

Social media we use

The social media in this research refers to the internet based applications which allow us to create, share, exchange information in the virtual community.

As we try to make impressions on others in face to face interaction, social media provides a platform for us to present ourselves online, not only by our online chatting, but also by the texts that we select to post in our online profiles. The pictures we choose, the links we share, and the words we type, can reflect who we are or who we want to be.

- ◆ What kind of impression we want to make through our online practices?
- ◆ How would our online friends feel when they look at our online profiles?



The Know-It-Alls The Passives The Dictators The "Yes" People The "No" People The Grippers

Pictures, Symbols

Compare with other kinds of online texts, pictures are quicker to catch attention. Also, different symbols are included in these pictures. We can use these symbols to express who we are and form the impression of others through their online pictures, similarly, others could do the same thing. While do we understand the symbols in the same way?

15 Chinese social media users are invited to show the researcher their online profiles, and explain why they select these pictures to post online? Then they show researcher the pictures that their online friends' post online, while explaining the impressions they have of the friends', they also express their attitude toward friends' online pictures, and give the example pictures to prove why they think in this way.

The Expectation and Reality



All the participants expect to make positive impression through the pictures they post online. They want to be considered as beautiful, humour, friendly, knowledgeable, mature, strong purchase power, and wide range of social relations. The symbols that they use to create these impression include selfies, friends they have, places they have been, food they have eaten, activities they have joined, and goods they have purchased. Participants explain their online picture posting motivation as for fun, share happiness, update status for family and 'close friends'.

Whereas, the meaning of these symbols is greatly changed while being used by participants to identify their friends' online pictures. Selfies are considered as the most annoying kind of online pictures, then followed by pictures of food, restaurant, and show the logos of the goods, people who post these kinds of pictures are being considered as shallow, show off and out of vanity. "The trick of making good online impression is do not post too often and only share with your 'close friends' " suggested by one of the participants.

