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Self-esteem, motivation, and self-enhancement presentation on WeChat

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Self-Esteem, Motivation,

and Self-Enhancement Presentation on WeChat

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
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Keywords: self-esteem, stability, self-enhancement biases, WeChat

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, thanks for always encouraging and supporting me.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to analyze whether self-esteem stability moderated the association between self-esteem level and the forms of self-enhancement strategies. Previous research has found that self-esteem level can predict the forms of self-enhancement, whereas the advances in the conceptualization of self-esteem recommend that the stability is another essential variable in terms of analyzing the relationship between self-esteem and self-enhancement. Depending on the relevant researches on use and gratification theory, which indicate that people use social media for self-enhancement and fulfilling their inner needs. This research focused on examining the forms of individual's self-enhance on WeChat Circle of Friends (COF) and how it influenced by the interaction between level and stability by analyzing 305 participants in China. The results of the study show that both level and stability was positively correlated with direct self-enhancement, but negatively correlated with indirect self-enhancement. Furthermore, the findings also show that self-esteem stability moderated the association between self-esteem level and direct self-enhancement such that individuals with stable high self-esteem reported higher levels of frequency in direct self-enhancement. However, the findings also revealed the self-esteem stability failed to moderate the association between level and indirect self-enhancement presentation. These results suggest that level and stability will interact to impact the forms of self-enhancement. The importance of considering both stability and level of self-esteem in analyses of self-enhancement presentation on social media is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Individual's online behavior has drawn significant attention from social psychological researchers (Jones, 1994). Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974) stated that how a person self-present online is a remarkable channel to recognize his or her psychological or sociological characteristics. Self-presentation contents can reflect an individual's some part of inner motives, needs, and desires. Some people tend to post their ideal self-views, whereas some of them prefer present self-disclosure contents online about their truly life and inner feeling (Rosenberg & Egbert, 2011). Researchers find the personality traits, self-esteem dimensions, and other psychological fields all have some degrees of correlation with individual social media behaviors. For instance, Buffardi and Campbell (2008) in their research confirmed that narcissism and eagerly aggrandizing self-image behavior online has higher levels of correlations. Use and gratification theory indicate that audience are autonomous and has the ability to choose specific media in order for gratifying their basic psychological needs. Researchers filtrated and categorized those psychological needs into several basic types: interpersonal motives, relationship maintenance, passing time, entertainment, companionship, self-efficacy, self-enhancement, gain cutting edge knowledge etc. (Sheldon, 2008, Joinson, 2003).

Among those, self-enhancement is one of the most common types conducting by individuals online. Allport (1973) indicated that self-enhancement is a "central goal for human existence". Shrauger (1975) proposed simple self-enhancement to illustrate that everyone wish to think good of self and drive to bolster the self-image thus others also think positive of them. A

great number of scholars, whether from sociology, philosophy, anthropology, psychology, and psychiatry field all endorsed self-enhancement as the principal force of human behavior. However, although everyone has the tendency to conduct the self-enhancement strategies, but people conduct it in disparity forms due to individual differences. Brown, Collins and Schimidt (1988) examined the association between self-esteem level and self-enhancement biases. Their findings show that people with higher levels of self-esteem tend to engage in direct forms of self-enhancement, whereas lower levels of self-esteem people tend to engage in indirect forms of self-enhancement. That is because how people behave self-enhance would impact by three conditions: private self-view, beliefs about whether other people would accept the image they present, and past experiences (Psyzczynski & Greenberg, 1987). High levels of self-esteem refer to a positive feeling toward self-image, or a person with worthiness. And low levels of self-esteem refer to inferior self-feelings, or a person with less worthiness. Therefore it is reasonable to explain why people with lower self-esteem prefer enhance self-image indirectly and higher levels of self-esteem people prefer direct way. Lower self-esteem individual hold more negative views toward self and doubt their competence in many areas, and also concern whether the positive self-image can be successful defended in other people's eyes. Thus those people tend to focus on present the relatedness with others or "bask in the glory" of other's achievement by underline their relationship with them (Cialdini et al., 1976). In contrast, higher self-esteem individual hold more positive views toward self and feel more confident about their competence, also believe other people regard them in the same way. Hence those people would not concern to enhance their self-image directly. However, this research ignored to include another important variable that is self-esteem stability when examining individual's self-enhancement forms online. Kernis stated that stability is a crucial dimension distinct from levels of self-esteem, and is

another variable that impact human behavior. Self-esteem stability refers to the magnitude of momentary fluctuations around a baseline level of self-esteem. The people who has more unstable self-esteem, regardless high or low level, has more contingent self-view, and highly concerned about external opinions toward them. Dependent self-esteem is another appropriate word to illustrate these people because they are unable constantly to achieve positive self-feelings and self-worth by self. The person who has more stable self-esteem is more secure toward their positive self-view. In another word, their positive self-worth is more independent and can obtain by self. In this case, stability is a crucial variable when analyzing individual's self-enhancement forms. For instance, an individual with high levels of self-esteem but low levels of stability may doubt self-views or competence now or then, by reason of the vague self-concept and highly sensitive toward others opinion. The unstable high self-esteem people may conduct both direct and indirect self-enhance strategies. It is logically to infer both self-esteem level and stability would interact to impact the forms of self-enhancement. Precisely, the following four types: stable high, stable low, unstable high and unstable low self-esteem people would conduct different forms and frequencies of the self-enhance strategies. Previous research focus on analyze the individual's self-enhance strategies offline, this research transfer offline self-enhance to online and use WeChat Moment as the experiment platform to determine the association between self-esteem level, self-esteem stability and the forms of self-enhancement presentation.

CHAPTER I:

SELF-ESTEEM OVERVIEW

The Evolution of Self-Esteem Definition

The researches of self-esteem have been analyzed for nearly 100 years, and it is still one of the most popular topics within sociological or psychological field. Individual's self-esteem is influenced by their characteristics, personality traits, cognitive processing system, etc. (Kernis, 2003). Due to the prevalent impact on human behaviors, self-esteem has become a valuable concept for social scientists, and there exists abundant literatures which come from diverse disciplinary theoretical perspectives.

The term self-esteem was first suggested by William James (1892) in his book *The Principles of Psychology*. He defined the self-esteem as a ratio of goal to attainment, in other word, the potentialities that we supposed obtained to the actualities of who we are. After that, the definition and component of self-esteem has been modified and improved by several researchers. Mruk (2006) described self-esteem coincides with William James but put in a different way. He suggests self-esteem as the relationship between two different attitudes within one person. The first attitude is this person's perfect image toward self, and second is this person's truly self-image. The larger differentiation those two attitudes are, the lower the person's self-esteem inclined to be. Besides, Coopersmith (1967) states that self-esteem refers to individuals' beliefs toward themselves, whether it is positive or negative, worthiness or not. In 1969, Nathaniel

Branden claims that self-esteem is a fundamental of human needs, and it integrates by the personal efficacy and self-respect. Moreover, Smelser (1989) specified the concept in three components which combined a cognitive aspect, affective aspect as well as evaluative element. Specifically, the cognitive element is characterize some parts of individual's personality, such as enthusiasm, ambitious or aggressive; the affective part is the association between the degree of positiveness or negativeness attitudes and those cognitive terms. This part can reflect the levels of person's self-esteem, which is high or low; the evaluative part is a person's optimal standard and this person's feeling of worthiness linked to the standard (Mruk, p11). Heatherton and Wyland (2003) indicate that the self-esteem is the emotional evaluation toward their self-concepts. Furthermore, the most popular definition of self-esteem which recognized by the public was proposed by Rosenberg (1965). He suggested that self-esteem is a positive or negative attitude toward oneself. The individual who with high levels of self-esteem would feel that he is a valuable object, or a person with worthiness. This person feels full of respect toward self but would not have superior perception when comparing with others (p.30).

Each major definition of self-esteem is crucial and they all advise meaningful perspectives about this vital human phenomenon from different approaches. If integrate all of those explanations and ingredients, the concept of self-esteem can be refining as an individual's feelings of positiveness or negativeness toward his or her self-concepts; whether this person treating the self as an worthiness object; and whether this person accept the truly self-image.

Self-Esteem Dimension: Stability and Level

Previous findings show that high self-esteem is correlating with several positive functioning, such as satisfying personal adjustment, internal control, the sense of autonomy etc. And low self-

esteem is correlating with feelings of inadequacy, consistent anxiety, depression, unworthiness, suicide inclination and other mental health disorder issues (Mruk, 2006). Battistich, Solomon and Delucchi (1993) claims that people who lack of self-esteem is not that popular comparing with those people who have higher self-esteem. Depending on those researches, it seems that bolster self-esteem is a necessity thing for pursuing better quality of life. Indeed, currently, teachers, parents or therapists are all focusing on boosting children's self-esteem due to the presumptions that high self-esteem would generate positive benefits and consequences, whereas lack of self-esteem would lead to social issues. A Personal and Social Responsibility task force was been fund by the governor of California George Deukmeijian for several years, since the assemblyman John Vasconcellos proposed that raising people's self-esteem would work out numerous the state's issues, such as drug abuse, crime behavior, students' performance and school achievement, teenage pregnancy etc. What's more, the task force assembled a team of researchers to do this survey. On the contrary, one of the researchers, Smelser (1989) reported that the data did not validate the previous anticipation from the task force. There has no firsthand evidence show that low self-esteem would cause such social problems.

The lack of supportive data questioned the conductions which is roughly bolster individual's self-esteem. In fact, there exist skeptical voices that query whether the high self-esteem brings absolutely advantages at that time. A research finding reveals that some high self-esteem individuals have higher levels of defensive or Narcissistic characteristics (Campbell et al, 2003). Salmivalli (1999) use a word "heterogeneity" of self-esteem to describe this phenomenon. Also, some people who lack of self-esteem do not reflect the tendencies of depression or suicide, and this result is contradicted with traditional findings linking low self-esteem to mental disorder symptoms (Harter, 1993). Baumeister, Tice and Hutton (1989)'s research outcomes are coupled

with this idea, and further advised that low self-esteem people do not truly loath themselves, but merely ambivalent or confused toward their self-feelings and self-concept. Given these partially contradictory or even mutually exclusive evidences, social scientists doubt that whether there only exist one dimension within self-esteem, or in other word, whether the level of self-esteem is the exclusive concerns when analyzing pertinent studies. If it does, which means all the human being's self-esteem has long-term stability trait and would not change. However, several researchers have questioned this assumption. Conley (1984) argued that individual's self-esteem is deeply impact by environment factors including interpersonal relationships, social comparison as well as personal fulfillment, thus threaten its stability. Progressively, researchers from diverse major department concurred with the belief that self-esteem can change over time and fluctuate on momentary period (Webster et al, 2017).

Currently, researchers use terms trait and state to distinguish two conditions within self-esteem. Trait refers to the average level of self-esteem over situations or time, and state refers to the short-time fluctuations during a given period. What's more, some researchers use term "baseline" to illustrate trait condition, and use term "barometric" to illustrate state condition. Accordingly, these assumptions all suggest that stability of self-esteem is a dimension distinct from levels of self-esteem within a person (Kernis, Grannemann, & Barclay, 1992). As noted before, self-esteem stability refers to the magnitude of momentary fluctuations around a baseline level of self-esteem. More precisely, it is measured as the standard deviation of person's self-esteem scores across daily assessment. The higher standard deviation of the individual's several times state score during regular interval periods, the more unstable of this person's self-esteem (Seery, Blascovich, Weisbuch, & Brooke Vick, 2004). In conclusion, there exist not only one dimension within self-esteem, which is high or low, stability is also another essential facet when

analyzing this social psychology topic. Therefore, this research examines both stability and level of self-esteem as predictors of individual's tendencies when using social media platforms, and analyzes their different motivation inclinations behind.

Differences between Stable and Unstable Self-Esteem

There are several differences between stable and unstable self-esteem. Kernis, Grannemann, and Barclay (1992) found that people with unstable self-esteem are more inclined to experiences anger and hostility compare with stable self-esteem individuals, especially for unstable high self-esteem people (Kernis, Grannemann, & Barclay, 1989). The unstable self-esteem people has contingent self-view and highly concerned about how other people evaluate them. They are extremely ego-involved in daily activities and very sensitive toward implicit or explicit disapproval messages. In other words, the unstable self-esteem people is comparatively vulnerable and continuously feeling insecure and threats from outside world. Their self-view are dependent on other people's opinions such as friends, peers, families, leaders, even strangers. Their self-worth are also threatened by those opinions and impacted by recent achievements or failures. For example, those people would define themselves worthless or stupid when receiving poor grades or performing unsuccessfully. What's more, the unstable self-esteem people report lack of autonomous and self-determining when confronting choices making. They would feel pressure or controlled when behaving front outside. Kernis (2005) research findings also stated that the unstable individuals experience more extreme feelings than the stable people. Because the positive outcomes in daily life made them feel better about self and have a sense of superior than others, conversely, the negative outcomes made them feel worse about self and obtain a sense of inferior then others. Due to the strong desire of feeling good about self, but lack of self-

references when defining themselves, the unstable self-esteem people are incapable to consistently achieve positive feelings of self-worth (Kernis, 2003). The core characteristics of unstable high or low are the same: impoverished self-concept, high ego-involved in daily life, fluctuate self-worth.

On the contrary, comparing with unstable self-esteem groups, the people with more stable self-esteem are acting widely divergent. Kernis use a word "optimal" to describe the nature of stable self-esteem. Basically, those people have anchored and secure positive self-worth. Their psychological adjustments are inclined to be more positive than unstable people. Stable self-esteem individuals are truly accepting and valuing the characteristics within them, whether it is good or imperfection. Although they always have positive feelings toward self, distinct from unstable people is they do not feel superior to other people even though they gain successful achievements. Equally as well, once they failed, they would neither gauge their worthiness nor self-value by this negative outcome. It does not mean they feel careless toward those events, indeed, enjoyment or disappointment feelings would also be experienced by those stable self-esteem individuals. However, they rarely ego-evolved in daily life (Deci & Ryan, 1995). The stable self-esteem people who have solid and clear self-concept, act autonomously and truly for inner needs, and have substantial self-worth which is not depend on others opinions (Kernis, 2003).

In brief, the stable and unstable self-esteem people have following basic two differences: first is the extent to invest their worthiness in daily achievements; second is the extent to which their self-concepts are indigent (Kernis, 1995).

Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

The integrated beliefs or aspects of how one perceives self are called self-concept. A person has clear self-concept means this person is aware of self (Baumeister, 1999). Individual's self-esteem is largely influenced by their self-concept. That is because, inherently, self-esteem is one's opinion toward "self", which is who they are and how they defined it. In another word, people's evaluative component toward their self-concept can reflect their self-esteem (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). Besides, the certainty toward self-concept would impact the levels or stability of their self-esteem. Self-concept clarity refers to the extent of one's self-beliefs are clear and contents of self are confidently defined (Campbell, 1990). Rosenberg (1989) stated that a person would "deprived of his most valuable frame of references" if this person has unstable or uncertain attitude, knowledge or feelings of self (p.153). Previously, there only exist researches to demonstrate the correlations between identity and self-esteem, which presented by Adler (1954) and Marcia et al (1980). Those researchers suggested that people who have higher levels of identity would possess higher levels of self-esteem.

However, the clue of correlations between self-esteem and self-concept are insufficient until recently. Since the construct of identity is partially overlapped with self-concept clarity, Campbell (1990) proposed that there has a positive relationship between the high levels of self-concept and higher self-esteem. In fact, his research findings proved the proposition and further stated that low self-esteem individuals do have uncertain self-concept compare with individuals who is high. Their self-concept is more dependent, susceptible, lack confidence of self-description, fluctuate constantly, and easily impact by "external self-relevant stimuli". Moreover, low self-esteem people's self-concept is internally inconsistent. Some researchers find that the low self-esteem people would avoid success or maintain their negative self-feelings by cause of it is match their preexisting self-image. These findings are coincided with the consistency theory

and indicate an unconditional phenomenon which is the low self-esteem people have clearly negative self-concept and hardly influence by others. The differences between this conclusion and Campbell's finding demonstrate that some low self-esteem people are certain toward their self-image, but some are not. In terms of the "heterogeneity" of low self-esteem, Marecek and Mettee (1972) found that only the individuals who are certain toward their negative self-image would avoided success, but the individuals who are not that certain would also pursue better self and conduct self-enhancement strategies. Thus, according to those findings we can rephrase the sentence: the unstable low self-esteem people are more uncertainty toward their self-concept compare with the stable low.

CHAPTER II

SELF-ENHANCEMENT AND SELF-ESTEEM

Self-Enhancement Need

Self-enhancement has been considered one of the innate psychological needs within human beings (Allport, 1961). Generally speaking, it involves "taking a tendentiously positive view of oneself" (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008). During the enhancement process, regardless of interpersonal actions or merely cognitive mechanism, the main purpose is to emphasize a belief that one is competent and valuable human being (Rogers, 2012). It is a type of motivation that drives individual doing actions to enhance self-feelings and maintain self-esteem. A great number of scientists endorsed self-enhancement needs as a "principal force of human behavior" (Brown, Collins & Schimidt).

There are two theories also support this idea. From self-determination theory, it postulates three universal psychological needs: relatedness, competence and autonomy. Competence refers to the desire to feel control and masters the outside environment; feel "self" as an object that having several positive identities and outcomes; to feel self-efficacy when dealing with external events. Relatedness means the desire of feel connectedness with other people, to experience caring from surroundings, and the wish to possess affectionate relationships. In a word, relatedness is a need of feeling belongingness. Autonomy need concerns with the urge to behave "in harmony with our integrated self", having sense of free will and acting out of own values and

truly interests (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Among these, self-enhancement need is a sense of feeling competence. Enhancing self-image or linking positive identities and personalities to "self" is an effective way to make other people feel good about you, also make you feel capacity at the same time.

Additionally, Cognitive-experiential self-theory (CEST) also embrace the idea that self-enhancement is human's essential need. CEST is an integrated global theory of personality included learning theory, cognitive scientific views on information processing, psychodynamic theory etc. There exist countless ties between CEST theory and self-esteem as well as self-concept. According to this theory, rather than have independent views about "self", people's views toward themselves are dependent on several external causes such as past experiences, behaviors, personalities and grows through its interactions with other people. And those views combined into an appropriate and sequential conceptual system (Epstein, 1998). Generally speaking, CEST proposes that people process information and respond to the world on two systems: rational and experiential. It is two separate systems for individuals to adapt reality. These two independent systems interact with each other and influence people to make choices. Behind each of choice reflects individual's needs. Human's basic needs motivated them to process need-relevant information and would respond to either rational or experiential system. After completing these processes and synthesizing materials, people would choose an action which mostly fitting their prior needs. The CEST theory suggests that human have four basic needs: pursue pleasure, self-enhancement, self-verification and relatedness. This conclusion are basically coincide with Hull's human's innate psychological needs approach, as well as the self-determination theory approach.

There are two types of self-enhancement strategies: self-advancement and self-protection.

The former strategy helps individual enhance positive self-concepts, and the subsequent strategy helps individual reduce negative self-concept. It may occur in front of the public or present in private. Some people may aware they are using this strategy, whereas some are not but just apply it unconsciously. Human evolutionism theory indicates that due to the survival desire from individual's inner heart, the competence and powerful individuals are more attractive and favorable in society. Thus, people prefer to show their positive side to attract other people and achieve social bonding or rich resources. This situation may occur primarily on individual with higher level of self-esteem. Whereas, some people feel less of self-efficacy due to the past frustrated unsuccessful experiences, feel less belongingness and relatedness from society and surroundings, or overly accepted negative feedbacks from outside, these factors would combined lead to a bad consequence that is lower individual's self-esteem. In this case, people with lower self-esteem are afraid of bolster self-image because concerns about other people would not buy it. They are not confident toward their personalities. Notwithstanding, although low self-esteem people feel hard to straightly enhance self-image, it does not mean they would not try to bolster their self-esteem. As mentioned before, self-enhancement need is human's instinct desire and would urge individuals to behave it in different forms at different situations. From Brown and his colleague's perspective (1988), lower self-esteem people also wish to enhance their self-feelings, even eagerly than higher self-esteem people. Although they may conduct it in different way.

Direct versus Indirect Forms of Self-Enhancement

Although people with regardless high or low self-esteem all tent to conduct self-enhancement strategies, but they may conduct it in different forms. The reason is the high or low individuals may all have stronger wishes to "think well of themselves", but the ways to conduct

it may varied by several differences such as: self-perception tendencies, beliefs of how other people may think about themselves, and evidence processing from the environment (Brown, Collins & Schimidt, 1988). In a research, Brown and his colleagues proposed that people with high self-esteem inclined to use direct form of self-enhancement, whereas people with low self-esteem tend to enhance self-worth indirectly. They identified the meanings of direct and indirect: direct form of self-enhance refers to the esteem-enhancing behavior basically focuses on "self" image; and indirect form of self-enhance refers to the enhancing behavior mainly focuses on exhibit good relationships with other people. More precisely, direct self-enhance is directly link the self to outstanding characteristics; and indirect self-enhance is indirectly link the self with others and highlight the close relationship between them. They further illustrate that because low self-esteem people tend to doubt their self-images and possess negative perceptions easily, it may causes them to doubt their competence in several areas. As a result, enhancing strategies directly applied to self may not easy for low self-esteem people to conduct, and they are hard to believe it would work for others due to the past failure experiences. Since instead of using direct self-enhance way, low self-esteem people are more likely to engage in indirect forms. Tesser and Campbell (1982)'s idea may also support this conclusion from other side. They stated that individuals can not only enhance their self-image through directly linking the self to successful identities, but can also bolster feelings of self-worth by pointing their positive relationships with others. For example, low self-esteem people may feel glory when linking themselves to successful people by emphasizing the close association between them (Cialdini et al., 1976). It is a roundabout way compare with directly linking self-image to positive factors. Cialdini (1976) called it as "bask in the reflected glory of other's accomplishments".

Combined sociometer and psychodynamic perspective, there also has a reason to believe that

low self-esteem people more prefer indirect forms of self-enhance. Robert White (1959) proposed a psychodynamic approach which indicate that the deprivation of an "agent" fundamental needs would causes physiological balance turbulence within this agent organism's normal state. The imbalance state triggers anxiety feelings hence arouses a drive state that motivate the agent behave in specific ways in order to fulfill the needs, which, in turn, weaken the tension as well as reconstruct homeostasis. The agent represents the "self" of each individual. Besides, Westen (1990) also proposed that human behaviors result from the interactions within several basic needs that beyond human's awareness and then making an final compromise which foster specific actions. Accordingly, when a person's basic needs are deficient, it would trigger tension feelings and motivate this person to conduct strategies and fulfill the desires. Also, environment would in turn influence each individual by decrease or enlarge their eagers toward needs, thus impact on behaviors. Preceding discussions demonstrate that human's self-esteem is related to their basic needs. As an alarm system within human's brain, the deprivation of basic needs such as lack of relatedness, would decrease self-esteem thus push human apply strategies for bolster self-esteem and restore homeostasis. And from a sociometer perspective, human beings have an innate need to be bonding with others. It proposes that self-esteem is a psychological gauge of interpersonal relationships (Leary et al, 1995). More specifically, self-esteem as an alarm system to measure individual's social relationships and interpersonal acceptance and rejection. It also monitors individual's behavior to adapt to social norms in order to accept by groups and society. Based on this theory, a person is more likely to obtain higher self-esteem if this person is having relational value. Leary and his colleagues (1995) further identified five groups linked to relational values that are categorized as the tremendous influence on human: the first is the macro-level, such as communities or societies; the second is coalitions,

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such as committees or teams; thirdly, is partner relationships; fourthly, is relative relationships; lastly, is normal friendships with other people. In brief, self-esteem serves as the "maintenance of interpersonal relations" (p.128). This innate desire of "need to belong" pushes individuals to maintain or aggrandize the likelihood of interpersonal acceptance. Such successful maintenance of social interactions depend on a system for interpret the cues such as approval, rejection, appreciation from social environment, and then alerts the individuals once they receive negative messages from outside. Self-esteem is the foundation of that system to motivate individuals behave in appropriate ways, and thus reduce the possibilities of being rejected by other people and survive in this world. Evidence shows that social exclusion and low levels of self-esteem has positive correlations. The person who is unpopular or excluded by groups would damage this person's self-esteem (Terdal & Leary, 1991). The fears of being exclusion from social groups motivate people actively engaged in social interactions and foster social ties, also in the meanwhile try to reduce the possibility of dislike by other people. As mentioned before, psychodynamic approach indicates there exists an alarm system within a person's brain which monitoring other people's reactions and the clues whether this person is falling into an included or excluded status. The assumptions also strongly supported by the sociometer theory. These two approaches all demonstrate that relatedness need is a fundamental motive in human behavior (Sullivan, 1953). It is crucial for human to retrieve love from others and approved by society. According to sociometer theory, the feelings of connectedness with outside would increase self-worthiness as well as positive self-feelings. If a person lack of close relations or enough acceptance then it would alarm self-esteem system thus trigger anxiety. Adler (1954) claims that poorly adjusted people inclined to doubt their self-worth, followed by constant desperate attempts to obtain appreciation, respect from others hence bolster self-esteem. Some of them

even sacrifice other basic needs for relatedness, for example engage in joyless activities or overly concerned about others feelings in order to gain approved from groups or peers. According to this theory, lack of relatedness or receive the exclusion messages from outside may reduce individual's self-esteem. In this case, some low self-esteem people may put the relationship needs as priority list. Directly enhance their self-image may not help them bolster self-esteem, but only linking themselves with others can reduce their anxiety. By showing the connectedness with peers may deliver a message that although this person may not that competence, but he or she is really kindness or friendly person hence it is worth to make friends with them.

In contrast, the high self-esteem people tend to conduct direct self-enhancement strategies. Thanks to the past successful experiences and achievements enable them to possess positive self-image in the most of time. Also, the high self-esteem people tend to have popular relationships, in this case, these people's priority need may not be connectedness, and instead they may focuses on self-competence.

In conclusion, low self-esteem people are more willing to conduct indirect self-enhance strategies, whereas high self-esteem people are inclined to use direct self-enhance strategies.

Self-Esteem Stability as a Moderator of Self-Esteem Level and Self-Enhancement

Although previous research has analyzed the relationships between self-esteem level and self-enhancement strategies. The findings are somewhat limited because they did not take the self-esteem stability into consideration. Previous chapters drew the differences between stable and unstable self-esteem. Individual with more stable self-esteem have more anchored self-views, secure self-worthiness and clear self-concept. Their self-feelings are hardly challenged by external factors such as negative opinions or unsuccessful experiences. In contrast, individual

with unstable self-esteem feel more threats from outside world. Their self-view are dependent and easily influenced by others judgment. Their self-worthiness fluctuate depend on their recent experiences. Because they lack of self-reference so that it is hard for them to consistently achieve positive self-feelings. The large disparities between stable and unstable indicate the importance of thinking self-esteem stability as a moderator of self-esteem and the forms of self-enhancement.

When considering how self-esteem level and self-esteem stability interact to impact the forms of self-enhancement, four types of self-esteem need to concern: the stable high self-esteem, the unstable high self-esteem, the unstable low self-esteem and the stable low self-esteem. First, individual with stable high self-esteem are confident of their self-image and ability, also those positive self-views are relatively independent and secure. In this case, they are unfettered by concerns that whether the positive identity can be defended. The stable high people can promoting self-image directly around "self" and not afraid of other people's judgements. So the stable high self-esteem people tend to engage in direct self-enhancement strategies. Second, individual with unstable high self-esteem are feel positive toward self-image in the most of time, however these good feelings are vulnerable and usually challenged by external factors. For them, the direct self-enhancement may useful in sometimes, but under specific circumstances such as when receiving poor evaluation by others or failed in an events, it is also hard for them to feel confident toward self-image thus drive them to conduct indirect forms. So the unstable high self-esteem people tend to engage in both direct and indirect self-enhancement strategies. Third, individual with unstable low self-esteem are feel negative toward self in the most of time. But because their self-feelings is also fluctuate and sometimes the positive comments from other people also makes them feel good for a short period of time, they would also engage in both

direct and indirect self-enhancement strategies, but the frequency of direct strategies is higher than the indirect forms. Lastly, individual with stable low self-esteem people are not only feel inferior but also truly believe in this negative self-esteem and hard changed by external factors. Previous findings show that the stable low self-esteem people are highly correlated with depression symptoms. Those people, according to self-determination theory, lack of relatedness and competence needs for a long period of time thus feel alienation from society. Their motivation largely decreased due to the deeply and long standing of frustrated experiences and feelings (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In the end, the stable low self-esteem people are less likely to engage in self-enhancement strategies because their motivations are largely decreased and not strong enough to drive them doing actions for enhancing self-esteem.

Self-esteem	Stable	Unstable
High	Higher levels of Direct	Direct + Indirect
Low	Low frequency of self-enhancement	Higher levels of indirect

Figure 1: Hypothesized Model

Figure 1 list the possible outcomes when combining both self-esteem level and self-esteem stability to examine how they interact to impact the forms of self-enhancement strategies.

CHAPTER III:

SELF-ESTEEM AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Background

Social media are computer-mediated Web2.0 technologies which include variety of Internet-based applications for engaging countless users to participate social interactions and distribute information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In recent years, the introduction of social media has substantially changed the means through which individual interact with other people and public. Due to the accessibility and promptness of social media, more and more people creating and sharing their sentiments or experiences on multiple platforms. Gradually, social media use becomes a necessity daily routine involved in the majority of people's life. Several popular social media platforms such as Facebook, WeChat, Twitter and Instagram supported a public places for individuals to interact, share, create, exchange messages with others. Via these specific platforms, people can build electronic profiles for self to attract other people. Also people can post self-relevant information such as daily events, interesting experiences, selfie and emotions, beliefs or preferences. By means of expressing a specific self-image and identity to the public such as physical appearance, competence and close relationships with others, individuals can obtain belongingness or self-efficacy feelings (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Thanks to the progressively development of social media technologies, as well as growing numbers of people transfer their center life from offline to online, individual's online behaviors

has drawn significant attention from social psychological researchers (Jones, 1994). Since behind the behaviors online are individual's motives, such motive drives individual to choose different self-presentation actions. Some people tend to post their ideal self-views, whereas some of them prefer conduct self-disclosure actions online that is present their truly life and inner feeling (Rosenberg & Egbert, 2011). Researchers find the personalities, self-esteem dimensions, and other psychological concepts all have some degrees of correlation with individual social media behaviors. Indeed, human's self-esteem may significant impact by peer acceptance, approval, disapproval, and interpersonal feedback via social media. And in turn, individuals self-esteem also impact how they conduct social media and fulfill their basic needs (Valkenburg et al., 2006). From the reciprocal effect, self-esteem can be seen as a variable to predict people's self-presentation strategies. On the other side, how a person present or describe his or her self-image can reflect this person's levels and stability of self-esteem. Those findings all raise researcher's interests to analyze the relationships between human's motives, self-esteem or personalities and online presentation.

Use and Gratification Theory

Use and gratification theory (UGT) is one of the influential theories in mass media research. It is audience-centered approach and based on origins of needs from social and psychological perspectives to understand mass communication (Roy, 2009). Basically, UGT is trying to interpret individual's motives when they choosing a specific media. Diverging from other media theories such as framing or cultivation that focus on figure out how media influence audience's choices as well as perceptions, UGT is focuses on understanding "what do people do with media" (Katz, 1959). This theory assumes that audience do not passively receive the messages

and ideas from media, instead, the audience are autonomous and has the ability to choose

specific media in order for gratifying their basic psychological needs. Which means audience's

satisfactions are dominant and has significant impact on social media trends. In another word, the

media companies are compete with each other to against information sources for mass's

gratifications. UGT provides some fundamental insights to illustrate the majority audience's

behaviors and attitudes about social media use from social psychological approach (Luo, 2002).

For better understanding and predicting what audience will achieve from media use,

researchers have proposed several motivation typologies for SSN. They filtrated and categorized

abundant information into following basic needs: interpersonal motives, relationship

maintenance, passing time, entertainment, companionship, self-efficacy, self-enhancement, gain

cutting edge knowledge etc. (Sheldon, 2008, Joinson, 2003). For instance, when affiliation with

other people online can fulfill individual's connectedness; sharing information and raises a hot

topic can fulfill people's self-efficacy feeling; posting perfect self-image pictures and receiving

others praise and positive comments can satisfy a person's self-enhancement need; TV shows

and funny news can entertain mass audiences.

Some researchers analyzed each of the famous social media platforms and determined what

specific needs they fulfill. By means of analyzing individual's self-presentation online can probe

the motivations behind. Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974) stated that individual's social media

behavior is a remarkable channel to recognize his or her psychological or sociological

characteristics. Because behind the media choices and behaviors are the person's inner motives

and specific need, desires or motivations can reflect a person's personality, preferences as well as

self-esteem dimensions. Later some researchers linked specific social media platform with

individual's personality and self-esteem for finding the correlations between. Outcomes show

that individual's self-presentation style truly can reflect the motivation behind and predict the person's self-esteem and personality, and vice versa. As a result, self-esteem is a variable that can predict individual's online presentation.

WeChat

WeChat is one of the most famous social media platforms in China which launched by Tencent Holdings Ltd on January 21, 2011. It has similar functions to Facebook or WhatsApp that can send instant texts，hold-to-talk voice messages, one-to-many messages, photo and video sharing, locating sharing and so on. In addition, WeChat has other general and special functions such as sharing "Moments" on Circle of Friends (COF), WeChat Pay payment services, city services, friend seek, index, WeChat out, several mini programs etc. It is free to download and supports almost all company smartphones. In 2013, the Tencent Company was announced that WeChat has been reached 355 million monthly active users at the end of this year, and already launched over 200 countries and supports eighteen countries languages. Researchers also apply use and gratification theory to analyze audience's motivations when they using WeChat. Relevant findings show reasons that motivate people to use WeChat are including socializing with friends; create and present positive self-image in WeChat Moment; entertaining; achieve information (Chang & Zhu, 2011). WeChat Moment is one of the functions and support a platform for people to self-present. Moment allows users to post selfies, update life experiences, share music and video, transfer news and articles, as well as immediate private feelings. After that individuals may receive comments, replies, and virtual likes from peers or relatives. The distinction from WeChat Moment to other social media platform is the privacy character. That is only the person who adds the user is able to see their Moment contents as well

as comments. Moreover, this person is only able to view the likes and comments from other users only if they are mutual friends. This function differentiates WeChat with other platforms and it is one of the key reasons why people are more willing to post their self-relevant information via Moments but not blog or QQ. Sun, Liu and Yang (2017) in their research reported that WeChat users are prefer to present pictures in which they looks better than what they truly are, or posting the pictures which show the close connectedness relationship with their friends. They tend to present positive aspects of their life and create a better self-image online.

In terms of the self-enhancement behaviors on WeChat COF, this research collected abundant of data and selected the highest frequency of self-enhance contents that appears on COF and classified them into direct and indirect forms. The direct self-enhancement contents include: enhance self-image; personal taste or preference toward music, film, food etc.; recent or past achievements; personal advantage or skills. The indirect self-enhancement contents include: photos with another famous person or people who achieve accomplishment; photos that can reflect connectedness relationships with friends, partners, relatives or coworkers; party moments etc. Direct self-enhancement contents basically focus on the "self", and indirect contents basically focus on the relationship with others.

CHAPTER IV:

HYPOTHESIS

Previous chapters propose that self-esteem stability is another crucial factor that can impact individual's self-enhancement presentation biases online. The unstable self-esteem people are more insecure toward self-image and their self-feelings fluctuate over time, thus compare with stable self-esteem people, they tend to engage in higher frequency of indirect self-enhancement presentation. Therefore, the first hypothesis is:

H1: As self-esteem stability decreases, the use of indirect self-enhancement presentation will increase.

This research also willing to figure out whether the self-esteem level and self-esteem stability will interact to impact the forms of self-enhancement strategies on COF. As discussed before, when take both level and stability into consideration, there are four possible outcomes based on logical inference from previous literature review: the stable high self-esteem tend to engage in direct self-enhancement forms; the unstable high self-esteem people tend to engage in both direct and indirect self-enhancement; the unstable low self-esteem people, on the contrary, tend to engage in indirect self-enhancement; and the stable low self-esteem are less likely to engage in self-enhancement, regardless high or low on COF. Accordingly:

H2: Self-esteem level and self-esteem stability will interact to impact the forms of self-enhancement presentations.

CHAPTER V:

METHODOLOGY

Method

The current research was a survey-based study focused on analyzing the association between self-esteem level, self-esteem stability, and direct versus indirect self-enhancement forms. The survey included four parts: the first part is analyzing their levels of self-esteem; second is examine the stability of their self-esteem; third step is to test the degrees of their direct or indirect self-enhancement frequency. The final step is to collect their demographics and other self-relevant information. No interferences occurred during the whole section. Participants are Chinese young adults whose age ranges from 18 to 45 and use WeChat in their daily life.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was constructed via one of the most famous online survey websites named Sojump in China. Survey was randomly collected from multiple social media platforms such as Wechat, Sina Weibo, QQ, forum etc. The total sample size is 305. Table-1 summarized the demographic structure of the sample. Table-2 describes how many participants usually use WeChat.

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Table-1: The descriptive frequency of each demographic category

Demographic Items		Frequency	Percent	Total
Gender	Male	145	47.5%	305
	Female	160	52.5%	
Educational Level	High school	5	1.6%	305
	Vocational Education	36	11.8%	
	Undergraduate	213	69.8%	
	Graduate	49	16.1%	
	PhD	2	0.7%	
Age range	18-25	93	30.5%	305
	26-30	126	41.3%	
	31-40	65	21.3%	
	40-45	21	6.9%	

Table-2: Do you use WeChat in your daily life?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	303	99.3	99.3	99.3
	no	2	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	305	100.0	100.0	

Measures

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

The first part assesses self-esteem level by using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem 10-item scale (Rosenberg, 1965). This scale is well known to measure individual's positive and negative attitude toward their self-worth. Participants are instructed to complete this part according to how they typically or generally feel about self. The responses scale range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher values indicate higher levels of self-esteem. This scale is regarded as un-dimensional, well validated, reliable, and internally consistent (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991).

Self-esteem stability

The second part assesses self-esteem stability using the 5 revised items of Rosenberg Stability of Self Scale (RSSS; Webster, Smith, Brunell, Paddock & Nezlek, 2017), as well as the 5-item of Labile Self-Esteem Scale (LSES; Dykman, 1998). The combined scale measures the extent of self-esteem fluctuation. Participants stated how true each statement for them on a 5-point rating scale. Higher values demonstrate greater self-esteem stability. Webster and his colleagues (2017) claims that revised RSSS showed "high test-retest reliability and high

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convergent validity with the LSES". Internal consistency for the LSES scale was α = .83 at Time 1 and α = .86 at Time 2. The LSES also well validated and shows high correlation with standard self-esteem level scale (Cremer & Sedikides, 2005).

Self-enhancement intensity test

The third part assesses the participant's intensity of self-enhancement conductions. It is new, created scale by the author by means of collecting abundant of contents from WeChat Moment and basically categorized into two motivations: direct self-enhancement and indirect self-enhancement. It is an 18-item scale. Participants choose the frequency of each statement on a 5-point scale. Higher intensity in direct self-enhance statements indicates higher motivations to use direct self-enhancement strategies. Higher intensity in indirect self-enhance statements shows higher motivations to conduct indirect self-enhancement.

CHAPTER VI:

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics:

Table-3 presents the means and standard deviations of each of the descriptive statements used to measure self-esteem level (SEL), self-esteem stability (SES), and self-enhancement present on COF.

Table-3: Descriptive Statistics (N=305)

	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
SEL-1	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	3.19	1.030
SEL-2	At times I think I am no good at all.	3.09	1.229
SEL-3	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	3.06	1.333
SEL-4	I am able to do things as well as most other people	3.38	1.405
SEL-5	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	3.22	1.179
SEL-6	I certainly feel useless at times.	3.12	1.200

Table-3: Descriptive Statistics (N=305) continued

SEL-7	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	3.39	1.071
SEL-8	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	1.70	0.690
SEL-9	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	3.41	1.266
SEL-10	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	3.39	1.128
SES-1	My opinion of myself tends to change a good deal instead of always remaining the same.	2.57	1.014
SES-2	I find that on one day I have one opinion of myself and on another day I have a different opinion.	2.79	1.120
SES-3	I change from a very good opinion from myself to a very poor opinion of myself.	2.80	1.296
SES-4	I have noticed that my ideas about myself seem to change very quickly.	2.90	1.197
SES-5	I feel that nothing can change the opinion I currently hold of myself.	2.60	1.008
SES-6	I notice that how good I feel about myself changes from day to day (or hour to hour).	2.80	1.136
SES-7	How I feel about myself stays pretty much the same from day to day.	2.61	1.008
SES-8	My self-esteem shifts rapidly from feeling good about myself on one day to feeling bad about myself the next day.	2.80	1.238
SES-9	I'm often feeling good about myself one minute, and down on myself the next minute.	2.99	1.260
SES-10	Compared to most people, my self-esteem changes rapidly.	2.91	1.138
Q1	I present my personal skills on WeChat Moment. (Direct)	3.06	0.946

Table-3: Descriptive Statistics (N=305) continued

Q2	I write comments that related to movies/music/news/events etc. on WeChat Moment for sharing my distinctive insights/opinions/perspectives/attitudes. (Direct)	2.96	0.949
Q3	I post selfies that are embellished by applications or photo software in order to show the better image of myself on WeChat Moment. (Direct)	3.38	1.393
Q4	I present the romantic/intimate relationship between me and my partner on WeChat Moment. (Indirect)	3.12	1.419
Q5	I present the closeness relationships between me and my relatives on WeChat Moment.(Indirect)	3.16	1.275
Q6	I present the positive relationships between me and other people (friends/peers/coworkers/leaders etc.) on WeChat Moment. (Indirect)	3.14	1.284
Q7	I share the recent hang-out/party/event experiences with other people on WeChat Moment.(Indirect)	3.40	1.152
Q8	I share my recent/past achievements (honors/awards/academic accomplishment etc.) on WeChat Moment. (Direct)	2.61	1.136
Q9	I present my perfect body image on WeChat Moment. (Direct)	3.25	1.457
Q10	I present my personal items which are expensive or can reflect my social status on WeChat Moment. (Direct)	2.08	1.103
Q11	I share the gifts that other people buy for me on WeChat Moment. (Indirect)	2.92	1.171

Table-3: Descriptive Statistics (N=305) continued

Q12	I'd like to show the relationship between me and people who are successful/attractiveness. (Indirect)	2.70	1.330
Q13	I'd like to share the information related to the famous person that I admire on WeChat Moment. (Indirect)	2.93	1.146
Q14	I'd like to present my unique/good tasting toward music/film/food/costume/fashion etc. on WeChat Moment. (Direct)	2.94	0.973

Table-4 presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for the measures of self-esteem level, self-esteem stability, and self-enhancement intensity. Self-esteem level and stability was positively associated with direct self-enhancement, whereas both was negatively associated with indirect self-enhancement.. The two forms of self-enhancement were positively associated with each other.

Table-4. Descriptive and correlations for self-esteem, self-esteem stability, direct and indirect self-enhancement strategies (N = 305)

Variable	Scale Reliability	Mean	Standard deviation	1	2	3	4
1. Self-esteem	.957	3.06	.80	- -			
2. Self-esteem stability	.945	3.07	.79	.49**	- -		
3. Direct self-enhancement	.893	3.03	1.01	.46**	.68**	- -	
4. Indirect self-enhancement	.948	2.89	.84	-.22**	-.33**	.57**	- -

Note: All correlations are significant at *p* < .01 (two-tailed).

The hypotheses were examined with two multiple regression analyses. The first analysis regressed direct self-enhancement strategies on self-esteem, self-esteem stability, and their interaction. The second analysis regressed indirect self-enhancement strategies on the same predictors. For each analysis, hierarchical entry was used such that self-esteem level and self-esteem stability scores were entered simultaneously in the first step, and then followed by their interaction in the second step. Table-5 reports the results of the multiple regression analysis.

Table-5. Summary of multiple regression analyses for variables predicting direct and indirect self-enhancement strategies (N = 305)

Variable	Direct self-enhancement			Indirect self-enhancement		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Self-esteem (SE)	.971	.157	.769**	-.817	.327	-.774**
Self-esteem stability (SES)	1.39	.101	.734**	-.887	.310	-.837**
SE x SES Interaction	.601	.086	.851**	.082	.090	.276
Overall R^2 for the model		.552			.300	
F-statistic for the model		188.105**			65.086**	

** $p < .001$

Direct self-enhancement.

The results indicate that the model with only self-esteem level and self-esteem stability explained a significant amount of variance in direct self-enhancement strategies, $R^2 = .479$,

$F(2, 302) = 139.044, p < .001$. The addition of the self-esteem and self-esteem stability

interaction explained an additional significant amount of variance, R^2-change = .073, F-change

$(1, 301) = 49.061, p < .001$.

To further examine the interaction, it was probed using the Aiken and West (1991)

approach of examining moderation at points one standard deviation above and one below the

mean of the moderator variable (self-esteem stability). As shown in Table 5, self-esteem level (β

= .300, $p < .001$) significantly predicted direct self-enhancement strategies at one standard

deviation above the mean of self-esteem stability. Higher self-esteem positively predicted greater

use of direct self-enhancement strategies. Table 5 also shows that, at one standard deviation

below the mean of self-esteem stability, self-esteem (β = -.456, $p < .001$) negatively and

significantly predicted the use of indirect self-enhancement strategies. Lower self-esteem

predicted greater use of indirect self-enhancement strategies.

Indirect self-enhancement.

As with indirect self-enhancement strategies, the results show that the model with self-

esteem and self-esteem stability explained a significant amount of variance in indirect self-

enhancement strategies, R^2 =.299, $F(2, 302) = 64.258, p < .001$. However, adding the self-esteem

x self-esteem stability interaction did not account for an additional significant amount of

variance, R^2-change = .002, F-change $(1, 301) = .828, p = .364$. Lower self-esteem ($\beta$ = -.774, p

= .013) and less self-esteem stability (β = -.837, $p = .005$) predicted greater use of indirect self-

enhancement strategies.

CHAPTER VII:

DISCUSSION

The present study analyzed whether self-esteem stability also impacts the forms of self-enhancement, and whether self-esteem stability moderated the associations that self-esteem level had with self-enhancement. This study proposed two hypotheses: first, people with more unstable self-esteem tend to present indirect self-enhancement contents than people with stable self-esteem; second, the self-esteem level and stability will interact to influence the forms of self-enhancement strategies. Depending on the previous findings about high level self-esteem people tend to engage in direct self-esteem, and low level self-esteem people tend to engage in indirect self-esteem. It seems that individuals with high self-esteem may be more likely to expect acceptance from social environment, and confidence about the "self", so it is easier for them to present positive self-image directly. Whereas, individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to expect rejection due to their inferiority self-feelings, thus instead of bolster "self", they tend to enhance self-image indirectly. In terms of self-esteem stability, people with more stable self-esteem, which means their self-feelings is independent and consistently, rarely fluctuate over time and hard to disturb by external factors, are more willing to "exhibit esteem-enhancing that explicitly center around self" (Brown, Collins & Schimidt, 1988). However, people with more unstable self-esteem, which means their positive self-feelings is insecure and is not able to

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constantly achieve it by themselves, they are more willing to engage in both direct and indirect self-enhancement strategies.

The data supported partial of the hypotheses. First, for the direct self-enhancement presentation on COF, table 2 shows that when controlling self-esteem stability variable and self-esteem level interact self-esteem stability variable, the self-esteem level is highly positively correlated with direct self-enhancement. When controlling self-esteem level and self-esteem level interact self-esteem stability variable, the self-esteem stability is also highly positively correlated with direct self-enhancement. Additionally, when examining whether self-esteem stability moderated the self-esteem level and direct self-enhancement strategies, the results show that self-esteem level interact with self-esteem stability is positively associated with direct self-enhancement. These findings are accordance with Brown and his colleagues assumptions that high self-esteem is prefer enhance self-image directly. Furthermore, it is support the hypothesis that stable self-esteem people tend to engage in direct form of self-enhance. Also, it is partially support the second hypothesis that self-esteem level significantly predicted direct self-enhancement strategies at one standard deviation above the mean of self-esteem stability. Which means individual who has higher levels and more stable self-esteem would more likely to engage in direct self-enhancement presentation than individual who has lower level or more unstable self-esteem. This result show that people who hold positive views toward self-worthiness, feel confidence about their competence, and self-esteem would not easily changed over time or impact by the external factors, would more likely to present the aggrandizement contents that is basically around "self". On the contrary, people who sometimes or most of time hold negative views toward self-worthiness, do not believe about their competence in many areas, and self-

esteem easily fluctuate during the short period of time would more likely to present the aggrandizement contents that is basically around the relationship with others.

In terms of the indirect self-enhancement presentation on COF, table 2 show that when controlling self-esteem stability variable and self-esteem level interact self-esteem stability variable, the self-esteem level is highly negatively correlated with indirect self-enhancement. When controlling self-esteem level and self-esteem level interact self-esteem stability variable, the self-esteem stability is also highly negatively correlated with indirect self-enhancement. Additionally, when examining whether self-esteem stability moderated the self-esteem level and the indirect self-enhancement strategies, the results failed to show the significance association between self-esteem levels interact self-esteem stability and indirect self-enhancement strategies. These findings are also accordance with Brown (1988) that low self-esteem is preferring bolster self-image indirectly. Besides, it is partially support the hypothesis that unstable self-esteem people tend to engage in both direct and indirect form of self-enhance. But it is failed to support the second hypothesis that self-esteem level significantly predicted indirect self-enhancement strategies at one standard deviation above the mean of self-esteem stability. This result show that people who hold negative views toward self-worthiness, feel doubt about their competence, would more likely to present the aggrandizement contents that is basically around relationship with other people. Moreover, individual whose self-esteem easily fluctuate during the short period of time would also more likely to present the aggrandizement contents indirectly. However, the results are not able to prove that unstable low self-esteem people are more tend to engage in indirect self-enhancement.

This results show that when self-esteem level and stability interact with each other can impact the forms of self-enhancement. Precisely, individuals with higher level and higher

stability self-esteem tend to engage in higher levels of direct self-enhancement. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis model that people with stable positive self-feelings tend to post the enhancing information that is basically relevant to "self". Because of the long-standing constant good judgments toward self gives them enough confidence to directly linking the outstanding characteristics to self. And high stable self-esteem people also believe that others would hold the same positive feelings toward them. Thus it is convincing for them to conduct self-enhancing strategies in direct way. However, results show that when self-esteem level and stability interact with each other were failed to impact the indirect self-enhancement. This finding is inconsistent with the hypothesis model and indicates that unstable low self-esteem people do not engage in indirect self-enhancement presentation. The possible reason to explain this result is that may be the individual's motivation of social media use largely decreased due to the fluctuate of low levels of self-esteem. Unstable low self-esteem has been considered to be positively associated with the depression symptoms; the depression feelings would decrease an individual's desire or motivation toward life. Whether it is enhancing competence feelings or pursues closeness relationships. People with unstable low self-esteem would tend to have a sense of detachment with society. That is the possible reason to explain why the self-esteem stability was failed to moderate the self-esteem level and the forms of self-enhancement strategies.

In brief, the findings indicate that both self-esteem level and stability can significantly predict the forms of either direct or indirect self-enhancement presentation on WeChat. Use and gratification theory indicate that people self-present on social media platform for specific inner needs, those needs somewhat impact by higher or lower, stable or unstable self-esteem hence limited how they fulfilled online.

CHAPTER VIII:

CONCLUSION

There are two dimensions within self-esteem: the level and the stability. Previously, the researchers from psychology or sociology only focus on analyze the high or low of self-esteem, the stability gradually been mentioned and underlined until recent years. Self-esteem is a crucial variable in social psychological research and has significant impact on human's motivation and behavior. How people present themselves in daily life will impact by their self-esteem. Recent researches indicate that people with high levels of self-esteem conduct the self-enhancement strategies in different forms compare with low self-esteem people. Precisely, the formers inclined to present direct self-enhancement contents, and latter tent to show indirect way. However, this research only examined the self-esteem level and self-enhancement biases, but ignored the self-esteem stability is another crucial factors that can moderate this two variables.

The main purpose of this research is to analyze whether the self-esteem stability is also impact the self-enhancement biases, and whether self-esteem level and stability can interact to impact this biases. Previous research only test individual's difference in self-enhancement biases offline. Whereas, due to the individual's self-enhancement behaviors extend from fact-to-face to social site network, also based on Use and gratification theory, which indicate that people now use specific social media platforms to present self for fulfilling their inner needs. The present study was examined whether the two dimensions within self-esteem would interact to influence

individual's self-enhancement biases on WeChat COF.

Consistent with previous findings, the results show that levels of self-esteem is highly positive correlated with direct self-enhancement, and negative correlated with indirect self-enhancement. Moreover, the results also indicate that the self-esteem stability also highly positive associated with direct forms whereas negative associated with indirect forms. The present findings show an additional significant amount of variance when the self-esteem level interact with self-esteem stability to predict the direct self-enhancement biases. Which indicated that the self-esteem stability was successfully moderated the self-esteem level and direct self-enhancement. On the contrary, the results show that self-esteem level interact with self-esteem stability did not account for an additional significant amount of variance, in this case the self-esteem stability is failed to moderate the self-esteem level with indirect self-enhancement biases.

CHAPTER IX:

IMPLICATION AND LIMITATION

Despite the significant role that WeChat plays in a huge number of Chinese people's daily life, current researches rarely examining the associations between user's self-presentation behaviors and their personality differences in China. The present study extended from offline to online, and chooses Chinese famous social media platforms as experimental medium, to analyze whether individual differences in self-esteem would lead them to conduct different forms of self-enhancement strategies.

However, there exist several limitations. First, previously there have no self-enhancement scale that related to WeChat COF, the author created this scale for analyzing the relationship between self-esteem and the forms of self-enhancement biases. Therefore the self-enhancement scale is not validated. Second, human's personality and gender are another two crucial variables that can impact the forms of self-enhancement, due to the time limit this research did not included this two factors. Future researches can emphasize those variables and extended the topics.

Moreover, the cross-cultural issues did not included in present study. According to the self-construction theory, individual in Western country is different from individual in Eastern country when they construct "self" in the society. Future research can draw the culture issues and compare the differences between Eastern and Western individual's self-enhancement biases.

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Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

2. At times I think I am no good at all.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

6. I certainly feel useless at times.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree

7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on a equal plane with others.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

Scoring: Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored. Give "Strongly Disagree" 1 point, "Disagree" 2 points, "Neutral" 3 points, "Agree" 4 points, and "Strongly Agree" 5 points. Sum scores for all ten items. Keep scores on a continuous scale. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem.

Self-Esteem Stability

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. My opinion of myself tends to change a good deal instead of always remaining the same.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

2. I find that on one day I have one opinion of myself and on another day I have a different opinion.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

3. I change from a very good opinion from myself to a very poor opinion of myself.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

4. I have noticed that my ideas about myself seem to change very quickly.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

5. I feel that nothing can change the opinion I currently hold of myself.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

6. I notice that how good I feel about myself changes from day to day (or hour to hour).

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

7. How I feel about myself stays pretty much the same from day to day.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

8. My self-esteem shifts rapidly from feeling good about myself on one day to feeling bad about myself the next day.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

9. I'm often feeling good about myself one minute, and down on myself the next minute.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

10. Compared to most people, my self-esteem changes rapidly.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

Scoring: Items 5, 7, are reverse scored. Give "Strongly Disagree" 5 point, "Disagree" 4 points, "Neutral" 3 points, "Agree" 2 points, "Strongly Agree" 1 points. Sum scores for all ten items. Keep scores on a continuous scale. Higher scores indicate greater self-esteem instability.

Self-Enhancement Intensity

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general behaviors on WeChat Moment. Please indicate how frequency you use in each statement.

1. I present my personal skills on WeChat Moment.

   Never　　　　　Rarely　　　　　Sometimes　　　　　Often　　　　　Always

2. I write comments that related to movies/music/news/events etc. on WeChat Moment for

   sharing my distinctive insights/opinions/perspectives/attitudes.

   Never　　　　　Rarely　　　　　Sometimes　　　　　Often　　　　　Always

3. I post selfies that are embellished by applications or photo software in order to show the

   better image of myself on WeChat Moment

   Never　　　　　Rarely　　　　　Sometimes　　　　　Often　　　　　Always

4. I present the romantic/intimate relationship between me and my partner on WeChat Moment.

   Never　　　　　Rarely　　　　　Sometimes　　　　　Often　　　　　Always

5. I present the closeness relationships between me and my relatives on WeChat Moment.

   Never　　　　　Rarely　　　　　Sometimes　　　　　Often　　　　　Always

6. I present the positive relationships between me and other people

   (friends/peers/coworkers/leaders etc.) on WeChat Moment.

   Never　　　　　Rarely　　　　　Sometimes　　　　　Often　　　　　Always

7. I share the recent hang-out/party/event experiences with other people on WeChat Moment.

   Never　　　　　Rarely　　　　　Sometimes　　　　　Often　　　　　Always

8. I share my recent/past achievements (honors/awards/academic accomplishment etc.) on

   WeChat Moment.

   Never　　　　　Rarely　　　　　Sometimes　　　　　Often　　　　　Always

9. I present my perfect body image on WeChat Moment.

   Never　　　　　Rarely　　　　　Sometimes　　　　　Often　　　　　Always

10. I present my personal items which are expensive or can reflect my social status on WeChat

Moment.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Often   Always

11. I share the gifts that other people buy for me on WeChat Moment.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Often   Always

12. I'd like to show the relationship between me and people who are successful/attractiveness.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Often   Always

13. I'd like to share the information related to the famous person that I admire on WeChat Moment.

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Often   Always

14. I'd like to present my unique/good tasting toward music/film/food/costume/fashion etc. on WeChat Moment

Never   Rarely   Sometimes   Often   Always

Scoring: Items 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 14 are indicating direct self-enhancement motivation. Items 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13 are indicating indirect self-enhancement motivation. Give "Always" 5 point, "Often" 4 points, "Sometimes" 3 points, "Rarely" 2 points, and "Never" 1 points. Sum scores for all ten items. Keep scores on a continuous scale. Higher scores indicate greater motivation intensity.

APPENDIX B:

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 ● Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 ● FAX (813) 974-7091

3/1/2018

Xiao Qiu
School of Advertising and Mass Communications
4202 E Fowler Ave.
Tampa, FL 33620

RE: **Exempt Certification**
IRB#: Pro00034180
Title: Self-esteem, motivation, and self-enhancement presentation on social media platform.

Dear Ms. Qiu:

On 2/28/2018, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined that your research meets criteria for exemption from the federal regulations as outlined by 45CFR46.101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

As the principal investigator for this study, it is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted as outlined in your application and consistent with the ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report and with USF HRPP policies and procedures.

Please note, as per USF HRPP Policy, once the Exempt determination is made, the application is closed in ARC. Any proposed or anticipated changes to the study design that was previously declared exempt from IRB review must be submitted to the IRB as a new study prior to initiation of the change. However, administrative changes, including changes in research personnel, do not warrant an amendment or new application.

Given the determination of exemption, this application is being closed in ARC. This does not limit your ability to conduct your research project.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University

of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

Mark Ruiz, PhD, Vice Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board