Online Self-Representation Of Malaysian Muslim Female Students: A Facebook Case Study

Meriem Narimane Noumeur
Batna 1 University, Algeria
m.narimen.noumeur@gmail.com

Syed Arabi Idid
International Islamic University Malaysia
sarabidid@iium.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Social networking websites play an important role in our lives. These websites provide several services that allow users to enjoy their time in cyberspace by providing them with space to represent their personalities in the virtual world. Using Goffman's dramaturgical theory, this study aims to identify the way Malaysian women represent themselves, by depicting and managing their virtual identities through Facebook while exploring the way they construct their identities and realize their online presence. A total of 133 female students from a Malaysian university were involved in the study on their self-representations (online and offline); highlighting the way they presented their identities online and suggesting whether their offline influenced the virtual identities. The findings showed a significant effect of the offline feelings on online self-representation and revealed a strong relationship between offline and online presence. It indicated the difficulty of separation between virtual and real identity.

Keywords: *social networking websites, Facebook, self-representation, students*

INTRODUCTION

Individuals are expressive in managing their individuality. It has been stated that 'online spaces are framed by a kind of compulsory individuality, where the "freedom" to express oneself becomes a requirement, which then allows identities to be managed and regulated' (Willett, 2008: 56). This requirement plays an important role in helping individuals represent themselves and make them feel comfortable with their shaped identity in the online spaces in general, and in the social networking websites, in particular. These websites are becoming more effective as communication tools and consequently are affecting social lives. This perspective on individualized identity is based on the study of profiles and home pages

of each member, in addition, to representation on texts, images, and videos that are created by them. Furthermore, social network sites profiles invite comments from members and other people that are identified as Friends within the network (Boyd, 2007, p. 123).

Findings have shown that SNSs, such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, and YouTube, are most popular among Internet users; there were about 1,180 billion daily active users of Facebook and around 313 million Monthly Active Users on Twitter all over the world (Socialbakers, 2016). Muslims are also active SNSs users.

Muslim-majority countries have witnessed a rapid diffusion and adoption of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube in recent times. In Malaysia, there were more than 10.9 million Facebook users in 2016. This number is expected to reach 13.6 million in 2019. Facebook is among the top five most visited websites, and Malaysians over the age of 15 spent approximately one-third of their time on social-networking services (ComScore, 2010). Facebook has quickly become a natural part of everyday life and their users go online for different purposes, such as creating an online self-image; representing themselves and managing specific impressions when they connect with others or post-narrative texts, photos or links and many other ways which Facebook provide for their users to express themselves online.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Facebook is part of the everyday human discourse. The presentation of identity through it is highly salient to many people as it represents an open social interaction and presentation of self (Delise, 2014). It is a leading website of social networking worldwide. It provides several services that allow its users to enjoy their time in the cyberspace. Those services particularly provide space for the users to interact with one another, in such a way that makes them feel comfortable to represent their personalities in the virtual world.

Facebook users can present themselves through the information they provide. When they initially create their accounts, Facebook users are asked to provide some personal information such as age, sex, and political view. Once they have registered, the users can express themselves either by posting pictures, videos, and links or by writing a narrative text to describe their ideas and views. They are able to give comments on topics and events on the cyberspace. These opportunities help users create their images with plenty of choices. Facebook users acknowledge having provided some personal information upon registration.

One can characterize online self-presentation in several ways. For instance, Donath (2007) focused on the signalling of status while Liu (2007) considered personal tastes through the profile. Counts and Stecher (2009), on the other hand, focused on the conveyance of the self in personality terms, based on a taxonomy developed by William James, that the latter categorized the self-concept into the material (i.e., physical), social (i.e., social and occupational roles) and spiritual self (i.e., perceived abilities).

It is normal for females of all ages to use Facebook. Many of them do so for various reasons, to communicate through e-mail or instant messaging (Ridings & Gefen, 2004). The use of social networking websites by Muslim women has been currently discussed in the virtual space, especially with the considerable number of Muslim internet users. It has been perceived that Muslim women are affected by the constraints in society and by stereotypes that are difficult to change even if this change is sought after only in the virtual space where

the Muslim women have the opportunity to manage their self-representation the way they want. In his study, Karimi (2014) concluded that new media offer decent promises for Muslim women to construct their identities of their own in the public sphere. Muslim women have gradually risen from their traditional roles of being just mothers and housewives confined mainly to the private spheres of their families to become influential players in public life. According to Joiner (2008), female students like to socialize online and they tend to use Facebook frequently as a tool for social connection (Sharifah et al., 2000, p. 96). Through this website, female students seek to establish a virtual identity and manage a specific impression about themselves.

In Malaysia where the majority are Muslims, the use of Facebook has dramatically increased especially among female university students aged between 18-24 years. Many students in Malaysian universities sign up for a Facebook account Thus, this study highlights the use of Facebook by Malaysian female students, explores the way they construct their identities and examines how the offline affects their online self-representation.

An understanding at how Malaysian Muslim women express their presentation will serve as an early study for a greater appreciation of the problem of self-presentation on offline and online among women in the other Muslim societies.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims at understanding the way Malaysian Muslim female students depict their virtual identities and manage them through Facebook. Other specific objectives include the following:

- To assess Muslim Malaysian female students' virtual identities through Facebook.
- To examine whether offline self-representations of the Malaysian Muslim female students significantly correlate with their online self-representation.
- To identify the effect of offline feelings and relationships on online self-representation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the above objectives, the following research questions were developed**:**

- How do Malaysian Muslim female students represent themselves through Facebook?
- To what extent are Malaysian Muslim female students' online identities correlated with their offline?
- Do Malaysian Muslim female students' offline feelings and relationships affect their online self- representation through Facebook?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1959, Erving Goffman proposed the social Theory of Self-Presentation. Goffman's theory focuses on the context of human behaviour based on a viewer's impression of the action or behaviour. He studied the roles individuals play, how those roles continually evolve, and the types of masks people wear (Lupinetti, 2015). Goffman's work becomes very important for self-representation online which has become progressively richer since the early days

of computer-mediated communication (CMC). Ellison et al. (2006) find that the greater control over self-presentational behaviour in CMC allows individuals to manage their online interactions more strategically, and in some cases, participants described how they or others create profiles that reflected an ideal as opposed to actual self, "Many people describe themselves the way they *want* [to be] … their ideal selves" (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006, p. 426).

Delise (2014) indicated that Facebook is a location for presentation which guides behaviour as users may be acting in certain ways in Facebook 'appropriateness', but not necessarily for specific audience members. Gunn and Thumim (2012) mentioned that the collective creation of our persona to a degree makes it vulnerable to other people's portrayals of self. At the same time online socializing provides opportunities to experiment and play with the practice of self-representation, Valkenburg, Schouten and Peter (2005) found that both men and women often use gender stereotyping in their presentation of self-online.

Eakin (2015) in his study on self and self-representation online and offline, discusses the boundaries between virtual and real identity by stating that while the Internet has brought ease and speed to the way expression is made of ourselves, and invents some new forms illustrating how to use it, performing identity work online is really not radically different from doing so offline. For this reason, self-representation on the Internet cannot be properly understood in isolation from the offline world. Waltorp (2015) notes that new technologies are often used to both follow and challenge social norms. On the other hand Yang and Brown (2016) notice that in the digital era, self-presentation is no longer confined to face-to-face encounters, The findings of their study show that self-presentation is a dynamic process and they indicated that Thinking carefully about one's own online self-presentation is related to more reflection upon the self; although self-reflection is related to lower contemporaneous self-concept clarity, it boosts the presenter's self-esteem in the long run. At the same time, however, practitioners should be aware of the possibilities of youth using social networking sites as an escape from self-esteem struggles (Yang & Brown, 2016, p. 413).

These studies agree that social networking websites provide a good environment to communicate and present identity in a virtual context. They focus on the way users represent themselves and the opportunities of practising self-representation online, however, the majority of studies take into consideration the effect of social environment on online representations of the self.

The majority of studies gave importance to the gender differences of practising self-presentation online more than presenting self-representation of the women in the exclusion of men. The study of Haferkamp et al. (2012) found that women used more portrait photographs for their profile pictures, while men use a full body shot that included the presence of other people. On the other hand, Alpizar et al. (2012) in their study state that men and women seek and sustain an attraction to characteristics of the opposite gender. Women tend to maintain a preference for men who portray the power and the availability of resources. Both men and women select the information they portray online, they do it in different ways, women are more likely to use nicknames, pseudonym, or false name online than men (Armentor-Cota, 2011). Sharifah et al. (2011) mention that female students largely used Facebook for these following motives; social interaction, passing time, entertainment, companionship, and communication while, passing time, entertainment, and communication were among the motivational factors that contribute more toward students' Facebook addiction. The

study of Shafie, Nayan and Osman (2012) indicates that female Malay users are more self-conscious and more comfortable navigating their online presence by partially hiding their offline identities. They are more comfortable displaying their solitary pictures when they are not using their real names while Malay males are less inhibitive by preferring to use their real names as their usernames and use their own pictures as their profile pictures (Shafie, Nayan & Osman, 2012, p. 138).

How do Muslim women then portray their identity offline? Studies on the importance of woman's self-presentation through social media are very few and the researchers who present studies in this field are focused on Muslim women and network MWN as a general subject. A study by Bastani (2001) examines the pattern of online interaction among Muslim women and the kinds of support they provide and sustain online. She mentions that MWN's members use the network to express themselves and to reveal their national origins and identities as Muslim women. Members take advantage of the increase in networked technology to strengthen their ties. In this way, they consider themselves less isolated and more connected to the rest of the Muslim community.

The current study focuses on a small community of university students by examining their use of Facebook in portraying their identity and presenting themselves via the medium. This study would be able to help us to understand how Muslim females use social media networks in expressing themselves by using an approach along with Goffman's work on self-presentation in everyday life. Goffman distinguished between front stages and back stages. In everyday life, people spend most of their lives on the front stage, where they deliver the lines and perform but sometimes people retreat to the back stages of life to be their real selves. They can also practice and prepare to return to the front stage (SparkNotes Editors, 2006). In an online environment, the idea of the front stage and the back stage have new directions. Rettberg (2017) categorized self-representation through technology into three categories written, visual and quantitative self-representation. The front stage on Facebook can be our interactions on our walls or in our friend's timeline or in other groups or Facebook pages; the back stage can be our offline selves behind the screen or can be also our interactions in the back stage where we can interact with others in representing and expressing our selves.

In this study, the representations of one's self are different depending on the interaction. Therefore, this study used a theoretical approach that the process of the self on Facebook can be categorized into two main categories: the **"I"** an individual self, who is isolated and introverted paying no heed to the environment posed to it. It is an "I" by nature that is self-surviving, progressing and creating new views about the world. The "I" can be known by those close to oneself like blood relatives and close friends that allow the individual to express her individuality.

On the contrary, the outer part of the "I" is the YOU, when people not familiar to "I" start to mingle. That YOU is always sceptical and do not trust people at the initial stage, hence it tries to portray a picture depending on the situation which the consciousness thinks suitable for executing the taken task. Simply put, YOU is what people pretend to be for a specific time but the I is a by default the inner side of the Human inner self. Therefore, the self-representation can be more reserved because the interaction is done with others and those people are considered as strangers. The second group the YOU may include friends, classmates, strangers etc. So, the human self plays two roles simultaneously like an actor who is the I at the back of the stage and YOU as demanded by the character she has to play.

This paper is trying to develop this theoretical approach of the process of self-representation online and off by considering the concept of "I" and "YOU" (Figure 1).
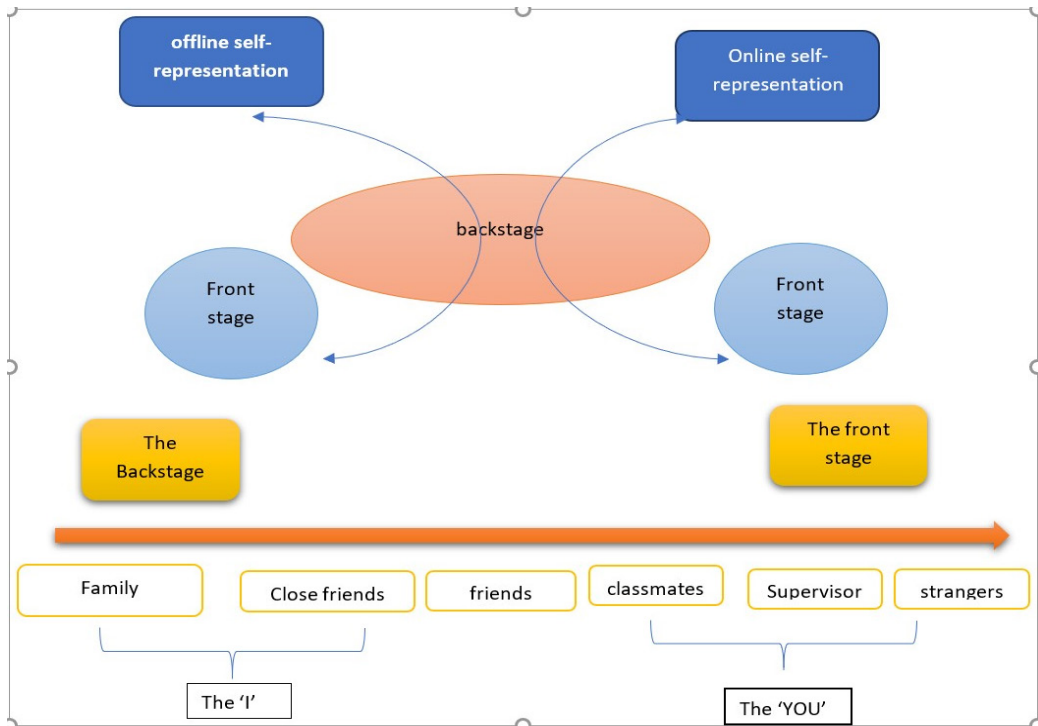

Figure 1: The Theoretical Approach of the Self Process Representation

METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative research method. An online survey was carried out in 2017 to examine self-representation of the Malaysian Muslim female students through Facebook. A total of 133 female students of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) participated in the study. All respondents were Facebook users.

The data were collected through a survey that was developed to elicit the self-representations of Malaysian Muslim female students through Facebook. By utilizing the Likert scale, the participants were encouraged to answer to reflect their self-representation in online and offline settings. the questionnaire had enough questions to cross-validate for the answers given, so as to check for the veracity of the answers given. The focus is to examine the way they present their identities online and to see if their offline identities are correlated to the virtual ones.

This study is a part of a bigger study to make comparative studies on Muslim societies on self-representation and online survey is a feasible method of surveying Muslim woman in different geographic regions. Besides in-depth interviews, the online survey method is commonly used among scholars when conducting studies on identity on the internet, including that of Facebook. (Boulianne, 2015; Thorson, 2014)

ANALYSIS

The findings showed that Facebook was widely used among the respondents. Out of 130 responses, it was found that 68 female students (52%) had more than 500 friends, while 29 per cent of the female students had 100-200 Facebook friends and 16 per cent of the female students had 300-400 Facebook friends whereas only 11 per cent had less than 100 Facebook friends. So on the average, each student had from 300 to 400 Facebook friends. The findings showed that the respondents were high users of Facebook with many friends.

Female students and privacy setting

To examine their concerns toward their privacy setting, the Malaysian Muslim female students were given a list of Facebook groups and asked to answer the extent they allowed the groups to see their entire Facebook. The respondents were asked to select items that were listed to them. The results showed the majority of the sampled students only allowed some groups to see their entire Facebook without any restriction These relevant groups were their family (54%), close friends (49%), friends (35%) and classmates (35%). In other words, the respondents disclosed their Facebook to their families and close friends which the study categorized as the "I" group while other friends (less than 49%) and classmates were less selected by them which were named as belonging to the "YOU" group.

Some respondents did not expose much to the other groups to view their Facebook posts and information such as to their teachers (34%) and religious community (30%), whereas a majority did not allow others, especially strangers (58 %), to view their entire Facebook.

A total of 30 per cent of the respondents were not Facebook friends with their supervisors, and teachers (16%) while 5 per cent did not allow their family to see their Facebook posts and 7 per cent did add their friends on Facebook. The results displayed in Figure 2 gave a picture that not all students opened up their Facebook to their family and friends. Although a majority were open, there were others who were selective in opening up their Facebook.
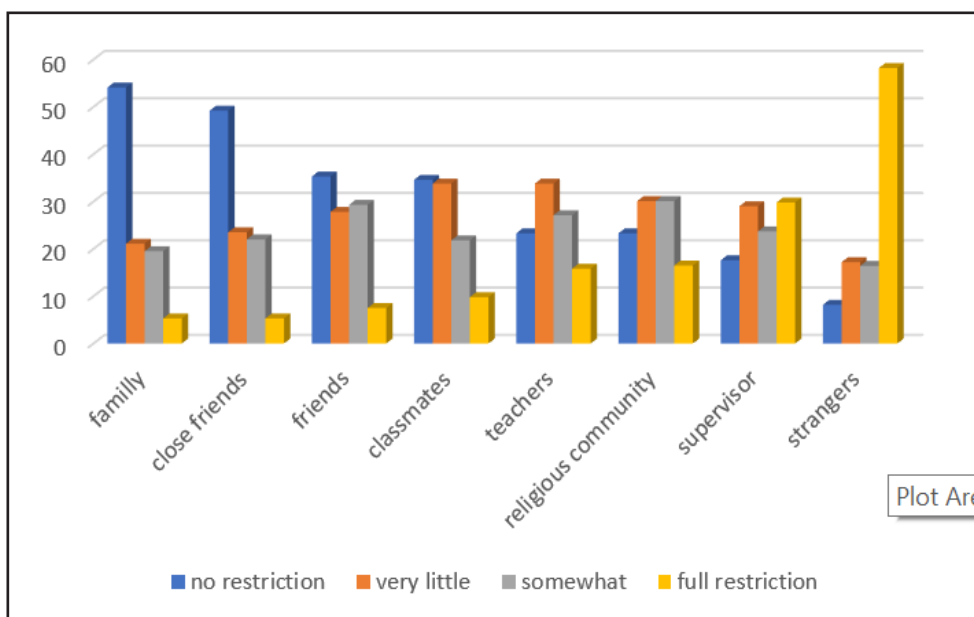

Figure 2: The "I" and "YOU" Proximate Self-Presentation

Offline self-representation

To reveal the way the students represent themselves offline; they were asked to answer to what extent they acted like the persons they really were. The study asked the respondents the extent to which they acted as their true selves when they were on Facebook.

The findings showed that the majority of students presented a little of their real selves in general (75%). However, the percentages between students who acted a lot like "the persons they really were" totalled 13 per cent and those who did not interact using their real selves (11.5%) were very close (Table 1).

Table 1: Act like the person they really are "in general"

	Frequency	Per cent
Not at all	15	11.5
Little	99	75.5
A lot	17	13.0
Total	131	100.0

The study then asked the respondents in what way they represented themselves, namely to their family, close friends, and friends. The self-performance of students differed according to the people they interacted with, as their true selves appeared through their interaction with some groups such as family (54%), close friends (45%) while 34% present said "only little" from their real selves with their close friends, 30 per cent with their family. A total of 35 per cent of the sampled students showed little of their real selves when they interacted alone in public and 43per cent with their classmates.

Every day acting differs depending on the impression the person wants to portray to the other. A significant proportion does not act as the persons they really are at all (51%) when they interact with strangers, 25 per cent with their supervisors while 36 per cent choose to show very little of their real selves with their supervisors (Figure 3).
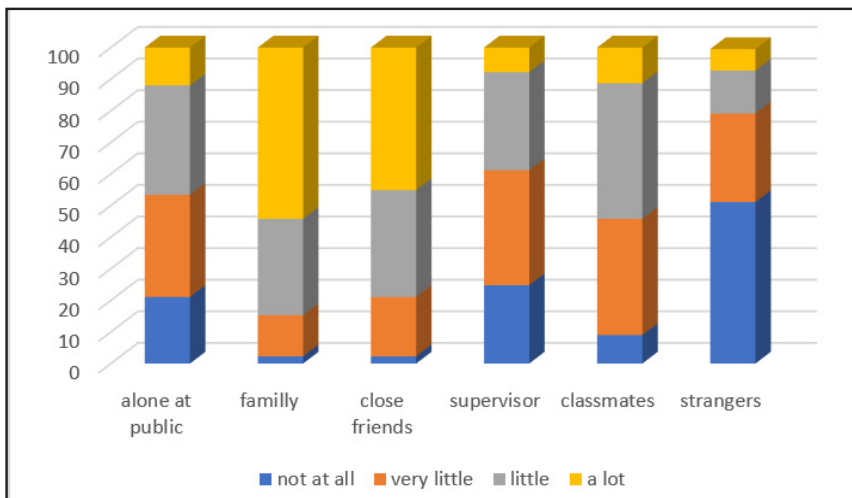

Figure 3: The act with others

Making a good impression on others

The students were also asked the extent to which they tried to make an impression on others. The findings (Table 2) showed that 48 per cent tried a lot to make a good impression on others in general followed by 30 per cent who said they tried little, 16 per cent very little and only 5 per cent that did not try at all to make a good impression on others.

Table 2: The extent the respondents try to make a good impression on others

	Frequency	Per cent
Not at all	8	6.0
Very little	21	15.8
Little	40	30.1
A lot	64	48.1
Total	133	100

Table 2 also showed that female respondents really tried to make a very good impression of themselves in their everyday life. Perhaps this was due to their keenness to make a good impression on their family and very close friends. Such behaviour for managing impressions differs depending on the persons they interact with and where the interaction takes place.
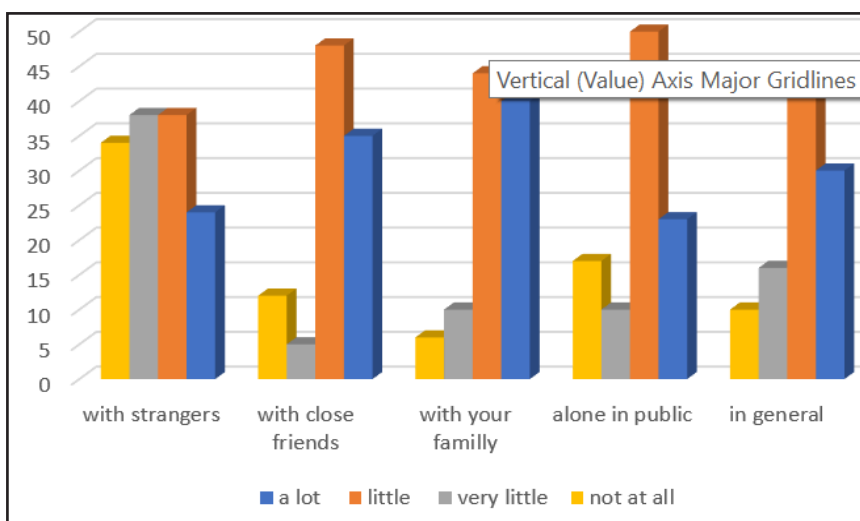

Figure 4. The extent they always try to make a good impression on others

The findings of this study revealed that 44 per cent of the students tried little to make a good impression on others in their life while 30 per cent tried a lot and only 10 per cent did not try at all to make a good impression on others (Figure 4). Meanwhile, 50 per cent of the female students tried little to make a good impression on others when they are alone at public and 23 per cent tried a lot to do that while 17 per cent did not try at all. About 40 per cent of students tried a lot to make a good impression on their family while 10 per cent did not try at all. The findings also showed that the majority of the students tried little to make a good

impression on strangers, 34 per cent did not try at all while 24 per cent tried a lot to make a good impression on them (Figure 4).

It can be noticed that there is no great difference between the different groups. The majority of the female students try to make a good impression with different groups in the degree of acting (little, very little, a lot) while the lowest percentage of the responses reveals that they do not try at all to make a good impression. These results confirmed that individuals not only try to convince others to see them as just, respectable, and moral individuals but also want to maintain and establish positive impressions (Goffman, 1959).

Online self-presentation

This study found that 69 percent of the sampled students on their overall Facebook page showed little of their real selves while a fair number of students (22%) on their Facebook page did not show themselves at all like the persons they really were and only 9.2 per cent showed their real selves "a lot" on Facebook (Table 3).

Table 3: The extent respondents showed themselves like the persons they really were on Facebook?

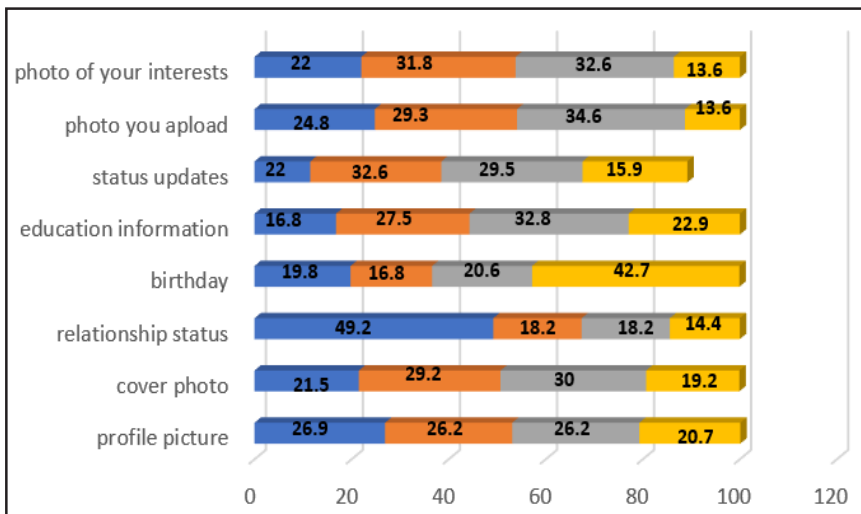|	frequency	Per cent
Not at all	29	22.1
Little	90	68.7
A lot	12	9.2
Total	131	100.0

Figure 5: The extent the Facebook page showed them like the person they really were

The findings in Figure 5 showed the extent to which the respondents represented themselves in different ways depending on the different Facebook services they used. The study

revealed that the majority of respondents show only "little" of their real selves when they used different Facebook services. A total of 35 per cent uploaded their photographs, while 33 per cent uploaded their interests, and 33 per cent provide information such as education. A total of 33 per cent revealed very little about themselves, while 16 per cent revealed a lot what they really were, another 22 per cent said that their status updates did not show them at all like the person they really were (Figure 5).

The study then asked the respondents to describe their state of happiness. The majority of them (85%) described themselves as happy while 15 per cent described themselves as sad. About 82 per cent of respondents described their stay at the university as happy, while 19 per cent said it was sad (Table 4).

Table 4: Students describing themselves at the university

	Describe yourself (%)	Describe your days at university (%)
Sad	14.9	18.7
Happy	85.1	81.3
Total	100	100

The results in Table 5 showed that about 77 per cent described their friendship in the university as well whereas 23 per cent had some problems with their friends. A total of 90 per cent enjoyed a good relationship with their family while 10 per cent described it negatively.

Table 5: Respondents' relationship with their family and friends

	Relationship with friends (%)	Relationship with family (%)
Some problems	23	9.7
Quite well	77	90.3
Totlal	100.0	100.0

To find an understanding of the online and offline self-representation, an empirical analysis was made. The variables that were used for analysis were "making an impression", "privacy"; "online self-representation", and "offline self-representation". The correlational relationship is as displayed in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of correlation analysis results N=130

The relationship between Constructs	Pearson's r	p-value	Strength of association
Privacy and onlineSR	.931**	.000	strong
Making a good impression and OfflineSR	.953**	.000	strong
Making a good impression and OnlineSR	.950**	.000	strong
OfflineSR and OnlineSR	.985**	.000	strong

onlineSR=online self-representation   OfflineSR=offline self-representation

The respondent's offline self-representation was significantly and positively correlated with their online self-representation through Facebook (r=.985, p<.01), In addition, the study revealed that the concern of privacy settings among female students was significantly and positively correlated to their online self-representation (r=.931**, p<.01). The strength of associations among them was also high, exceeding the coefficient of 0.5 for strong correlations between variables. Statistically significant positive relationships also existed between the concern of making a good impression on others and online self-representation (r=.950**, p=0.00)

The results showed that the concern of making a good impression on others and offline self-representation were linearly correlated with one another, and significantly affected the online self-representation through Facebook.

Table 7: Coefficients[a]

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	How do you describe yourself now	-9.971	2.420		-4.121	.000
		12.424	.760	.825	16.339	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ONLINE SELF-REPRESENTATION

Table 8: Coefficients[a]

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-25.603	2.132		-12.009	.000
	Relationship with family and friends	8.153	.313	.917	26.040	.000

Dependent Variable: ONLINE SELF-REPRESENTATION

Linear regression was used to expose the relationship between the independent variable female everyday feelings (how they describe themselves) and the dependent variable online self-representation. The correlation is shown in Table 7.

The descriptive analysis revealed that the majority of the respondents described themselves as a happy person (56%) (Table 4) and the results in Table 7 revealed that their feelings significantly affected their online self- representation at the level of p<0.05. with β =.825.

The descriptive analysis also showed that the majority of female students described the relationship with their family as very well (56%) and 43 per cent of the respondents enjoyed a good relationship with their friends (Table 5). The linear regression test revealed that the female students' relationships with family and friends had a significant impact on their online self- representation with β=.917 (Table 8).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The patterns of responses reveal that the respondents under presented their real selves when they interacted offline (48.1%) and their self-performance differed according to the people they interacted with. Their true selves appeared through their interaction with some groups. These groups were family and close friends which were part of the 'I' category while the respondents were more reserved when interacting with strangers and classmates and supervisor ("the you" category of self-representation process). This result is supported by Goffman's work of Dramaturgy which assumes that when humans are engaged in any interaction, they are performing for those with whom the interaction takes place (Ritzer, 2007).

The findings were clear that individuals used social networking websites to maintain a different impression on different groups. They were more explicit to those nearer to them namely the "I" category" but maintained a distance with the "You" category. Individuals know that their family members and close friends know more of them than the others who are distant from them.

When individuals interact with others these interactions shape people's views of themselves, which are then reflected in the ways they present themselves during interactions (Rosenberg & Egbert, 2011). A total of 48 per cent of the female students tried a lot to make a good impression on others in general but as Goffman (1959), asserted people are engaged in strategic actions to create and maintain the desired image. He believed that individuals not only tried to convince others to see them as just, respectable, and moral individuals but also that people wanted to maintain and to establish   positive 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 behaviours (Walther et al., 2008). When one creates a Facebook account one is asked to provide some information such as age; relationship status, education information etc. In addition, to create a profile picture and cover photos, these services provide the user with the opportunity to manage it as wanted.

The finding of this study supports our idea of self-representation categories (the "I" and "YOU" categories). The majority of the respondents disclosed their Facebook to their families and close friends (I) while other friends and classmates (the "YOU" group) were less selected by them.

In conclusion, this study shows that there is a significant and positive correlation between offline self-representation and online self-representation through Facebook with strong associations (r=.985) so that the more the respondents are interested in their offline self-representation, the more interested they are on Facebook so that there is not a big gap between acting online and offline. The performance of self-representation online and offline can have the same result with some groups with whom the interaction takes place.

 The study also revealed that the way female student's feeling (β =.825) and relationships with their family (β =.917) significantly affected the way they represent themselves online. These results confirm that it is not possible to separate virtual identity from real identity and it is supported by Eakin (2015) who also argues that individuals construct their selves whenever they engage in self-narration online or off. The qualities of identity and the properties of its representation are two different faces of a single phenomenon of self-experience. Also Cover (2014) mentioned "Online social networking behaviour "is as performative as 'real

life' acts, and just as equally implies a stabilized inner core self behind the profile. Rosenfeld, Giacalone, and Riordan (2002) suggest that both in real life and online, self-representation connects the idea of who we are to the outside world. Back et al. (2008) argue that online identities reflect offline identities as their study on 236 SNS users of 17-22 years prove there is no self-idealization as they are using SNSs to maintain their relationships. On the other hand, these results may suggest that the way people representing themselves is different according to the people with whom they interact and these groups can be the same groups in different settings (online and offline) and this maybe explains the strong relationship between online and offline self-representations.

Another thing to highlight in this relationship is the different tools the performers used in their interactions as the online self-representation can use new tools such as photos, videos, status updates and some of this information they provide are related to the offline world more than the online one such as birthday, relationship status. The real information can explain the strength or weakness of the relationship between online and offline depending on the tools the respondents use for their self-representation

The strong relationship between the offline and online self-representation can be explained also by using Goffman's dramaturgy work of the front stage and back stage. When we observe the interactions on Facebook we can notice that there is a relationship between the online and offline representation in the area of backstage; when the backstage in everyday life is when we are alone; in Facebook the backstage can be the hidden area which is inclusive of the private messages or it can also be the behind screen where the backstage of our real selves can meet with our virtual selves back stage. This stage can be affected by different factors which can influence our real feeling and then our online interactions and representation of self.

Therefore, social networking websites are very important nowadays for women's representation of self as they provide them with a new tool to express and manage a good impression of themselves but their virtual identities cannot be performed in isolation from the offline ones, The findings of the study help to understand the relationship between online and offline representations and the effect of offline psychological state and relationship with others on the way the female students represent themselves.

Lastly, we found that the studies of social networking websites (SNSs) need to have new directions in Malaysia and in Muslim communities. In general, the studies need to focus on the way the SNSs users represent themselves in different settings to reveal if there is a gap between online and offline presence within the process of self- representations.

REFERENCES

Alpizar, K., Islas-Alvarado, R., Warren, C. R., & Fiebert, M. S. (2012). Gender, sexuality and impression management on Facebook. *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities. 4* (1), 121-125.

Armentor-Cota, J. (2011). Multiple perspectives on the influence of gender in online interactions. *Sociology Compass*, 5 (1), 23-36.

Back, M. D., Stopfer, J. M., Vazire, S., Gaddis, S., Schmukle, S. C., Egloff, B., & Gosling, S. D. (2010). Facebook profiles reflect actual personality, not self-idealization. *Psychological Science*, *21* (3), 372-374.

Bastani, S. (2000) Muslim women on-line. *The Arab World Geographer*, *3* (1), 40-59.

Boyd, D. (2007). Why youth (heart) social networking sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. In D. Buckingham (Ed), *MacArthur foundation series on digital learning: youth, identity and media volume* (pp. 119-142). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Boulianne, Shelley (2015). Social media use and participation: A meta-analysis of current research. *Information, Communication and Society, 18* (5), 524-538.

COMSCORE (2010). Social networking habits vary considerably across Asia-Pacific markets. Comscore. Retrieved from https://www.comscore.com/Insights/Press-Releases/2010/4/Social-Networking-Across-Asia-Pacific-Markets.

Counts, S. & Stecher, K. B. (2009, March). Self-presentation of personality during online profile creation. Proceedings of the 3rd International ICWSM Conference. California: The AAAI Press.

Cover, R. (2014). Becoming and belonging: Performativity, subjectivity, and the cultural purposes of social networking. In A. Poletti, and J. Rak (Eds), *Identity technologies: constructing the self online* (pp. 55-69). Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Delise, N. N. (2014). How do you Facebook? The gendered characteristics of online interaction. In *Illuminating how identities, stereotypes and inequalities matter through gender studies* (pp. 9-27). Dordrecht: Springer.

Donath, J. (2007). Signals in social supernets. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *13* (1), 231-251.

Eakin, P. J. (2015). Self and self-representation online and off. *FRAME, Journal of Literary Studies*, *28* (1), 11-29.

Ellison, N., Heino, R., & Gibbs, J. (2006). Managing impressions online: Self-presentation processes in the online dating environment. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 11* (2), 415-44.

Number of Facebook users in Malaysia from 2015 to 2022 (in millions). (n.d.). Statista. Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/statistics/490484/number-of-malaysia-facebook-users/

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor Books.

Gunn, S. E. & Thumim, N. (2012). Socializing and self-representation online: Exploring Facebook. *Observatorio Journal, 6* (1), 87-105.

Haferkamp, N., Eimler, S. C., Papadakis, A. M., & Kruck, J. V. (2012). Men are from Mars, women are from Venus? Examining gender differences in self-presentation on social networking sites. *Cyberpsychology, Behaviour, and Social Networking, 15* (2), 91-98.

Karimi, S. (2014). Iranian women's identity and cyberspace: A case study of stealthy freedom. *Journal of Social Science Studies*, *2* (1), 221-233.

Liu, H. (2007). Social network profiles as taste performances. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *13* (1), 252-275.

Lupinetti, V. M. (2015). Self-presentation and social media: A qualitative examination of the use of Instagram by amateur NPC female figure competitors. Masters dissertation (Unpublished). San Jose State University

Rettberg, J. W. (2017). Self-representation in social media. Retrieved from http://jilltxt.net/txt/Self-Representation_in_Social_Media.pdf

Ridings, C. M., & Gefen, D. (2004). Virtual community attraction: Why people hang out online. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 10(1), DOI: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2004.tb00229.x.

Ritzer, G. (2007). *Contemporary sociological theory and its classical roots: The basics*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Rosenberg, J., & Egbert, N. (2011). Online impression management: Personality traits and concerns for secondary goals as predictors of self-presentation tactics on Facebook. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 17*(1), 1-18.

Rosenfeld, P., Giacalone, R. A., & Riordan, C. A. (2002). *Impression management: Building and enhancing reputations at work*. London: Thomson Learning.

Shafie, L. A., Nayan, S., & Osman, N. (2012). Constructing identity through Facebook profiles: Online identity and visual impression management of university students in Malaysia. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 65*, 134-140.

Sharifah, S, S. Z., Omar, S. Z., Bolong, J., & Osman, M. N. (2011). Facebook addiction among female university students. *Revista De Administratie Publica Si Politici Sociale, 3*(7). 95-109.

Socialbakers (2016). Facebook statistics directory. Socialbakers. Retrieved from https://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/

SparkNotes Editors. (2006). SparkNote on identity and reality. Sparknotes. Retrieved from http://www.sparknotes.com/sociology/identity-and-reality.

Thorson, Kjerstin (2014). Facing an uncertain reception: young citizens and political interaction on Facebook. *Information, Communication & Society, 17* (2), 203-216.

Valkenburg, P. M., Schouten, A. P., & Peter, J. (2005). Adolescents' identity experiments on the Internet. *New Media & Society*, 7(3). 383-402.

Walther, J. B., Van Der Heide, B., Kim, S., Westerman, D., & Tong, S. T. (2008). The role of friends' appearance and behaviour on evaluations of individuals on Facebook: Are we known by the company we keep? *Human Communication Research, 34* (1), 28–49.

Waltorp, K. (2015). Keeping cool, staying virtuous: social media and the composite habitus of young Muslim women in Copenhagen. *MedieKultur: Journal of media and communication research, 31*(58), 49-67.

Willett, R. (2008) Consumer Citizens Online: structure, agency, and gender in online participation. In D. Buckingham (Ed.) *Youth, identity, and digital media* (pp. 49-69). London: MIT Press.

Yang, C. C., & Brown, B. B. (2016). Online self-presentation on Facebook and self development during the college transition. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 45*(2), 402-416.