The Presentation of Self on WeChat Moment:

The Role of Personality Traits and Network Characteristics

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

In this day and age, the rapid development of internet-based communication tools has greatly changed the way we socially interact, especially for social networking sites (SNS) which enable people to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships online, but also provide an ideal environment for self-presentation. The present study aimed to investigate how individuals present themselves on one popular SNS, WeChat; and explore factors that might impact their self-presentation, such as personality traits and network characteristics. A cross-sectional online survey was conducted with 252 WeChat users (age range = 18-66 years, 61.1% female). Results indicated that individuals do use WeChat differently and employ different strategies to present themselves online; and that both personality traits (e.g., extraversion, self-monitoring) and network characteristics (e.g., network size) matter. Findings extend prior research on self-presentation and SNS use behaviours. Implications and limitations are discussed, and directions for future research are suggested.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Individuals spend most of their lives interacting with others. When people interact, they are responding not to one another but to the impressions they have of one another. As a result, people have always been concerned about their self-images and engaged in strategic self-presentation to control others treating them in desired ways (Leary, 2019). In this day and age, the rapid development of the Internet and smartphones has deeply changed people's lifestyle, especially for social networking sites (SNS) which have been integrated into the daily communicative routine and social interactions. Popular SNS, such as Facebook and WeChat, enable people to access and broadcast information effectively, develop and maintain interpersonal relationships, and also provide an ideal environment for self-presentation. SNS users can selectively present themselves, such as their interests, emotions, opinions and activities, without being constrained by time or space, to form and manage their online impressions. In order to better understand the dynamics of modern interpersonal interactions, it is crucial to explore how self-presentation functions on such sites. This study, targeting WeChat, aimed to investigate how individuals present themselves on the site and explore factors that might impact their self-presentation, such as personality traits and network characteristics. In the following section, previous related theories and research were reviewed to guide the development of the study framework and hypotheses.

1.1 Self-Presentation

1.1.1 Self-Presentation Definition

Self-presentation is the process whereby people try to control and regulate how other people perceive them (Schlenker & Pontari, 2000; Leary, 2019). The concept of impression management is similar to but broader than self-presentation, which refers to controlling all kinds of information, including information about controllers themselves, other people and events. Self-presentation is more specifically the control of information about the self (Schlenker & Pontari, 2000).

Early work on self-presentation was regarded as a minor and fringe area in social psychology, and focused on its manipulative and deceptive uses in some particular social situations, such as job interviews or first dates. However, researchers now regard self-presentation more broadly as a fundamental component of social life (Goffman, 1959; Schlenker, 1985; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). Most of the time, rather than deliberate and effortful behaviours, self-presentation goes on automatically via habitual patterns of behaviours which allow people to put their cognitive effort into other important issues. Nevertheless, these behaviours also convey a kind of self-image to others (Schlenker & Pontari, 2000). Furthermore, the images people try to present are more often genuine rather than deceptive. People are multifaceted individuals and could convey many different impressions in different situations, all of which are authentic. In other words, people tend to tactically reveal about themselves selectively based on their goals in the situation and assumptions about what impressions would achieve those goals (Leary, 2019; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992).

1.1.2 Self-Presentation Motivations and Strategies

In general, people employ various self-presentation strategies to present themselves, which are driven by varying motivations (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Two broad sets of self-presentation motivations have been discussed extensively: audience-pleasing motivation and self-verification motivation (Baumeister & Hutton, 1987; Swann, 2012; Leary, 2007). The audience-pleasing theory emphasizes that people attempt to present themselves based on other people's expectations and preferences. In other words, self-presentation is motivated by seeking approval and avoiding disapproval from others. To seek social approval, people usually emphasize desirable aspects of themselves. Two common self-presentation strategies are considered to be engaged in this purpose (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Lee et al., 1999). One strategy is ingratiation. The goal of ingratiation is to get others to like you. As people generally like others who agree with them, say nice things about them, and possess characteristics like warmth and kindness, ingratiation is about imitation, flattery, and presenting good personal qualities. The other strategy is self-enhancement. Since people usually admire and appreciate others who are attractive, intelligent and competent, self-enhancement is to highlight positive sides and try to convince others of one's merits, capabilities or talents.

However, successful self-presentation requires people to accurately assess how others perceive and evaluate them. Although people desire to make favourable impressions, they do not always know whether images they convey are accepted and sometimes their behaviours may lead to failed or unexpected results. For example, in some cases, when ingratiation is too blatant, it may lead to others feeling manipulated, which may result in distrust and dislike (Jones & Wortman, 1973). Also, in the study of Schlenker and Leary

(1982a), participants who employed self-enhancement and subsequently did not perform

well in an actual task, received low feedback from others, because they were considered

boastful. Therefore, rather than actively making desirable impressions to seek approval,

some people appear to focus more on avoiding disapproval and employ a self-protection

strategy (Arkin, 1981; Wolfe et al., 1986). Generally, they tend to "play it safe" in social

interactions and be more normative, neutral, modest and less distinctive. They might not

only conceal negative self-images that may lead to disapproval but also hide positive sides

which may lead to additional challenges (Leary & Allen, 2011a; Wooten & Reed, 2004).

Moreover, Arkin (1981) suggested that which self-presentation strategies people intend to

use depends on both internal factors (e.g., personality) and external factors (e.g.,

characteristics of audiences). For example, certain personality traits, such as low self-esteem

(Baumeister, 1982; Baumeister et al., 1989) and social anxiety (Schlenker & Leary, 1982b;

Leary & Kowalski, 1995), may incline people to use a self-protection strategy. Additionally,

people may present themselves differently when facing different audiences. For instance,

people usually interact differently with females and males, and sometimes people may

respond differently to their superiors and subordinates, etc (Leary, 2019).

As opposed to audience-pleasing theory, self-verification theory (Swann 1983, 1990,

2012) assumes that people are motivated to validate and sustain their pre-existing self-

concepts. Namely, people present themselves for a more private and personal purpose.

They tend to seek affirmation of their established self-views even when those self-views are

negative, and prefer to be evaluated accurately than positively. Baumeister and Hutton

(1987) also referred to this type of motivation and behaviour as "self-construction", and

presumed that self-presentations under this purpose would be relatively stable and

consistent across different situations. In addition, self-verification more likely happens in established relationships (e.g., marriages). As a relationship deepens, people prefer to be seen in self-confirming ways (Swann et al., 1994). Also, Rosenberg (1979) considered that self-verification is particularly prevalent among adolescents who try to make certain impressions to maintain a sense of who they are.

Notably, people who engage in a self-verification strategy can present positive as well as negative aspects of the self. When they present positive self-information, it could be similar to self-enhancement behaviours. Whereas, regarding negative self-information, self-verifiers are willing to share it but self-enhancers are inclined to conceal it. Therefore, to evaluate verification behaviours, Bareket-Bojmel et al. (2016) only focused on negative verification behaviours. Likewise, in this study, the self-verification strategy refers particularly to presenting negative self-information. Nevertheless, Kwang and Swann (2010) suggested that, since most people hold positive self-views, in most cases, people still tend to describe themselves positively.

1.2 Self-Presentations on SNS

The rapid development of internet-based communication tools, especially for SNS, has significantly changed the way of social interactions. These technologies not only bring new opportunities for people to access and broadcast information, develop and maintain interpersonal relationships; but also provide new windows for self-presentation. Compared with offline settings, the asynchronous and cues-limited (e.g., lack of visual and nonverbal cues) nature of online communication enables SNS users to have more control over their

self-presentational behaviours (Joinson, 2001; Misoch, 2015; Sun & Wu, 2012). Namely, they have more time to plan and think about what self-images they want to present. Also, communicating online enables people to avoid embarrassment and vulnerability in face-to-face conversations, especially for those who have difficulties engaging socially. As a result, individuals are willing to invest their energy and time in online interactions and online impression management (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Bareket-Bojmel et al., 2016).

Aside from the nature of online interactions, SNS themselves, as user-friendly platforms, provide an ideal environment for self-presentation. Take Facebook as an example. Its status update box asks "what's on your mind?" which prompts users to share their thoughts, experiences or emotions via multiple ways (e.g., texts, photos, or videos). Compared with other features like instant messaging, status update encourages more open, one-to-many communication (Winter et al., 2014). It allows users to present themselves to a large audience quickly and easily, which seems unique to public figures or celebrities in the past. On the other hand, multiple audiences may also bring additional difficulties to self-presentation. Facebook users' networks usually contain people who already recognize each other in real life, such as family members and friends from school and work, and they might be representing different and sometimes even conflicting social audiences (Vitak, 2012; Rui & Stefanone, 2013b). It is challenging when people attempt to balance their self-images based on varied audience expectations. Therefore, making decisions about what to conceal and present in such a public environment can be regarded as a complex process of self-impression management. Similar to offline settings, people also employ various self-presentation strategies online. The four self-presentation strategies mentioned above might also be translated into four types of SNS behaviours, for instance: posting about positive

sides of the self (self-enhancement strategy); clicking "Like" or making positive comments on others' posts (ingratiation strategy); posting about neutral information (self-protection strategy); sharing negative thoughts (self-verification strategy).

Most previous studies regarding SNS behaviours were conducted in Western countries and typically based on Facebook. The current study intends to research another popular SNS, WeChat (Wei Xin in Chinese), which dominates the Chinese social media world. According to the latest data in January 2020, WeChat had 78% penetration among 16-64 year olds in China and over 1.15 billion monthly active users worldwide (Hootsuite, 2020). Compared with Facebook, WeChat is a more all-around platform which integrates social communication, e-commerce, mobile payments, public services, and mini-programs interfacing with other apps (Statt & Liao, 2019). This study focuses only on one popular WeChat feature, Moment, similar to status update in Facebook, which allows one-to-many communication, enabling users to share personal information to their entire networks and comment or Like on others' posts. Moreover, like Facebook, most of the contacts on WeChat are also acquaintances in real life. Although WeChat has been widely used, studies regarding self-presentation behaviours on this site are still limited.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

As suggested by Leary (Leary, 2019), self-presentation behaviours are a function of both the situation and the person. On the one hand, the nature of the situation exerts an influence on behaviours, including the characteristics of audiences, prevailing norms operating in the social context, and so forth. On the other hand, self-presentation is constrained by internal factors, such as personalities and interpersonal skills. Regardless of the influence of the situation, different people may present themselves differently in the same situation. Especially for self-presentation on SNS, people are usually addressing a broad audience, and it is hard to tailor self-presentations to a particular person. Therefore, they might compromise with different audience expectations, which may lead to personality traits as a more important factor to predict self-presentation behaviours (Chen & Marcus, 2012).

Although a growing body of studies have examined the effects of personality and social network characteristics on general SNS use, research concerning the relationships between personality traits, network characteristics and different types of online self-presentation remains scarce. Therefore, the current study aims to extend the four types of self-presentation strategies (i.e., self-enhancement, ingratiation, self-protection, and self-verification) into the context of WeChat Moment, and explore how personality traits and network characteristics influence self-presentation strategies employed, and how they ultimately impact WeChat Moment usage. To do so, a research model is proposed (see Figure 1).
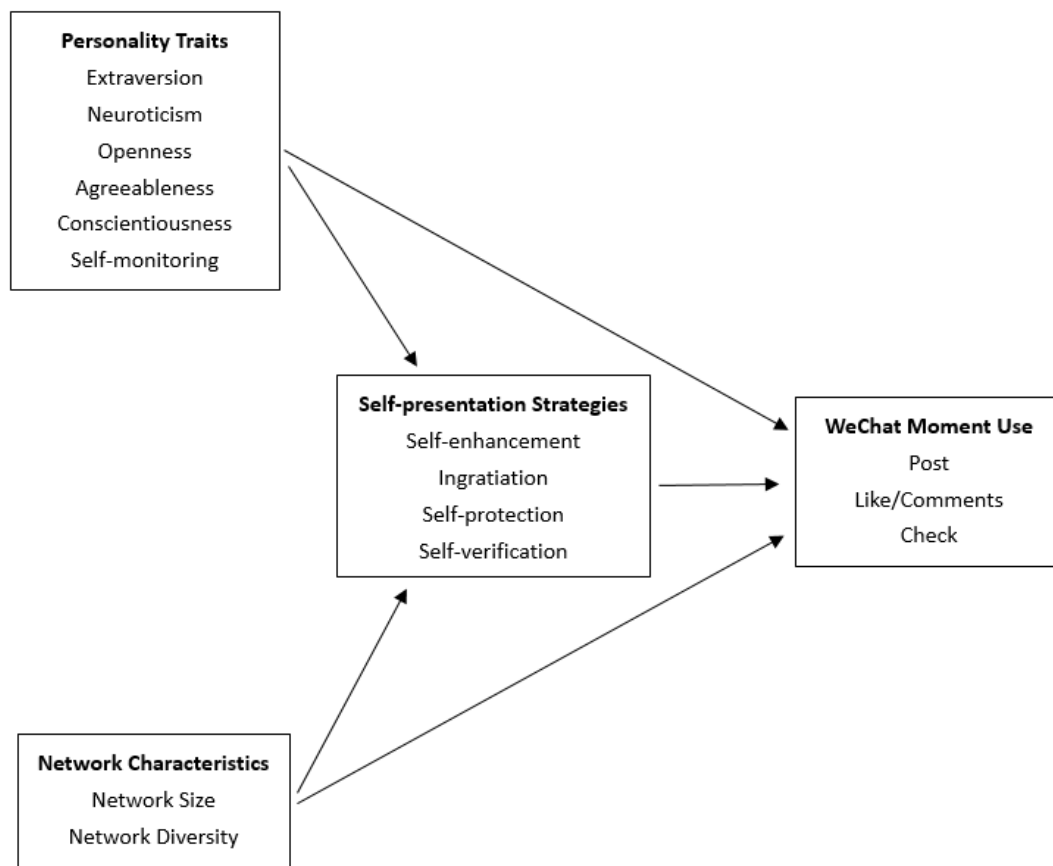
Figure 1. Proposed research model

1.4 Hypothesis Development

1.4.1 Personality Traits

Generally, people's personality is related to their thoughts, feelings, motivations and

behavioural tendencies (McCrae & John, 1992). Much previous research has suggested that

individuals who score higher on certain types of personality traits may present themselves

in distinct ways in SNS. These studies were mainly based on broad models of personality, in

particular, the Five-Factor Model, or the Big Five (Goldberg, 1990), which has been

replicated cross-culturally and also been translated, revised and widely used in China (John

& Srivastava, 1999; McCrae & Terracciano, 2005; Zhang et al., 2019). In addition, some

researchers have noted that the Five-Factor approach may be too broad to capture some

nuanced relationships between personality and online behaviours (Ross et al., 2009; Quercia

et al., 2012; Tsai et al., 2017). Therefore, this study also included one extra personality trait,

self-monitoring.

1.4.1.1 Big Five Personality Traits

The Big Five theory states that people's personality can be summarized by five key

factors: extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness, and

conscientiousness. Within each factor, there is a range of related and more specific

personality traits (McCrae & John, 1992).

Extraversion describes the extent to which people feel comfortable to interact

directly with other people. Individuals rated high on the extraversion factor are dominant,

expressive, talkative and sociable; whereas introverts, who rated low on the extraversion

factor, tend to be quiet, deliberate, low-key and reserved (Rothmann & Coetzer, 2003). As

for the relationship between extraversion and SNS usage, there are two competing

explanations: a rich-get-richer explanation versus a social compensation explanation. The

rich-get-richer assumption is that extraverts benefit more from using SNS since they can

strengthen and extend their social networks with these technologies (Valkenburg & Peter,

2007). In contrast, the social compensation explanation assumes that introverts would gain

more from the asynchronous communication which allows them to interact with others in a comfortable way and may compensate for the deficits of their interpersonal skills (Schouten et al., 2007). Empirically, most studies support the rich-get-richer argument and imply that, although introverts may prefer to communicate online, they are still less successful in getting benefits from using SNS than extraverts (e.g., Utz et al., 2012; Gosling et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2014). Previous research has suggested that more extraverted individuals are more likely to be Facebook users and display more Facebook friends (Gosling et al., 2011; Ross et al., 2009; Moore & McElroy, 2012). They tend to disclose more information (Gosling et al., 2011), share more photos and update status more frequently (Lee et al., 2014; Dupuis et al., 2017). In addition, extraverts are more likely to click Like, and write more comments than introverts (Lee et al., 2014; Tsai et al., 2017). Even though these results reveal how extraversion influences SNS behaviours, they do not offer insights into how this trait is reflected in specific styles of self-presentation. As extraverts are likely to be socially adaptable and interpersonally interactive (Digman, 1990), it seems justified to hypothesise that extraverts are more inclined to engage in self-presentation strategies like ingratiation and self-enhancement. Therefore, the first hypothesis is as follows:

H1. Extraversion will be positively associated with WeChat Moment use, such as posting and clicking Like or writing comments (**H1a**); and extraverts are more likely to employ self-enhancement (**H1b**) and ingratiation strategies (**H1c**).

Neuroticism is the opposite of emotional stability. People with high neuroticism tend to display negative attributes such as insecurity, anxiety, emotionality, irritability and difficulty managing stress (Moore & McElroy, 2012). Research has shown that neurotics, compared with people with higher emotional stability, tend to browse Facebook more

frequently and spend more time on Facebook (Ross et al., 2009; Ryan & Xenos, 2011). They also tend to share more personal information, feelings and thoughts (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010; Wang et al., 2012; Seidman, 2013), and are more likely to post negative status updates on Facebook (Dupuis et al., 2017). This tendency may be due to the need for self-expression and self-definition (Wang et al., 2012; Seidman, 2013). Thus, the following hypothesis is offered:

H2. Neuroticism will be positively correlated with WeChat Moment use, such as checking and posting (**H2a**); and people with high neuroticism are more likely to employ a self-verification strategy (**H2b**).

Openness-to-experience (Openness) represents an individual's willingness to explore the unknown and new ideas (Costa & McCrae, 1992). People higher in openness tend to be intellectually curious, creative, and open to emotion; whereas those who with lower openness are inclined to follow tradition and are characterized as pragmatic and closed-minded. Some studies have shown that openness is positively related to SNS use (Ross et al., 2009; Correa et al., 2010) and the number of Facebook features use (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010). More open individuals are relatively more likely to post text, upload photos and make comments (Gosling et al., 2011; Tsai et al., 2017). However, other research has found no relationship between openness and SNS usage (Hughes et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2012; Moore & McElroy, 2012; Seidman, 2013; Lee et al., 2014), which may be due to the prevalence of SNS. As a variety of new SNS have been launched, some SNS, such as Facebook, studied in much previous research, may no longer seem a new experience. Similar to Facebook, WeChat has become relatively ubiquitous in China. In addition, the

relationship between openness and specific styles of self-presentation is less clear, and this will be explored in the current study. Thus, the hypothesis is as follows:

H3. Openness will not be related to WeChat Moment use.

Agreeableness refers to the tendency to be sympathetic, modest, flexible, cooperative, and kind (Costa & McCrae, 1992). People who are high in agreeableness are usually viewed as pleasant and considerate, value harmony relationships and attempt to foster positive interpersonal interactions (Graziano & Tobin, 2009). Several studies have found that agreeableness is unrelated to SNS behaviours (Ross et al., 2009; Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010; Wang et al.,2012; Tsai et al., 2017) and negatively correlated with posting to seek attention (Seidman, 2013). Individuals with high agreeableness regret more often what they posted and doubt the content appropriateness of their posts (Moore & McElroy, 2012). Instead of posting, they are willing to click Like and make comments to other users' posts (Ryan & Xenos, 2011; Wang et al., 2012). Moreover, Leary and Allen (2011b) found that highly agreeable people convey more normative images and present themselves more similarly to various targets, since they might believe that tactical self-presentation is often for a competitive desire to control others, and conveying distinctive images are likely to create distance with others. Therefore, the following hypothesis is offered:

H4. Agreeableness will not be related to WeChat Moment use (**H4a**), and agreeable individuals are more likely to employ a self-protection strategy (**H4b**).

Conscientiousness represents the tendency to display self-discipline and act dutifully (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Highly conscientious individuals are organized, responsible and

task-oriented; whereas individuals with low conscientiousness appear as spontaneous, sloppy and unreliable. It has been suggested that conscientiousness is negatively related to time spending on Facebook (Ryan & Xenos, 2011), photo uploading (Ryan & Xenos, 2011; Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010), wall postings (Moore & McElroy, 2012), and the frequency of writing comments (Lee et al., 2014). Furthermore, people high in conscientiousness tend to behave in ways consistent with group norms (Leary & Allen, 2011b). They are less likely to post for seeking attention (Seidman, 2013), and tend to post cautiously and express more regret over their inappropriate posts (Moore & McElroy, 2012). Therefore, the hypothesis is as follows:

H5. Conscientiousness will be negatively associated with WeChat Moment use, such as posting and clicking Like or writing comments (**H5a**), and conscientious people are more likely to employ a self-protection strategy (**H5b**).

1.4.1.2 Self-Monitoring

Self-monitoring is another personality trait that may be highly associated with self-impression management. It was conceptualized by Snyder (1974), which represents the extent to which people monitor and control their behaviours to be considered as normative and socially appropriate. A person with high self-monitoring is someone "who, out of a concern for social appropriateness, is particularly sensitive to the expression and self-presentation of others in social situations and uses these cues as guidelines for monitoring his own self-presentation" (Snyder, 1974; p. 528). People with low self-monitoring "value consistent behavior that reflects what they perceive to be their true selves" and "possess

smaller repertoires of self-presentational skills" (Fuglestad & Snyder, 2009; p. 574).

Research about the relationship between self-monitoring and SNS use is limited. Gogolinski

(2010) found that high self-monitors prefer a more detailed Facebook page of other people,

because they can learn more about others and get clear cues to guide themselves. On the

other hand, they display limited, generic and more cautious information on their own pages

in order to ensure a more agreeable page for all audiences. By contrast, low self-monitors

tend to describe themselves in detail with displaying more personal information (Lin, 2008).

Also, as Quercia et al. (2012) suggested, although high self-monitors might present

themselves in likable ways, they may not tend to share more private information or to make

that information more visible on SNS. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H6. Self-monitoring will be negatively related to posting frequency (**H6a**), and high self-

monitors are more likely to use a self-protection strategy (**H6b**).

1.4.2 Network Characteristics

As noted by Goffman (1959), social interactions are like theatrical performances;

individuals are actors performing before audiences. Thus, audiences' expectations for the

role have a critical influence on actors' self-presentation. In offline settings, audiences are

those who can be directly interacted with and observed, while audiences in SNS refer to

users' online networks. Studies have found that two network characteristics, size and

diversity, influence self-presentation both offline and online. Notably, the technical features

of SNS disrupt temporal, spatial, and social boundaries, which flatten audiences into the

same environment. This phenomenon, known as context collapse (Binder et al., 2009; Vitak,

2012), may be beneficial for users to broadcast and share information across large and diverse audiences, but it may also make effective self-presentation more challenging based on varied audience expectations. As social networks become larger and diverse, it may lead to higher levels of social constraint and interpersonal stress. Accordingly, individuals may be more concerned about their self-images in public (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Binder et al., 2009), and tend to use a lowest common denominator strategy to deal with the context collapse problem, that is making fewer disclosures and only sharing the information acceptable to everyone in their networks (Hogan, 2010).

However, previous research has suggested that SNS users, instead of "sterilizing" their accounts, tend to disclose more as networks grow and diversify (Vitak, 2012; Stefanone et al. 2011; Rui & Stefanone, 2013a; Rui & Stefanone, 2013b). This may be attributed to the fact that the primary motivation for using SNS is maintaining relationships, and self-disclosure is considered as an effective technique to maintain interpersonal relationships. Thus, as network size increases, so do the demands of relationships maintenance, and individuals may disclose more about themselves (Rui & Stefanone, 2013a; Rui & Stefanone, 2013b). Furthermore, research also found that people with a large network tend to be more concerned about their self-impression and disclose more positive content (Lin et al., 2014). Therefore,

H7. Network size will be positively related to posting (**H7a**), and people with a larger network are more likely to employ a self-enhancement strategy (**H7b**).

H8. Network diversity will be positively related to posting (**H8a**), and people with a more diverse network are more likely to employ a self-enhancement strategy (**H8b**).

1.4.3 Demographic Factors

Research has suggested that age may influence the way people present themselves. Although online environments encourage people of all ages to share and connect with others, adolescents disclose more information on Facebook than other age groups do (Christofides et al., 2012). Moreover, research argued that gender differences influence communication behaviours. For instance, females are generally found to disclose more personal and emotional information than males do on SNS (Bond, 2009; Stefanone et al., 2010; Rui & Stefanone, 2013b). Therefore, these two demographic variables, age and gender, are considered as control variables in this study.

Chapter 2: Method

2.1 Sample and Procedures

The research proposal was approved by both the Human Ethics Committee and the School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing of the University of Canterbury (see Appendix A). All ethical guidelines and regulations regarding human research were followed throughout the whole study process.

Prior to data collection, sample size estimates were calculated using G*Power. Given the proposed effect size of .09 in multiple regressions which was between the small and medium effect size, with the probability of alpha errors at .05 and powers of .90, a total sample size of 220 would be required at least.

Due to the target population for the study being WeChat users, a virtual snowball sampling method, which relies on individuals' virtual networks, was used to recruit participants. Specifically, the survey links were advertised to WeChat friends of the researcher and some WeChat public groups, such as the Christchurch Chinese Students Association WeChat Group. Also, the survey advertisements were displayed on bulletin boards in the campus of University of Canterbury and around some public areas (e.g., churches, shopping centres) in Christchurch city. Then, people who were interested in the study were also asked to forward the links to their WeChat friends and groups. Although the snowball sampling method might not provide a truly random sample, it was relatively less

costly and time-consuming and it provided a more diverse range of participants than simply

relying on undergraduate psychology students.

The survey was hosted on Tencent Questionnaire which is one of the biggest Chinese

online survey platforms and also can be run as a mini-program in WeChat. That means

participants can access the survey page in WeChat directly and conveniently. The survey

(see Appendix B) contained three parts: an information sheet with a brief description of the

study's purpose and ethical issues about anonymity and privacy protection; a consent

button for participants to confirm their agreement and involvement; and the main

questionnaire part. All survey items were translated into Chinese and all participants

responded to the Chinese version of the survey. To avoid multiple responses from the same

person, respondents were prevented from using the same Internet Protocol (IP) address

more than twice.

Ultimately, out of 1029 potential respondents, 254 individuals reached the end of

the survey (25% response rate). With the exclusion of two participants, who were younger

than 18 years old, the final sample included 252 participants, which met the expected

sample size mentioned above. The mean age of the final sample was 37.40 years (SD =

12.74) ranging from 18 to 66 years. 154 participants were female (61.1%), 98 were male

(38.9%). Moreover, geographically, the IP address showed around 53% of participants were

in China (predominantly in the North) and 47% of them were outside of China

(predominantly in New Zealand).

2.2 Measures

The online survey contained two demographic questions (age and gender) and the

following measures. All survey items were translated into Chinese and then the Chinese

version was translated back to English to compare with the original text and reconcile any

meaningful differences between the two. The accuracy of translations was verified by two

Chinese-English bilinguals fluent in both languages.

2.2.1 Big Five Personality Traits

Given time constraints, the Big Five personality traits were measured by the Mini-

IPIP scale (Donnellan et al., 2006) which is a short form of the International Personality Item

Pool Five-Factor Model measure (IPIP-FFM; Goldberg, 1999). The Mini-IPIP scale includes 20

items with 4 items for each trait. Items involved short statements, taking extraversion as an

example, "I am the life of the party" and "I don't talk a lot" (reverse-scored). Participants

rated the extent to which they agreed to these statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1 =

strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The Mini-IPIP has good and similar reliability and

validity, compared to the IPIP-FFM and other "Big Five" measures (Cooper et al., 2010;

Donnellan et al., 2006). In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha for all subscales,

extraversion (α = .74), neuroticism (α = .71), openness (α = .73), agreeableness (α = .68), and

conscientiousness (α = .72), indicated acceptable reliability.

2.2.2 Self-Monitoring

The revised self-monitoring scale (RSMS; Lennox & Wolfe, 1984) was used to

measure self-monitoring. The original self-monitoring scale (Snyder, 1974), including 25

true/false items, was criticized by Lennox and Wolfe for some psychometric shortcomings,

such as factorial issues and low internal consistencies. To address these problems, they designed the RSMS, a 13-item 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree). Example items include "In conversations, I am sensitive to even the slightest change in the facial expression of the person I'm conversing with" and "I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations" (reverse-scored). The RSMS was reported to possess adequate reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .75 (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984). In this study, the reliability of the RSMS was confirmed, with a Cronbach's alpha of .85.

2.2.3 Network Size and Diversity

Network size was measured with an open-ended question: "How many total friends do you have on WeChat". Regarding network diversity, participants were asked to select the categories present in their WeChat network from a range of 18 social categories which were adapted from studies of McCarty et al. (2001) and Manago et al. (2012), including immediate family members (e.g., parents, children, sisters, brothers), other family members (e.g., uncle, aunt, cousins), best friends or confidantes, ordinary friends, school relations, childhood relations, current romantic partner, past romantic partner, people known through hobbies, people known through other friends, coworkers, superiors, business relations, people providing services (e.g., online sellers, couriers), neighbours, people met only once, people known from WeChat Shake, and others. The diversity value was represented by the ratio of the number of selected categories to the total 18 categories. Higher scores of size and diversity indicated a larger and more diverse network. On average, participants had 314.87 friends (SD = 372.86) and these friends fell into 8.20 social categories (SD = 3.89).

Furthermore, the distribution of network size was positively skewed, therefore a logarithmic

transformation was applied in the later analyses to improve its predictions.

2.2.4 Self-Presentation Strategies

The four self-presentation strategies (i.e., self-enhancement, ingratiation, self-

protection, self-verification) employed in the WeChat Moment context were measured by

adapting items from a variety of sources (Bareket-Bojmel et al., 2016; Huang, 2014; Kim &

Lee, 2011; Lee et al., 1999; Jung et al., 2007; Rosenberg & Egbert, 2011; Crabtree & Pillow,

2018). Participants were asked to respond to these items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never

to 5 = always). To identify further the structure of the scale, factor analyses were conducted

later. The final items can be seen in Table 1 of the Results.

2.2.5 WeChat Moment Use and Privacy Settings

In the present study, WeChat use reflected general behaviours relevant only to the

Moment feature (similar to status update in Facebook), rather than other features like

private messaging. Moment usage was measured with three one-item indicators: "How

often do you post on Moment", "How often do you click Like or write comments on others'

posts" and "How often do you check Moment" with an eight-point frequency scale (1 =

Never, 2 = Several times a year, 3 = Once or twice a month, 4 = Once or twice a week, 5 =

Several times a week, 6 = Once or twice a day, 7 = Several times a day, and 8 = Every waking

hour).

Although not hypothesized, for exploratory purposes, this study also surveyed

participants regarding their privacy settings on the Moment feature. There are several

privacy settings provided on Moment. Time Limit is one of them, which was chosen because

it is a novel setting for WeChat and may not have been explored before (Li et al., 2018).

Using Time Limit users' past posts can be limited to display for a certain time range. It was

measured with a one-item indicator: "How do you set the Moment Time Limit", with five

options for participants to choose from: "All viewable" (N = 113), "Last 6 months viewable"

(N = 43), "Last month viewable" (N = 23), "Last 3 days viewable" (N = 73) and "No ideas how

to set it" (N = 0). The Time Limit setting was treated as a dichotomous variable in the later

analyses (0 = All viewable [N = 113, 45%], 1 = Limited viewable [N = 139, 55%]).

2.3 Data Analysis

In this study, all analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25.0.

Before analyses, the data were screened for missing values and univariate outliers. No cases

had missing data and no outliers were found, N = 252.

Exploratory factor analyses were conducted to determine the underlying structure of

the self-presentation strategies scale. Next, the relationships between personality traits,

network characteristics, self-presentation strategies and Moment use were analysed using

Pearson's correlation coefficients. Finally, to further test the research hypotheses, a series

of hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted to explore the extent to which the

predictors can explain the dependent variables. The control variables were entered in the

first steps and the main predictors were added in the later steps.

Chapter 3: Results

3.1 Factor Analysis Results of Self-Presentation Strategies on Moment.

To identify further the structure of the self-presentation strategies scale, principal component analyses (PCA) with varimax rotation were performed. Firstly, the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (KMO = .86) and Bartlett's test ($\chi2$ = 1474.08, df = 153, p < 0.001) both indicated that the factor analysis was appropriate. Based on the following criteria used in PCA: eigenvalues greater than 1, loading score greater than .6 for each factor and meaningfulness of each dimension, a total of four items were deleted. Finally, a four-factor solution was revealed, which included 14 items and accounted for 61.58% of the total variance.

As shown in Table 1, the first factor, self-enhancement (Cronbach's α = .83), consisted of four items and accounted for 19.56% of the variance. The second factor, self-verification (Cronbach's α = .78), with three items, explained 15.51% of the variance. The third factor, self-protection (Cronbach's α = .63), containing four items, accounted for 13.58% of the variance. Finally, the fourth factor, ingratiation (Cronbach's α = .61), included three items and explained 12.93% of the variance.

Table 1. Factor analysis of self-presentation strategies on WeChat Moment.

	1	2	3	4
Self-enhancement (α = .83)				
1. I share positive thoughts, feelings, or emotions.	.80			
5. I share daily or travel photos that only convey positive aspects of mine.	.78			
4. I post information about my interests, special skills or talent.	.77			
7. I share good sides of mine, like getting good scores or positive accomplishments.	.77			
Self-verification (α = .78)				
12. To let others understand me, I'm willing to reveal failed experience or negative thoughts.		.83		
16. I express my attitudes or feelings, although some of which may not be accepted or liked by others.		.78		
11. I tend to express my true opinions, even though some of which are negative.		.78		
Self-protection (α = .63)				
18. I post neutral information, neither positive nor negative.			.73	
17. When I post or comment things, I carefully choose words or expressions.			.64	
10. I do not tend to disclose my inner thoughts, feelings, or emotions on Moment.			.64	
15. Rather than posting, I prefer to browse others' posts.			.62	
Ingratiation (α = .61)				
9. What I post is just to please someone.				.75
3. I click Like about something I'm not really into.				.74
14. What I post is not real me, but it might help me to make friends.				.67
Eigenvalues	2.74	2.17	1.90	1.81
Variance explained (%)	19.56	15.51	13.58	12.93

Note. All values reported from the final, rotated factor solution.

3.2 Descriptive and Correlation Results

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and

Pearson's correlations of the main variables. On average, participants posted on their

Moment roughly once or twice a month (M = 2.95, SD = 1.32), clicked Like or wrote

comments on others' posts about several times a week (M = 5.04, SD = 1.47), and checked

the Moment page around several times a day (M = 6.65, SD = 1.03). Regarding the four

types of self-presentation strategies, a repeated-measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

was used to compare the means of them, $F_{(3, 753)} = 78.00$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .24$. The

post-hoc test revealed that the self-protection strategy (M = 3.33, SD = .61) was employed

significantly more than other strategies in the Moment context, followed by the self-

verification strategy (M = 2.77, SD = .78), self-enhancement strategy (M = 2.65, SD = .82),

and ingratiation strategy (M = 2.36, SD = .73).

The correlation coefficients (r) showed that some personality traits and network

characteristics were significantly related to self-presentation strategies and Moment use

behaviours. To further explore their potential relationships, multiple regression analyses

were performed later. Moreover, with regard to the privacy setting, it was positively

correlated with the neuroticism trait (r = .16, p < .05), network size (r = .22, p < .01), network

diversity (r = .19, p < .01), self-verification strategy (r = .13, p < .05); and negatively related

to age (r = -.38, p < .01).

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and Pearson's correlations among variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Age	-																	
2. Gender	.14*	-																
3. Extraversion	-.06	-.03	-															
4. Neuroticism	-.26**	-.16*	-.15*	-														
5. Openness	-.13*	.04	.07	-.05	-													
6. Agreeableness	.05	.00	.25**	-.15*	.27**	-												
7. Conscientiousness	.15*	.00	-.06	-.38**	.36**	.38**	-											
8. Self-monitoring	-.04	.18**	.28**	-.30**	.19**	.27**	.33**	-										
9. Size	-.29**	.05	.16**	.08	.15*	.06	.05	.01	-									
10. Diversity	-.24**	-.12	.10	.01	.14*	.12	.14*	-.06	.40**	-								
11. Self-enhancement	-.02	-.09	.40**	.04	.07	.08	-.12	.01	.19**	.12*	-							
12. Ingratiation	-.01	.03	.18**	.14*	-.12*	.01	-.24**	.01	.14*	.04	.34**	-						
13. Self-protection	.04	.10	-.14*	-.17**	-.03	.13*	.26**	.27**	-.08	-.03	-.40**	-.21**	-					
14. Self-verification	-.12	-.12	.02	.30**	.01	-.15*	-.33**	-.28**	.00	-.01	.33**	.27**	-.35**	-				
15. Post	.09	-.06	.22**	-.04	.15*	.00	.00	-.01	.20**	.04	.60**	.28**	-.42**	.28**	-			
16. Like/Comments	-.18**	-.29**	.24**	.11	.03	.06	-.16*	.00	.23**	.07	.45**	.33**	-.22**	.22**	.44**	-		
17. Check	-.21**	-.19**	.02	.11	-.06	-.06	-.08	-.06	.13*	.13*	.22**	.17**	.03	.04	.23**	.42**	-	
18. Privacy	-.38**	-.10	.03	.16*	.06	-.01	.00	.04	.22**	.19**	.08	.10	-.01	.13*	-.01	.13*	.11	-
Mean	37.40	-	2.81	2.97	3.20	3.38	3.53	4.11	2.33	.46	2.65	2.36	3.33	2.77	2.95	5.04	6.65	-
SD	12.74	-	.67	.64	.62	.54	.59	.58	.38	.22	.82	.73	.61	.78	1.32	1.47	1.03	-

Note. Size variable is the value with a logarithmic transformation. Gender (0 = Female, 1 = Male). Privacy (0 = All viewable, 1 = Limited viewable).

*$p < .05$ (2-tailed), **$p < .01$ (2-tailed).

3.3 Hypotheses Tests

To test the research hypotheses, a series of hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted. Prior to regressions, the relevant assumptions were checked. Firstly, all dependent and independent variables were close to normally distributed (within accepted values of skewness and kurtosis), except for the network size variable. Although the normality of the network size (as an independent variable) was not included in regression assumptions, a logarithmic transformation of it was still applied to enhance predictions. Then, the assumption of no multicollinearity was met, indicating by correlation matrix (no substantial correlations [$r > .9$] between predictors, see Table 2) and accepted values of the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance. Next, the assumption of independent errors was also met as all Durbin-Watson values were close to 2. Furthermore, the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity were met, indicated by residual and scatter plots. Finally, the examinations of Cook's distance and Mahalanobis distance demonstrated no multivariate outliers. Therefore, overall, assumptions of multiple regression were all satisfied.

3.3.1 Predictors of Self-Presentation Strategies

Four two-step hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed to explore the extent to which personality traits and network characteristics predicted the four types of self-presentation strategies (self-enhancement, ingratiation, self-protection, and self-verification) employed on Moment. Age and gender were entered in the first step as control variables, and then the Big Five personality traits, self-monitoring, network size and network diversity were added together in the second step. Overall, neither age nor gender

significantly predicted each self-presentation strategy, either independently or together

with other factors. Table 3 shows the results from the final regression model.

Table 3. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses for predicting the four types of self-presentation strategies.

	Self-enhancement	Ingratiation	Self-protection	Self-verification
Age	.10	.09	-.06	-.03
Gender	-.08	.03	.06	-.06
Extraversion	**.38*****	**.14***	**-.21****	.09
Neuroticism	.05	.12	-.05	**.16***
Openness	.09	-.10	**-.16***	**.15***
Agreeableness	.01	.07	.08	-.05
Conscientiousness	-.13	**-.22****	**.19***	**-.23****
Self-monitoring	-.04	.08	**.24****	**-.19****
Size	**.13***	**.14***	-.06	-.04
Diversity	.05	.03	.01	-.01
R^2	**.21*****	**.13*****	**.18*****	**.20*****

Note. Values are standardized coefficients (β) and R^2 values from the final regression model. Size variable is the value with a logarithmic transformation. Gender (0 = Female, 1 = Male).

*p < .05 (2-tailed), **p < .01 (2-tailed), ***p < .001 (2-tailed).

Firstly, for predicting the self-enhancement strategy, the final regression model was

significant, F (10, 241) = 6.40, p < .001, and explained 21% of the total variance. Extraversion

(β = .38, p < .001) and network size (β = .13, p < .05) emerged as significant predictors.

Therefore, **H1b** (extraversion) and **H7b** (network size) were supported, while **H8b** (network

diversity) was rejected.

Secondly, for predicting the ingratiation strategy, the final model explained 13% of

the total variance, F (10, 241) = 3.60, p < .001. Extraversion (β = .14, p < .05),

conscientiousness (β = -.22, p < .01) and network size (β = .14, p < .05) had significant

relationships with the degree to which the ingratiation strategy employed. Thus, **H1c** (extraversion) was supported.

Thirdly, for predicting the self-protection strategy, the final model explained 18% of the total variance, $F(10, 241) = 5.14$, $p < .001$. Extraversion ($\beta = -.21$, $p < .01$), openness ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .05$), conscientiousness ($\beta = .19$, $p < .05$), and self-monitoring ($\beta = .24$, $p < .01$) demonstrated significant relationships with the extent to which the self-protection strategy used. Therefore, **H5b** (conscientiousness) and **H6b** (self-monitoring) were supported, while **H4b** (agreeableness) was not supported.

Lastly, the final regression model for predicting the self-verification strategy was significant, $F(10, 241) = 5.99$, $p < .001$, and explained 20% of the total variance. Neuroticism ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$), openness ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$), conscientiousness ($\beta = -.23$, $p < .01$), and self-monitoring ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .01$) showed as significant predictors. Thus, **H2b** (neuroticism) was supported.

3.3.2 Predictors of WeChat Moment Usage

As shown in Table 4, to investigate the extent to which personality traits, network characteristics and self-presentation strategies predicted WeChat Moment usage (post, Like/comments and check), three two-step hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted. Age, gender, the Big Five personality traits, self-monitoring, size and diversity were entered in the first step with their betas and significance levels shown in Models 1. Following this, the four types of self-presentation strategies were entered in step two with their beta values and significance levels reported in Models 2.

Table 4. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses for predicting WeChat Moment usage.

	Post		Like/Comments		Check	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Age	.21**	.14*	-.03	-.08	-.15*	-.18**
Gender	-.10	-.05	-.31***	-.29***	-.16*	-.16*
Extraversion	.21**	-.02	.16*	.02	.01	-.08
Neuroticism	-.03	-.08	.01	-.03	.03	.02
Openness	.20**	.12*	.05	.04	-.08	-.05
Agreeableness	-.10	-.09	.06	.05	-.03	-.06
Conscientiousness	-.05	.09	-.20**	-.12	-.02	.00
Self-monitoring	-.05	.02	.05	.05	.00	-.06
Size	.23**	.15**	.23**	.16**	.08	.03
Diversity	-.05	-.07	-.07	-.09	.06	.03
Self-enhancement		.45***		.31***		.29***
Ingratiation		.10		.19**		.14*
Self-protection		-.21***		.00		.18*
Self-verification		.09		.01		-.11
R^2	.15***	.47***	.22***	.36***	.09*	.18***
ΔR^2		.32***		.14***		.09***

Note. Values are standardized regression coefficients (β), R^2 and R^2 change values. Size variable is the value with a logarithmic transformation. Gender (0 = Female, 1 = Male).

*p < .05 (2-tailed), **p < .01 (2-tailed), ***p < .001 (2-tailed).

For predicting the frequency of posting on Moment, in the first model (F [10, 241] = 4.14, p < .001, R^2 = .15), age, extraversion, openness and network size emerged as significant predictors. After the four self-presentation strategies were added, the Model 2, F (14, 237) = 15.02, p < .001, explained 47% of the total variance, with a significant increase of 32% of the variance from Model 1. In the final model, self-enhancement strategy (β = .45, p < .001), self-protection strategy (β = -.21, p < .001), network size (β = .15, p < .01), openness (β = .12, p < .05), and age (β = .14, p < .05) had significant relationships with the posting behaviour. Extraversion was no longer a significant predictor after self-presentation

strategies were added. The significant relationship between extraversion and the self-enhancement strategy in Table 3 implies that extraversion had an indirect effect on the posting behaviour, mediated through the self-enhancement strategy.

For predicting the frequency of clicking Like or writing comments on others' posts, in the first model (F [10, 241] = 6.90, p < .001, R^2 = .22), gender, extraversion, conscientiousness and network size appeared as significant predictors. After the four self-presentation strategies were entered, Model 2, F (14, 237) = 9.30, p < .001, explained 36% of the total variance, with a significant increase of 14% of the variance from Model 1. In the final model, self-enhancement strategy (β = .31, p < .001), ingratiation strategy (β = .19, p < .01), network size (β = .16, p < .01) and gender (β = -.29, p < .001) had significant relationships with clicking Like or writing comments behaviours. Extraversion and conscientiousness were no longer significant predictors once self-presentation strategies were added. The significant relationships between extraversion, conscientiousness and the ingratiation strategy in Table 3, indicates that extraversion and conscientiousness had an indirect influence on the clicking Like or writing comments behaviours, mediated through the ingratiation strategy.

Finally, for predicting the frequency of checking Moment pages, in the first model (F [10, 241] = 2.36, p < .05, R^2 = .09), only age and gender showed as significant predictors. After the four self-presentation strategies were entered, Model 2, F (14, 237) = 3.40, p < .001, explained 18% of the total variance, with a significant increase of 9% of the variance from Model 1. In the final model, self-enhancement strategy (β = .29, p < .001), ingratiation strategy (β = .14, p < .05), self-protection strategy (β = .18, p < .05), age (β = -.18, p < .01) and gender (β = -.16, p < .05) all had significant influence on the checking behaviour. Neither

personality traits nor network characteristics significantly predicted the checking frequency, either in Model 1 or Model 2.

In summary, the results suggested that extraversion had indirect positive effects on the frequency of posting and clicking Like/writing comments, supporting **H1a**. Neuroticism, agreeableness, self-monitoring and network diversity showed no significant effects on any Moment use behaviours, thus, **H4a** was supported, **H2a**, **H6a** and **H8a** were rejected respectively. Openness had significant relationships with the posting behaviour, **H3** received no support. Conscientiousness had indirect negative effects on the frequency of clicking Like/writing comments but had no effect on posting, therefore, **H5a** was partially supported. Network size had significantly positive influences on posting and clicking Like/writing comments, supporting **H7a**.

Chapter 4: Discussion

The purpose of the study was to explore how personality traits and network characteristics influenced self-presentation behaviours on WeChat Moment. Overall, it was found that both internal factors (e.g., personality traits) and external factors (e.g., network size) did explain self-presentation strategies employed and Moment usage to some extent.

Specifically, concerning the four types of self-presentation strategies, the results indicated that WeChat users who rated high in extraversion and had more WeChat friends, were more likely to employ a self-enhancement strategy; those who were high in extraversion but low in conscientiousness, and with larger network size, were more prone to use an ingratiation strategy; those who were high in conscientiousness and self-monitoring, but low in extraversion and openness, were more likely to employ a self-protection strategy; and those higher in neuroticism and openness, but lower in conscientiousness and self-monitoring, were more inclined to engage in a self-verification strategy.

With regard to Moment usage, users who were older, higher in openness, with larger network size, using more self-enhancement strategy and less self-protection strategy, posted more frequently on their Moment; those who were female, with larger network size, and employing more self-enhancement strategy and ingratiation strategy, clicked Like or wrote comments on others' posts more often; and those who were younger, female, and using more self-enhancement strategy, ingratiation strategy as well as self-protection strategy, checked more frequently Moment pages.

4.1 Summary of Findings

The findings in the current research not only confirm existing theories and studies in many ways, but also make new contributions to the related literature.

4.1.1 Self-Presentation Behaviours on WeChat Moment

In general, WeChat users, based on the study sample, seem to use the Moment feature passively. Although they checked the Moment page around several times a day and sometimes clicked Like or wrote comments on others' posts a week, they seldom posted. Moreover, they engaged in a self-protection strategy significantly more than other strategies in the Moment context. In other words, they tended to post neutral information and not disclose inner thoughts or feelings on Moment. And rather than posting, they preferred to browse others' posts. Such "silent" behaviours in the online communities are usually known as lurking (Sun et al., 2014).

The reasons why people lurk and what factors affect the lurking phenomenon on Moment would be another topic deserving further investigation. Nevertheless, the present study did find this neutral self-presentation behaviour was affected by personality traits, such as high conscientiousness and self-monitoring, and low extraversion and openness. In addition to these personality traits, cultural differences could also be an influential factor. Researchers have suggested that some self-presentation styles might be more common in some cultures than others. For example, Heine et al. (2001) and Lee-Won et al. (2014) argued that people with collectivist cultures, such as those of China, Japan, and Korea, value group harmony, tend to be modest and avoid self-enhancement which might draw the

attention of others and cause friction with other people. Whereas people in individualistic cultures, such as those of the United States and Western Europe, emphasize personal achievement and tend to stand out and compete for attention (Leary & Allen, 2011a). Also, research regarding SNS behaviours showed that individuals with more individualistic cultural backgrounds posted more photos (Rosen et al., 2010) and were significantly more likely to employ a self-enhancement strategy (Lee-Won et al., 2014). In the current study, participants with Chinese cultural backgrounds used self-protection strategy more than self-enhancement strategy, which may be consistent with the argument about collectivist cultures. However, further cross-cultural research is needed to examine this point. Moreover, privacy concerns, namely, concerns about privacy security by posting, might also lead to lurking behaviours on SNS (Vitak, 2012), which would be explored in future research.

4.1.2 Personality Traits and Self-Presentation on WeChat Moment

The study began by examining the role of six personality traits in self-presentation behaviours. Similar to previous research on Facebook (Lee et al., 2014; Dupuis et al., 2017; Tsai et al., 2017), more extraverted users tended to post and Like or comment more frequently, but the present study indicated that these tendencies were mediated through self-enhancement and ingratiation strategies. That means what extraverts posted were more likely to be positive and likeable content and they were more likely to click Like about something they did not really like. It was also found that less extraverted individuals were more inclined to use a self-protection strategy, in line with introverts tending to be quiet, reserved, and focussed more on their internal world rather than external stimulation.

Secondly, neuroticism showed no significant effects on any Moment usage, which was not in line with the previous findings (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010; Wang et al., 2012; Seidman, 2013). However, people with high neuroticism were more likely to employ a self-verification strategy. That means neurotics were more willing to post true and even negative feelings or opinions on Moment, which might support the similar findings on Facebook by Dupuis et al. (2017).

Thirdly, contrary to the hypothesis regarding openness to experience, users higher in openness posted on Moment more frequently, which was similar to the studies of Gosling et al. (2011) and Tsai et al. (2017), but not consistent with other related studies (e.g., Wang et al., 2012). The previous evidence about the relationship between openness and SNS use is mixed. This study assumed openness would not be related to Moment use because WeChat seems no longer a new experience. However, the extent of participants' experience on WeChat was not examined in this study. Thus, future research might also take the experience factor into account. In addition, it was found that more open users were more likely to employ a self-verification strategy, perhaps because they are open-minded and tend to use Moment to share their unusual thoughts. Less open users were found to use a more self-protective strategy, probably because they tend to follow tradition.

Fourthly, the results indicated that agreeableness was neither related to Moment usage nor any specific styles of self-presentation, which was generally in line with some previous studies (Ross et al., 2009; Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010; Wang et al., 2012; Tsai et al., 2017) and implied that agreeableness might not play a role in directing SNS behaviours.

Fifthly, similar to the findings of Lee et al. (2014), conscientiousness had negative effects on the frequency of clicking Like or writing comments, but the current study also indicated that the effects were indirect, which were mediated through the ingratiation strategy. Namely, less conscientious participants were more likely to click Like about something they were not really into. Furthermore, as suggested in the prior studies (Leary & Allen, 2011b; Moore & McElroy, 2012; Seidman, 2013), users higher in conscientiousness were more likely to engage in a self-protection strategy, and tended to post or comment cautiously and neutrally, and were less likely to seek attention. Additionally, it was also found that less conscientious people were more inclined to employ a self-verification strategy, tended to express themselves, even negative selves.

Finally, self-monitoring had no significant effects on any Moment usage. So it was not supporting the findings of Quercia et al. (2012) that high self-monitors shared less private information. However, as expected, high self-monitors were more likely to use a self-protection strategy. They tended to post generic and cautious information, which was in line with Gogolinski's (2010) work. Moreover, based on the study sample, self-protection or neutral behaviours, as mentioned above, were more commonly used and seemed as a normative and socially appropriate style of self-presentation, thereby which might more likely be employed by high self-monitors. Also, the study found that people with lower self-monitoring were more prone to use a self-verification strategy, and tended to value their true selves, even negative ones.

4.1.3 Network Characteristics and Self-Presentation on WeChat Moment

A second focus of the present study was to investigate the role of network characteristics (i.e., network size and network diversity) in self-presentation behaviours. It was found that users with more WeChat friends not only tended to post more frequently, supporting previous studies (Vitak, 2012; Stefanone et al. 2011; Rui & Stefanone, 2013a; Rui & Stefanone, 2013b); but also tended to click Like or comment on others' posts more often. They were more likely to employ a self-enhancement strategy, confirming the work of Lin et al. (2014) that they tended to disclose more positive information; but also were found to use more ingratiation strategies. As network size increases, more interpersonal relationships must be maintained. Accordingly, people with a larger network might disclose more positive self-images and interact with others more actively to gain social approval.

Network diversity, however, in contradiction to the hypotheses, had no predictive value for self-presentation styles and Moment usage. One potential explanation is that the relationship between network diversity and SNS behaviours may be mediated or moderated by other variables, such as privacy settings. For example, Vitak (2012) found that network diversity was positively associated with one Facebook privacy setting, Friend Lists, which allows users to customize specific audiences before posting, and could mitigate the context collapse problem. Also, Stutzman et al. (2011) and Brandimarte et al. (2013) suggested that SNS users who used more privacy settings tended to disclose more self-information. Thus, privacy settings (e.g., Friend Lists) might be related to both network diversity as well as SNS behaviours. WeChat also provides a similar setting to Facebook Friend Lists which could be examined in future research.

4.1.4 Other Findings

The privacy setting tested in the current study was Time Limit. It was found that users who were younger, less emotionally stable, with a larger and more diverse network, and using a self-verification strategy, were more likely to set a time limit for their posts. The Time Limit setting may help these users to control their emotional and negative posts being viewed by others. Therefore, privacy settings seem to play a role in Moment behaviours, and other privacy settings on Moment could be considered further in future research.

In addition, this study employed a more diverse sample than college students. It was found that the older users posted more frequently on Moment, which was not consistent with the previous evidence that adolescents disclosed more on Facebook than other age groups (Christofides et al., 2012). The younger WeChat users, however, tended to browse others' posts rather than posting. These findings suggested that the older users were more active on WeChat, in line with the recent WeChat report that the peak age group of usage was shifting to the older group (Iqbal, 2020). Such findings also suggest that the WeChat company may need to focus more on older users and develop more elderly friendly features in future.

Regarding the role of gender difference in Moment behaviours, although the study did not find that females disclosed more than males on SNS (Rosen et al., 2010; Rui & Stefanone, 2013b), the female participants in this study were found to click Like or comment more often on others' posts and check the Moment page more frequently. Namely, females might pay more attention to others' sharing and be more willing to interact with others.

4.2 Theoretical Implications

Besides the above findings, the current study has several theoretical implications. First, most previous studies regarding SNS behaviours were conducted in Western countries and typically based on Facebook. The current study adds to the literature on SNS research, targets on WeChat, with mainly Chinese users. In addition, rather than general SNS use, this study focuses on users' behaviours on a more specific feature of WeChat, Moment, that represents more open and one-to-many communication.

Next, only a few studies have examined self-presentation on SNS, and these studies were mainly concerned to test self-enhancement as a strategic self-presentation (Lee-Won et al., 2014; Bareket-Bojmel et al., 2016). The current study used a greater range of self-presentation types in the context of Moment. It adds to the self-presentation literature by exploring how these self-presentation strategies are employed in larger and diverse audiences than within dyads.

Finally, although prior research suggested that self-presentation behaviours might be influenced by both dispositional and contextual factors, seldom has SNS research taken these factors into account together. To fill this gap, the framework of the present study examined the roles of both personality and network characteristics in online self-presentation. Taken together, the study findings provide a more detailed understanding of self-presentation behaviours in social networking contexts.

4.3 Limitations and Future Research

Although the present study yielded some novel findings and implications, several limitations should be mentioned. Firstly, similar to many studies regarding SNS use, this study used a cross-sectional design, which was limited in that individuals' self-presentations were snapshots at a point in time. However, social interaction is usually an ongoing process. As relationships change over time, so do the goals and motivations of self-impression management. Namely, people may engage in different self-presentation strategies in different stages of interpersonal relationships. For example, people are commonly self-enhancing with new acquaintances and more modest with old friends (Schlenker & Pontari, 2000; Leary & Allen, 2011a). Therefore, to capture more dynamic relationships among these key variables, longitudinal and experimental studies are needed in future research. Moreover, as suggested by Bareket-Bojmel et al. (2016), in addition to one's self-presentation behaviours, others' feedback should also be considered into the research model. From a longitudinal perspective, audiences' responses to specific styles of self-presentation would alter an individual's future self-presentation. For example, if self-enhancement content is Liked more by others, more self-enhancement posts will be encouraged.

Second, the study relied on self-reporting questionnaires, and some well-known issues, such as social desirability and false memory, should not be excluded. For example, some participants would present themselves in positive ways, even given instructions to answer honestly and spontaneously. Answering questionnaires about themselves is also a kind of self-presentation (Leary & Allen, 2011a). Therefore, as suggested by Winter (2014) and Bareket-Bojmel et al. (2016), a future study could collect data directly from users'

Moment pages to develop a more objective and effective measure of SNS behaviours.

Moreover, the social desirability tendency can be tested by the Balanced Inventory of

Desirable Responding in future (Musch et al., 2002; Brailovskaia & Bierhoff, 2016).

Third, the R^2 values in the multiple regression for predicting self-presentation

strategies were low to moderate, which suggested that other more critical predictors would

be added to strengthen the regressions in future. For example, some more specific

personality traits, such as narcissism, which might be highly related to conveying desirable

self-images (Leary & Allen, 2011a), could be considered in future study.

Lastly, generalising the study findings to other SNS could be problematic. Different

SNS have different rules. Take Weibo as an instance. It is another popular SNS in China and

similar to Twitter, the social circles of which are more anonymous and public. Therefore,

more research is needed to explore and compare self-presentation behaviours on different

types of SNS. Moreover, as SNS platforms are constantly changing, some findings of the

current study might be interpreted cautiously in future years.

4.4 Conclusion

As SNS have become ubiquitous in modern social interactions, popular SNS, such as

WeChat, should be considered as an important avenue to understand self-presentation

behaviours. Building upon existing theories of self-presentation and studies of SNS

behaviours, the current study investigated a range of self-presentation behaviours on

WeChat, provided evidence that self-impression management is an integral part of SNS use,

and both personality traits and network characteristics did influence such online behaviours

to some extent. Taken together, this research contributes a framework for future

explorations on self-presentation in new communication contexts. More research (e.g.,

cross-cultural research, adding audiences' feedback in the study model) is needed to obtain

a more complete picture of online self-presentation.

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Appendix A

UC UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Rebecca Robinson
Telephone: +64 03 369 4588, Extn 94588
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Ref: HEC 2019/95/LR

25 November 2019

Minfei Huang
Psychology, Speech and Hearing
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Minfei

Thank you for submitting your low risk application to the Human Ethics Committee for the research proposal titled "The Presentation of Self in WeChat Moment: Examining the Role of Personality Traits and Network Characteristics".

I am pleased to advise that this application has been reviewed and approved.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your email of 20th November 2019.

With best wishes for your project.

Yours sincerely

Dr Dean Sutherland
Chair, Human Ethics Committee

Appendix B

Minfei HUANG

minfei.huang@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing

UNIVERSITY OF
CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

My name is Minfei Huang. I am a master's student in Psychology at the University of Canterbury. For my dissertation, I am studying about self-presentation behaviours on social networking sites. The purpose of this research is to investigate how individuals' personality traits and social network characteristics impact the way they present themselves in the WeChat context.

I would like to invite you to participate in this survey study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and anonymous, and you have the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. If you choose to take part in this study, your involvement will be much appreciated and valued. The questionnaire will take you approximately 10 minutes. Your responses will be anonymous and no published or reported results will identify the participants.

If you do not feel comfortable responding to these questions, you can leave the questions unanswered or withdraw from the survey at any point. If you wish to speak with someone about the project or your experience, please contact with me,
Minfei Huang (minfei.huang@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)
Or my supervisor Simon Kemp (simon.kemp@canterbury.ac.nz).

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (humanethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

Do you agree to participate in this survey? By clicking **YES**, you consent that you are willing to answer the questions in this survey. Otherwise, if you don't want to participate it, please click **NO**.

YES   NO

<mark>Important note: the actual questionnaire is in Chinese.</mark>

Age:

Gender: Female   Male

How often do you check Moment?
How often do you post on Moment?
How often do you click Like or write comments on others' posts?

> **1.Never 2.Several times a year 3.Once or twice a month 4.Once or twice a week 5.Several times a week 6.Once or twice a day 7.Several times a day 8.Every waking hour**

How do you set the Moment Time Limit?

- o   1.All viewable 2.Last 6 months viewable 3.Last month viewable 4.Last 3 days viewable
- o   No ideas how to set it

How many total friends do you have on WeChat?   _____

Please click what kind of people are in your WeChat? *You can choose more than one*.

- ☐   immediate family members (e.g., parents, children, sisters, brothers)
- ☐   other family members (e.g., uncle, aunt, cousins)
- ☐   best friends or confidantes
- ☐   ordinary friends
- ☐   school relations
- ☐   childhood relations
- ☐   current romantic partner
- ☐   past romantic partner
- ☐   people known through hobbies
- ☐   people known through other friends
- ☐   coworker
- ☐   superiors
- ☐   business relations
- ☐   people providing services (e.g., online sellers, couriers)
- ☐   neighbours
- ☐   people met only once
- ☐   people known from *WeChat Shake*
- ☐   other

Self-presentation strategies on WeChat Moment

The following statement regarding to how you present on WeChat Moment. Please consider your Moment page while answering the following questions:

Never (1)   Rarely (2)   Sometimes (3)   Often (4)   Always (5)

1. I share positive thoughts, feelings, or emotions.

2. I share articles, music or videos which may not be interested by others.

3. I click Like about something I'm not really into.

4. I post information about my interests, special skills or talent.

5. I share daily or travel photos that only convey positive aspects of mine.

6. I click Like or write positive comments on friends' posts.

7. I share good sides of mine, like getting good scores or positive accomplishments.

8. I share something funny or interesting to make friends happy.

9. What I post is just to please someone.

10. I do not tend to disclose my inner thoughts, feelings, or emotions on Moment.

11. I tend to express my true opinions, even though some of which are negative.

12. To let others understand me, I'm willing to reveal failed experience or negative thoughts.

13. I enjoy others' comments and feedback on my posts.

14. What I post is not real me, but it might help me to make friends.

15. Rather than posting, I prefer to browse others' posts.

16. I express my attitudes or feelings, although some of which may not be accepted or liked by others.

17. When I post or comment things, I carefully choose words or expressions.

18. I post neutral information, neither positive nor negative.

The Big Five

This personality questionnaire will ask you some questions about what type of person you are. Please read each statement and rate the extent to which you agree with it. Do not deliberate too long on any statements. First impressions are the best.

Strongly Disagree (1)   Disagree (2)   Neutral (3)   Agree (4)   Strongly Agree (5)

I am the life of the party.

I sympathize with others' feelings.

I get chores done right away.

I have frequent mood swings.

I have a vivid imagination.

I don't talk a lot.

I am not interested in other people's problems.

I often forget to put things back in their proper place.

I am relaxed most of the time.

I am not interested in abstract ideas.

I talk to a lot of different people at parties.

I feel others' emotions.

I like order.

I get upset easily.

I have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.

I keep in the background.

I am not really interested in others.

I make a mess of things.

I seldom feel blue.

I do not have a good imagination.

Self-monitoring

The statements below concern your personal reactions to a number of different situations. Please read each statement and rate the extent to which you agree with it. Do not deliberate too long on any statements. First impressions are the best.

 Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Slightly Disagree (3) Slightly Agree (4) Agree (5) Strongly Agree (6)

In social situations, I have the ability to alter my behaviour if I feel that something else is called for.

I am often able to read people's true emotions correctly through their eyes.

I have the ability to control the way I come across to people, depending on the impression I wish to give them.

In conversations, I am sensitive to even the slightest change in the facial expression of the person I'm conversing with.

My powers of intuition are quite good when it comes to understanding others' emotions and motives.

I can usually tell when others consider a joke to be in bad taste, even though they may laugh convincingly.

When I feel that the image I am portraying isn't working, I can readily change it to something that does.

I can usually tell when I've said something inappropriate by reading it in the listener's eyes.

I have trouble changing my behaviour to suit different people and different situations.

I have found that I can adjust my behaviour to meet the requirements of any situation I find myself in.

If someone is lying to me, I usually know it at once from that person's manner of expression.

Even when it might be to my advantage, I have difficulty putting up a good front.

Once I know what the situation calls for, it's easy for me to regulate my actions accordingly.