and their demographic aspects? For this purpose, control variables were also included such as region, in which the students live, their GPA, the type of study, the year of study, and the gender of the students, The Socio-Economic Status. The results related to the first question, which deals with the most prominent self-presentation strategies most used by the sample on social networking sites, showed that most of the sample (49.7%) reported that they were negative in their pattern of use, while (22.4%) were positive, but not social, and (28 %) Only they were positive and social on social media.

Based on the Self-Presentation Scale (RSPS) from Lee et al. (1999) and modified by Boz and Guan (2017), a new strategy used on social media and the strategies most used by the sample included are self-representation and the goal is exemplification, followed by ingratiation (flattery), then self-promotion (with a moderate response rate), then supplication and intimidation (with low response rate). It appears that the results of this study are consistent with Ahmed (2022) and Balelah (2020) who studied self-presentation strategies used in face-to-face communication, where. The strategies are still used in social media, and these methods have certainly helped develop impression management opportunities for followers and influencers and have allowed them greater degrees of freedom to form mental images of them in the minds of their audiences.

Therefore, the first observation is to confirm the delivery of the strategies. The self-used by Saudi university students who represent the study sample is the same as that used in face-to-face communication presented by Goffman, Jones and Pittman, and it is clear that the strategies of self-promotion and ingratiation are the two basic strategies which are used on social media. While the rest of the strategies (supplication, exemplification, and intimidation) were rarely used in the study.

The results related to the second question, which deals with the nature of the statistically significant relationship between the self-presentation strategies used by the sample and their demographic aspects, also showed that there are statistically significant differences between the averages of the sample regarding the use of exemplification on social media platforms according to the gender variable. By comparing the averages of the two categories between genders, the study concluded that the differences were in favor of the male category at the expense of the female category. That is, young Saudi males use the role model (exemplification) strategy when using social media more than females.

There are no statistically significant differences between the averages of the sample's self-representation strategies and the variable of year of study, nor the field of study variable. This result can be explained and discussed by the fact that self-presentation occurs consciously and unconsciously to manage the impressions of other individuals during social interactions, and therefore there is no room for the majors and fields of study in which students' study to intersect with their personal desire to represent, present, and present themselves. There are no statistically significant differences between the averages of the sample's responses regarding the self-representation strategies (self-



enhancement - intimidation - supplication) they use and the cumulative GPA variable. While there are statistically significant differences between the average responses of the sample regarding the self-representation strategies, which is ingratiation (acting flattery) that they use on social media, and the cumulative GPA variable. This result can be explained and discussed by saying that some people with high GPAs may be more inclined than others to want to show excessive praise, and to enrich and satisfy themselves because they feel distinguished from others with low GPAs.

There are statistically significant differences between the averages of the sample's responses regarding the self-representation strategies they and the region variable. This result can be explained and discussed in light of the mutual influence between the urban physical structure and the culture of its residents, in the traditional urban environments in Saudi cities and regions, where they are exposed to the nature of the population and their influence by that particular urban environment, in the various aspects of their lives, as well as their mutual role in influencing it and changing its features to adapt. With their different and changing requirements and needs in the era of the technological and digital revolution in which they live within that urban framework. There are no statistically significant differences between the averages of the sample's responses regarding the self-representation strategies (self-promotion, ingratiation, intimidation, and supplication) they use on social media and the economic level variable. While there are statistically significant differences between the average responses of the sample regarding the self-representation, strategies they use on social media, and the economic level.

The detailed analysis of Saudi youth social media self-presentation strategies shows how cultural, regional, and socioeconomic factors shape online identity construction. Youth prefer exemplification and self-promotion strategies, indicating a desire to present themselves in a positive and achievement-oriented light. Regional differences suggest that cultural and social norms are key to these preferences. Southerners and those with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to exemplify, reflecting regional cultures and economic resources on self-presentation. Although ingratiation, intimidation, and supplication did not differ across socioeconomic groups, the findings highlight the complex interaction between individual, social, and economic factors in shaping Saudi youth's social media identities.

## Conclusion

Since the self-concept is not formed outside the environment of social interaction, personal identity is formed and continues during interaction with others. For a specific self-concept to persist in an individual, he must try to present himself in a way that makes others behave with him in a way that supports this concept and strengthens his sense of self. Likewise, the impressions an individual forms and creates among others affect how others perceive, evaluate, and deal with them, in addition to their views of themselves, so they act in ways that create specific impressions in the eyes of others. Self-presentation is key to creating virtual relationships, interactions, and prosocial relationships. To build positive images, Saudi university students selectively provide information about themselves and carefully provide it in response to their followers' comments. The goal of self-presentation is to make the audience of followers accept the images and self-presentations presented by these applicants. To achieve this goal, they must present themselves according to their social roles and ensure that the audience of followers evaluates their images positively. Therefore, individuals must adjust their public image according to the audience's expectations.

## Limitation

Despite providing valuable insights, this study has limitations that indicate areas for future research. The cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw causal conclusions about the relationship between self-presentation strategies and socioeconomic or regional variables. Furthermore, the study's reliance on self-reported measures may introduce response biases, and its focus on Saudi youth may fail to capture the full diversity of social media use patterns across different cultural or age demographics. Future research could benefit from longitudinal designs that track changes over time, the use of qualitative methods to better understand the motivations behind self-presentation strategies and the inclusion of a broader range of demographics and cultures. Investigating the impact of technological advancements and the changing landscape of social media platforms may also provide more insights into the dynamics of online self-representation.

The study also has some limitations that are embodied in the lack of Arab and national Saudi studies. By following the previous research gaps, future study constitutes a basis for understanding the research problem and emphasizing the importance of the research topic. However, in this research, only a few previous studies were



available on the research topic, so the researcher has to spend some time providing national background studies on self-presentation. These limitations lead us to intensify future studies and research on the issue of representation and self-presentation strategies for young people according to different variables and educational stages than those addressed in the current study.

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