

The Role of Self-Presentation on Social Networks Sites: Examining the Self-Esteem of Young People in Different Identity Status and Gender Differences

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Abstract

The study examines the nature of the use of social networks sites (SNS) from a developmental perspective, and self-presentation activities, investigating the development and shaping of identity, during young adulthood. The study model examined personal aspects of identity, mental and behavioral aspects and gender that shape the self-esteem of young adults today, among 800 young men and women aged 20 - 25, who completed online self-report questionnaires. The current study provides a comprehensive theoretical model that explains the set of connections between identity status, self-presentation, and self-disclosure on SNS, and self-esteem among young adults. The mediation model emphasizes that for different identity states, young people tend to certain modes of self-presentation which explain their degree of self-esteem. This model's contribution lies in understanding the significant role of SNS in development and identity formation during young adulthood. Alongside the theoretical contribution, the present study has practical implications.

Keywords

Social Networks, Self-Presentation, Self-Esteem, Identity States, Young People, Gender

1. Introduction

The use of SNS is prevalent among young adults today and is a space for editing and distributing content for various personal, social, marketing, and other purposes and for creating dialogue and communication with a wide audience (Kapoor et al., 2018). Studies that have researched the usage of SNS have focused on

user characteristics and how social networks are utilized (Xiao et al., 2021).

The development of young people in their early twenties includes the formation of an identity in relation to romance, employment and worldview (Arnett, 2000) through a commitment to essential decisions and choices in life (Luyckx et al., 2013).

Previous studies have taken a developmental perspective in researching the use of social networks among adolescents and young people, but few have explicitly examined the relationship between the use of SNS and the experience of the various development stages (Cingel et al., 2014). Although researchers examined the relationship between the use of SNS and developmental aspects (e.g., Cingel et al., 2014), they did not examine the relationship between the use of SNS and the degree of identity formation. A useful model for examining the degree of identity formation is Marcia's "Ego identity status" model, which recognizes four identity states (achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, diffusion), according to levels of inquiry and commitment which reflect the degree of identity formation (Marcia, 1966, 1993). This model has been studied and validated widely over the years and is still used in research today (Becht et al., 2021).

Goffman's "self-presentation" theory (Goffman, 1959) claimed that how individuals present themselves to others through impression management is part of the development of self. Some have suggested that the people create on social networks may influence the self also outside the network (Toma, 2013) in real life. Therefore, it is possible that self-presentation in SNS nowadays constitutes part of the identity development of young adults and is related to their personal well-being (Vogel & Rose, 2016), and self-esteem (Michikyan et al., 2014). In addition, it has been suggested that gender issues, such as norms and expectations, may also be related to self-presentation on SNS and to the formation of young people's self-esteem (Michikyan et al., 2014), but their role has not yet been clarified. Although a conceptual connection was proposed between dimensions of the identity development of young people in self-presentation activities in social networks and their relationship to self-esteem, such a comprehensive model was not built and tested.

1.1. Current Study

The current study combines the extensive literature on self-identity, at both the theoretical and empirical levels, with the developing research on self-presentation on social networks. Studies referring to identity in the context of the SNS, often made use of basic identity categories, such as age and gender (Toma, 2013). Therefore, the current study will examine the connections between the ego identity status of young adults, the self-presentation on SNS and their self-esteem, while referring to gender differences. SNS have created new spaces and social contexts for exploring and expressing identity and even though technology changes rapidly, the unique characteristics of social networks and the attraction of young people to them is preserved and therefore relevant for understanding and research even if the technology changes (Davis, 2013).

1.2. Hypotheses of the Current Study

H1: Gender differences will be found in the research variables.

H2: The ego identity status will explain the degree of self-esteem of young adults. It is assumed that the more consolidated the identity, the higher the self-esteem will be.

H3: The ego identity status will explain the self-presentation of young adults on SNS. It is assumed that young people with a consolidated identity will tend to an authentic self-presentation on SNS, while young people who are still in the process of investigation will tend to a false or exploratory self-presentation on SNS.

H4: The ego identity status will explain the degree of self-disclosure of young adults on SNS. people who are still in the process of investigation will tend to higher self-disclosure on SNS.

H5: Self-presentation and self-disclosure on SNS will have a unique contribution in explaining the self-esteem of young adults.

H6: A mediation model will be examined according to which the assumed relationship between the ego identity status and self-esteem will be mediated by self-presentation and self-disclosure on SNS.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

The participants included 800 young adults (408 women and 392 men; age ranged from 20 - 25, $M = 22.58$, $SD = 1.74$), residents of Israel, native Hebrew speakers. 46.3% of the participants defined themselves as employees, 18.4% as students, 13.4% soldiers, 4.5% unemployed, and the rest as "other". The 92.4% of the participants uses Facebook, 68.1% Instagram, 16.1% Snapchat, 11.4% Twitter, 8.6% LinkedIn, 11.9% Pinterest, Google+ 23.6%, YouTube 82.3%. In addition, 8.8% surf on social networks up to half an hour a day, 24.8% surf on social networks up to an hour and a half a day, 31.9% surf between two to three hours a day, 21.1% surf between three to five hours a day, 13% surf more than five hours a day, 0.5% do not surf at all.

2.2. Measures

Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status Extended (Bennion & Adams, 1986). The questionnaire consists of 64 items (16 for each situation) rated on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = do not agree at all, 6 = agree to a very large extent), including 4 categories of self-identity states: Identity Diffusion ("I've never been involved in politics enough to come to a firm position about one way or the other"); Foreclosure ("I could think of many different things, but it was never a decision because my parents said what they wanted"); Moratorium ("I just can't decide which profession to pursue. There are so many options"); Achievement ("It took me a while, but now I really know what career I want"). Reliability range ($\alpha = .58 - .81$).

Self-Presentation on Facebook Questionnaire (Michikyan et al., 2014). The questionnaire consists of 17 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = do not agree at all, 5 = agree to a very large extent), including 3 categories: Presentation of the real self on SNS (“Who I am online is similar to who I am outside the network”); the ideal self on SNS (“I upload content on social networks to show sides of whom I would like to be”); False self-presentation on SNS-deception (“I am a completely different person online compared to offline”), exploration (“On social media I can try out different aspects of who I am, much more than in real life”), Comparison/impression (“I try to impress others with the pictures I put on my profile”). Reliability range ($\alpha = .65 - .81$).

General Disclosiveness Scale (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976, 1977). The dimensions of self-disclosure used are: extent of exposure (“I rarely express personal beliefs and opinions online”, reverse coding); awareness and intention underlying self-presentation (“When I want, my self-disclosure online accurately reflects who I really am”). Each category included five items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = do not agree at all, 5 = agree to a very large extent). Reliability range ($\alpha = .62 - .77$).

Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). The questionnaire consists of 10 items, rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = do not agree at all, 4 = agree to a very large extent), ex., “In general, I am satisfied with myself”. Reliability ($\alpha = .94$).

2.3. Procedure and Data Analysis

After the study was approved by the University Ethics Committee, an online questionnaire was distributed by a special Internet company. The questionnaire contained a general explanation about the study, ensuring the anonymity of the data and the confidentiality of the participants.

A statistical analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses using SPSS software. A hierarchical regression was conducted, where in the first step personal background variables and the frequency of use of SNS were entered for statistical control, and in the second step the self-identity state variable was entered, predicting the dependent variable (self-esteem/self-presentation/self-disclosure according to the hypothesis). In the third step in the regression, the self-identity state variable was entered together with the self-presentation and self-disclosure variable, predicting self-esteem. To test the significance of the mediation model, a Sobel test was conducted, when the regression coefficients and standard error were entered into the formula.

3. Results

3.1. Gender Differences in the Research Variables

Significant differences between young women and men in different identity states (diffuse identity and foreclosure) have been found. There are more young men with a diffuse identity compared to young women ($t = -4.21, p < .00$), and

similarly, more young men with an identity state of foreclosure compared to young women ($t = -4.12, p < .00$). In addition, a significant difference was found in false self-presentation and exploration-type self-presentation on SNS, whereby young men tend more than young women to false self-presentation ($t = -3.91, p < .00$) and to exploration-type self-presentation ($t = -4.91, p < .00$). Young men tended to higher self-disclosure on SNS compared to young women ($t = -2.24, p < .05$). It can be said, then, that young men are more prone to the exposure and to present different parts of their identity on SNS, including false aspects.

3.2. The Ego Identity Status Will Explain the Degree of Self-Esteem of Young Adults

To test the hypothesis, according to which the type of ego identity state will explain the degree of self-esteem of young people, a stepwise linear regression was conducted. In the first step, background variables (gender, age, surfing time) were entered and in the following steps, the ego identity state variables were entered according to the degree to which they explain the dependent variable. In **Table A1**, the regression results for predicting self-esteem by ego identity status types are presented (**Appendix Table A1**).

The regression model was significant [$F(5,793) = 51.90, R^2 = 24.7, p < .000$]. Age and gender did not contribute to the model and were removed. The hypothesis was supported, with all four types of self-identity states explaining the self-esteem of young women and men. The different identity states explained 24.7% of the explained variance of the self-esteem variable.

In accordance with hypothesis 2a, young people with a high foreclosure identity state (low exploration, high commitment), tend to have lower self-esteem, and explain about 4% of the variance in self-esteem. Young people with a high diffuse identity (low exploration, low commitment) also tended to have lower self-esteem and explain 1.3% of the variance of self-esteem.

In accordance with hypothesis 2b, young people high in the achievement type identity tended to have higher self-esteem. Thus, identity achievement explained 6.3% of the variance in self-esteem. However, contrary to hypothesis 2b, young people who were high in a moratorium-type identity situation (high investigation, low commitment) tended to have lower self-esteem and not as hypothesized. The moratorium situation explained about 12.3% of the variance in self-esteem. In conclusion, it can be said that a more cohesive identity is linked to higher self-esteem.

3.3. Predicting the Mode of Self-Presentation on SNS by the State of Identity

To test the hypothesis, according to which the type of self-identity state will explain the self-presentation of young men and women on SNS, a stepwise linear regression was conducted. For each of the dependent variables (self-presentation:

false, exploration, ideal, authentic) a regression model was prepared in which background variables and the predictor variables were entered in steps. In **Table A2**, the regression coefficients and explained variance in the regression models are presented, with the last step in each model shown (**Appendix Table A2**).

The regression model for false self-presentation was found to be significant [$F(6,792) = 49.91, R^2 = 27.4, p < .001$]. In the first step, background variables were entered and in the following steps, the identity state variables were entered according to the degree to which they explain the dependent variable. Age did not contribute to the model and was removed. The hypothesis was supported, with all four types of self-identity states explaining the variation in false self-presentation of young women and young men. In total, the different predictors explained 27.4% of the explained variance of the false self-presentation variable in SNS.

In accordance with hypothesis 3a, young people with moratorium and dif-fused identity states tended to false self-presentation in SNS, explaining about 1.4% and 4.4%, respectively, of the variance of the false self-presentation variable. Young people with a foreclosure type of identity also tended to false self-presentation, explaining 16.4% of the variance of the dependent variable. This is contrary to hypothesis 3b, that they will be less inclined to false self-presentation.

In accordance with hypothesis 3b, young people who are high in an achievement-type identity situation, tend less to false self-presentation (inverse relationship), explaining 1.7% of the dependent variable.

The regression model for ideal self-presentation is significant [$F(4,794) = 50.88, R^2 = 20.4, p < .001$]. In the first step, background variables were entered and in the following steps, the identity state variables were entered. The hypothesis was partially supported, when moratorium, identity achievement and dif-fuse identity explain the variation in ideal self-presentation of young women and young men. In total, the various predictors explained 20.4% of the explained variance of the ideal self-presentation on SNS variable.

In accordance with hypothesis 3c, young people with an identity state of the moratorium and foreclosure types tended to have an ideal self-presentation on SNS, explaining approximately 4.4% and 1.4%, respectively, of the variance of the ideal self-presentation variable.

The regression model for true self-presentation was found to be significant [$F(3,795) = 60.78, R^2 = 18.7, p < .01$] and the regression model for exploratory self-presentation was found to be significant [$F(6,792) = 55.87, R^2 = 29.7, p < .001$]. In the first step, background variables were entered, and then ego identity state variables were entered. The hypothesis was supported, as predictors explained 27.4% of the explained variance of the true self-presentation and 29.7% self-presentation on SNS variable.

To summarize, a less consolidated identity tends to false self-presentation and the more consolidated the identity, the truer the self-presentation will be. Even when the identity is solidified, young people still have a need to present the posi-

tive and best sides in their lives.

3.4. Predicting the Manner of Self-Disclosure by the Ego Identity Status

To test the fourth hypothesis, according to which the type of ego identity status will explain the self-disclosure of young men and women on SNS, a stepwise linear regression was conducted. For each of the dependent variables (degree of self-disclosure and awareness and intention) a regression model was conducted in which background variables and predictor variables were entered in steps.

Table A3 displays the regression coefficients and the variance explained in the regression models conducted, when the last step in each model is shown (**Appendix Table A3**).

The regression model for the degree of self-disclosure on SNS was found to be significant [$F(5,793) = 8.69$, $R^2 = 5.2\%$, $p < .05$]. In the first step, background variables were entered and in the following steps, the ego identity status variables were entered according to the degree to which they explain the dependent variable. Age did not contribute to the model and was removed. The hypothesis was partially supported, with three self-identity states explaining the variation in the degree of self-disclosure of young women and men on SNS. In total, the predictors in the model explained 5.2% of the explained variance of the variable degree of self-disclosure on SNS.

3.5. The Contribution of Self-Presentation and Self-Disclosure on SNS in Explaining Self-Esteem

To test the fifth hypothesis, according to which self-presentation (true, false, ideal and exploration) and self-disclosure (degree of exposure and awareness and intention) will explain the self-esteem of young men and women on SNS, a stepwise linear regression was conducted. In the first step, background variables were entered and in the second step the predictor variables.

The regression model was found to be significant [$F(6,792) = 57.07$, $R^2 = 30.2\%$, $p < .001$]. Age, gender, and degree of exposure did not contribute to the model and were excluded. The hypothesis was largely supported (except for the degree of self-disclosure), where true, ideal, false, and exploratory self-presentation as well as awareness and intention contributed to the explained variance of self-esteem. In total, the various predictors explained 30.2% of the explained variance of the self-esteem dependent variable.

In accordance with hypothesis 5b, false, exploratory, and ideal self-presentation on SNS is related to lower self-esteem (inverse relationship), explaining 19.8%, 3.7% and 1.1% (respectively) of the variance in self-esteem.

3.6. Mediation Model

According to the sixth hypothesis, the manner of self-presentation on SNS will mediate the relationship between identity status and self-esteem. To examine a mediation model with several mediating variables, a Sobel test was used.

Mediation Model 1: Foreclosure identity status, self-presentation, and mediating variables.

In accordance with the research hypothesis, the false, ideal and exploration self-presentation variables mediate the relationship between foreclosure type identity status and self-esteem, as shown in **Figure 1**.

From **Figure 1**, it appears that the relationship between early closure identity status and each of the mediating variables (false self-presentation, ideal self-presentation and exploratory self-presentation) is significant ($b = .05, p < .0001$; $b = .04, p < .0001$ ($b = .05, p < .0001$). The relationship between foreclosure identity status and self-esteem is significant ($b = -.03, p < .0001$). The relationship between the mediators (false, ideal and exploratory self-presentation) and the dependent variable self-esteem is also significant ($b = -.14, p < .0001$; $b = -.09, p < .0005$; $b = -.15, p < .0001$).

In testing the direct effect of foreclosure type identity status on self-esteem, when the mediating variables enter the regression equation, the relationship is not significant ($b = -.005, p > .10$). That is, the relationship between an identity state of foreclosure type and self-esteem is fully mediated by a false, idealized, and exploratory self-presentation. This is a full mediation model, since with the introduction of the mediating variables, the relationship between identity status and self-esteem does not exist and the decrease in b is significant ($Z = -9.31, p < .0001$).

The true self-presentation variable was not found to mediate the relationship between foreclosure identity status and self-esteem, because the path between early closure (the predictor variable) and true self-presentation (the hypothesized mediating variable) is not significant ($p = .31$). Thus, the true self-presentation variable is not used as a mediating variable because one of the conditions for the existence of mediation is not met. Similarly, self-disclosure does not constitute a mediating variable either, because the condition according to which there would be a relationship between it and the dependent variable is not met ($p = .11$).

Mediation model 2: diffuse identity, self-esteem, and mediating variables.

In accordance with the research hypothesis, the variables true, false, ideal and

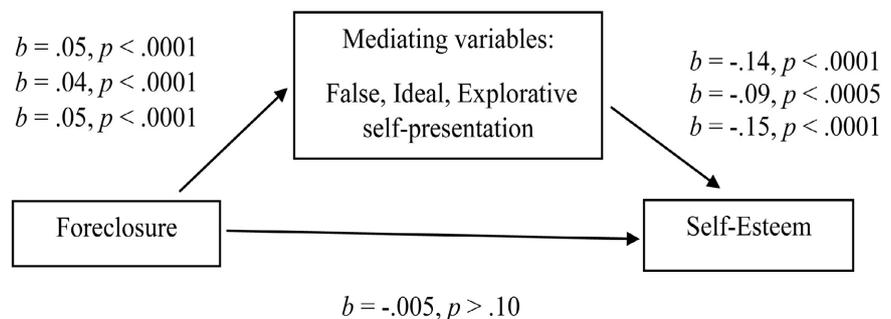


Figure 1. Full mediation model of foreclosure identity status and self-esteem by the mediating variables.

exploration self-presentation mediate the relationship between diffuse identity and self-esteem, as shown in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2 shows that the relationship between a typical identity state and each of the mediating variables (true, false, ideal, and exploratory self-presentation) is significant ($b = -.01, p < .05$; $b = .04, p < .0001$; $b = .05, p < .0001$; $b = .06, p < .0001$). The relationship between the mediators (true, false, ideal, and exploratory self-presentation) and the dependent variable self-esteem is also significant ($b = -.13, p < .0001$; $b = .04, p < .0001$; $b = -.09, p < .001$; $b = -.13, p < .0001$). The relationship between diffused identity status and self-esteem is significant ($b = -.03, p < .0001$).

In testing the direct effect of diffused identity status on self-esteem, where the mediating variables enter the regression equation, the b is still significant ($b = -.02, p < .0001$). But the decrease in b following the introduction of intermedia-ries is significant ($Z = -8.31, p < .0001$). That is, the relationship between dif-fused identity status and self-esteem is partially mediated by true, false, ideal, and exploratory self-presentation. This is a partial mediation model, since by in-troducing the mediating variables, the relationship between identity status and self-esteem has weakened.

The self-disclosure variable was not found to mediate the relationship between diffuse identity status and self-esteem, because the path between diffuse identity status (the predictor variable) and self-disclosure (the hypothesized mediating variable) is not significant ($p = .88$). Thus, the self-disclosure variable is not used as a mediator variable, because one of the conditions for the existence of media-tion, a relationship between the independent variable and the mediator, is not found.

Mediation Model 3: moratorium identity status, self-esteem, and mediating variables.

In accordance with the research hypothesis, the false, ideal and exploration self-presentation variables mediate the relationship between moratorium identi-ty status and self-esteem, as shown in **Figure 3**.

From **Figure 3** it appears that the relationship between moratorium identity status and each of the mediating variables (false, ideal, and exploratory self-presentation) is significant ($b = .05, p < .0001$; $b = .06, p < .0001$; $b = .06, p < .0001$). The relationship between the mediators (false, ideal, and exploratory

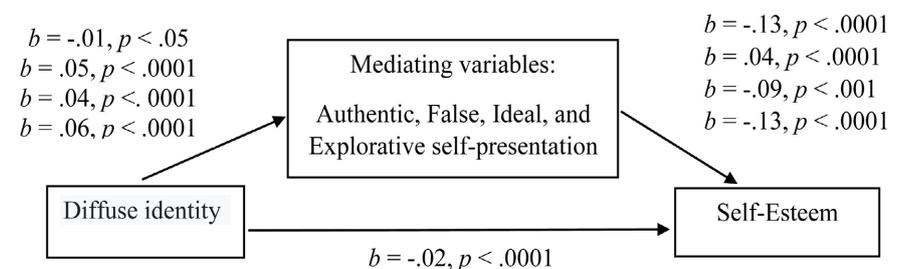


Figure 2. Partial mediation model of diffuse identity and self-esteem by the mediating variables.

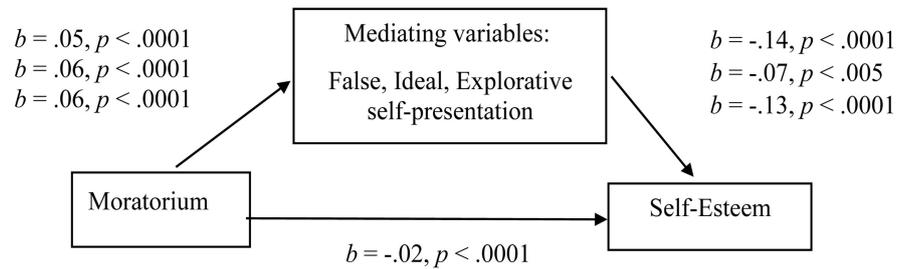


Figure 3. Partial mediation model of moratorium identity status and self-esteem by the mediating variables.

self-presentation) and the dependent variable self-esteem is also significant ($b = -.14, p < .0001$; $b = .07, p < .005$ ($b = -.13, p < .0001$)). The relationship between moratorium identity status and self-esteem is significant ($b = -.04, p < .0001$).

In testing the direct effect of moratorium identity status on self-esteem, where the mediating variables enter the regression equation, the b is still significant ($b = -.02, p < .0001$). But the decrease in b following the introduction of intermediaries is significant ($Z = -8.62, p < .0001$). That is, the relationship between moratorium identity status and self-esteem is partially mediated by false, idealized, and exploratory self-presentation. This is a partial mediation model, since when the mediating variables are introduced, the relationship between identity status and self-esteem weakens.

The variables self-disclosure and true self-presentation were not found to mediate the relationship between moratorium-type identity status and self-esteem. Thus, the path between moratorium identity status (the predictor variable) and self-disclosure (the hypothesized mediator variable) was not found to be significant ($p = .08$). Similarly, the path between moratorium identity status (the independent variable) and true self-presentation (the hypothesized mediating variable) is also not significant ($p = .14$). The variables self-disclosure and true self-presentation, therefore, are not used as mediator variables because one of the conditions for the existence of mediation, a relationship between the independent variable and the mediator, is not met.

Mediation Model 4: Achievement Identity Status, Self-Esteem, and Mediating Variables.

In accordance with the research hypothesis, the false, ideal, and true self-presentation variables mediate the relationship between achievement identity status and self-esteem, as shown in **Figure 4**.

From **Figure 4**, it appears that the relationship between achievement identity status and each of the mediating variables (false, ideal and true self-presentation) is significant ($b = -.01, p < .05$; $b = .06, p < .0001$; $b = .02, p < .0005$). The relationship between the mediators (false, ideal and true self-presentation) and the variable dependent on self-esteem is also significant ($b = -.16, p < .0001$; $b = -.09, p < .0001$; $b = .12, p < .0001$). The relationship between achievement identity status and self-esteem is significant ($b = .03, p < .0001$).

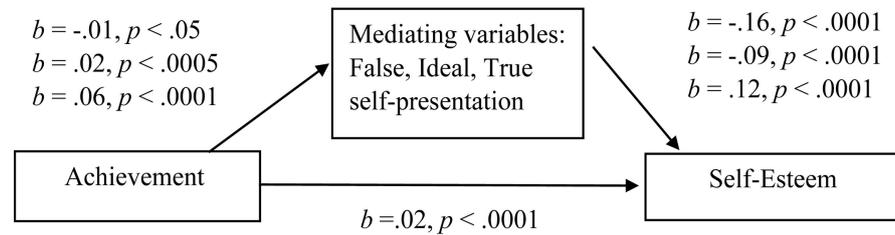


Figure 4. Partial mediation model of achievement identity status and self-esteem by the mediating variables.

In testing the direct effect of achievement identity status on self-esteem, when the mediating variables enter the regression equation, the b is still significant ($b = .02, p < .0001$). But the decrease in b following the introduction of intermediaries is significant ($Z = 4.46, p < .0001$). That is, the relationship between achievement identity status and self-esteem is partially mediated by false, ideal, and true self-presentation.

4. Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to examine how the use of SNS contributes to affects the self-esteem of young women and men in different identity states.

Previous findings indicated relationships between the type of self-identity state and self-esteem, among young adults in Israel. Like previous studies, identity achievement predicts high self-esteem and the other identity states (diffuse, foreclosure, moratorium) predict lower self-esteem. According to the developmental approach of the identity states, young people with low commitment in various areas of life may experience lower self-esteem (Basak & Ghosh, 2008), as is also reflected in the current study. This situation may lead young people to look for ways to practice inquiry and commitment in different arenas, and on SNS, which in recent years have become a central arena that allows the practice of this activity (Mowbray et al., 2018), as was found in the current study.

Following previous studies in which a correlation was found between personality variables and the nature of the self-presentation on SNS (Michikyan et al., 2014), in the current study, the activity in which young people engage on the SNS reflect the state of identity they are. Thus, young adults who have achieved a sufficiently consolidated identity will engage in real self-presentation online, and less in false self-presentation and exploratory self-presentation for the purpose of investigating and examining different parts of the self. It seems that when the identity is consolidated, the need to upload and disclose personal content decreases for the purpose of investigating, testing, and confirming different parts of the self-identity and therefore the self-disclosure is more measured with greater awareness. Thus, young people in a moratorium-type identity state, who display a high degree of exploration in various areas of life and a low commitment to them, find the SNS a source of exploration of different parts of their identity that they want to examine and experiment with such as, occupation, re-

lationships, and so forth.

Young people with foreclosure type identity state, displaying low exploration and high commitment, demonstrate less true self-presentation and more false self-presentation and exploration type self-presentation. They also show less awareness and intention underlying their self-presentation. A possible explanation for these findings is that these young people took on a commitment without examination and investigation, and in fact without real connection and inner listening to themselves.

Young people with a diffuse identity characterized by low exploration and low commitment, demonstrate false self-presentation, exploratory self-presentation and less self-disclosure. In this state, young people tend to self-present in a manner that is not true, accompanied by a small amount of self-disclosure.

Also, ideal self-presentation was found to be related to all identity states, except for diffuse identity. It seems that many young men and women tend to present ideal parts of themselves; aspects they aspire to or wish to adopt for themselves. Yet, young people with diffuse identity did not tend to ideal self-presentation, possibly because they do not have a clear and defined model to which they aspire or which they examine and investigate.

True self-presentation in social networks is associated with and predicts higher self-esteem. Awareness and intention of young women and men in uploading content to social networks is also related to higher self-esteem. Young people who present themselves in an authentic, conscious, and intentional way have higher self-esteem. They are not in the process of self-searching and the authentic and conscious use is reflected in higher self-esteem.

False, ideal, and exploratory self-presentation were all found to be associated with lower self-esteem. A possible explanation is that the need to change and embellish oneself indicates dissatisfaction and incongruity with who one is and with different parts of one's identity, something that indicates lower self-esteem.

The current study found that how young women and men present themselves on SNS explains the connection between their identity state and their self-esteem. This finding extends the findings of an earlier study in which self-presentation on SNS served as a mediating factor between personality variables and outcome variables among young adults (Jackson & Luchner, 2018).

The mediation model in the current study emphasizes that the use of SNS to present different parts of the self is a significant part of the identity formation and self-esteem of young people. How young people present false, ideal, and authentic parts of themselves plays a bridging role between their identity state and the degree of their self-esteem.

Regarding gender differences, as expected, young women are less inclined to a diffuse or foreclosure identity state, compared to young men. This finding supports previous findings (Gyberg & Frisé, 2017). The findings indicate that young men reveal themselves more on SNS and are more inclined to self-presentation for identity investigation (exploration) and false self-presentation. Young wom-

en, on the other hand, tend to demonstrate a greater degree of awareness and intention around the content they choose to display. These findings also indicate that gender norms that exist outside of social networks sites are also typical in the SNS zone.

5. Theoretical and Practical Contribution

The current study provides a comprehensive theoretical model that explains the set of connections between the identity states, self-presentation, and self-disclosure on SNS and self-esteem among young men and women. This model contributes to the understanding of the significant role of SNS in the development of young women and men today and in the formation of their identity.

The tested mediation model highlights the role of self-presentation on SNS in explaining the relationship between the state of identity and self-esteem. This model has not been tested before in the reviewed literature and is an innovation and a major contribution to research, showing that how young women and men present themselves on SNS is related to the degree of their identity formation and, as a result, predicts the degree of their self-esteem. Thus, young people with a less cohesive identity engage more in activities of false, exploratory, and ideal self-presentation which, in turn, predicts lower self-esteem. On the other hand, those with a state of identity achievement tend to a true self-presentation and, as a result, tend to have higher self-esteem.

In addition, the gender aspect findings indicated that young women self-present differently than do young men. This insight sheds light on how the gender aspect is also related to the investigation and formation of identity through the medium of SNS.

Alongside the theoretical contribution, the present study has practical implications, as it shows that SNS are a beneficial space for experimentation and investigation in various areas of life during young adulthood. The study thus expands the practical knowledge of how young women and men explore and experiment and thereby consolidate their identity and self-esteem. Consequently, educational and occupational counseling for young people at this developmental stage should include experience and investigation via SNS since this space has the potential to allow exploration and formation of the identity and self-esteem of young people.

Also, the current study provides relevant knowledge, for the creation of gender awareness that is sensitive to ambivalent messages that young women and men experience on SNS and may affect the formation of identity and the content that emerges in therapy. Thus, it is important to pay attention to the voices that may emerge and influence the choices and conduct of young men and women, the empowering and enlarging possibilities on the one hand, and on the other, the gender norms that may limit and reduce them. The current study found that young women tend to be more careful in their self-presentation actions, and this may harm their self-esteem.

6. Research Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Along with the contribution of the research, it is also important to note its limitations, and to suggest directions for future research.

The current study used self-report questionnaires. It is possible that the participants tried to represent themselves more positively. To deal with this inherent bias, discriminant validity was tested. Future research may deal with the issue of self-report bias, by incorporating the report of another member of the peer group, while cross-referencing the answers with the self-report.

Another limitation is that the study was conducted at one point in time. Since the research deals with developmental aspects of young people and the effects of using SNS, it might be worth conducting a longitudinal study to examine the effects of using SNS for self-development over time to obtain a deeper understanding of the change and development process resulting from the use of SNS. In the future, qualitative research might be conducted in a way that allows discourse on gender diversity through in-depth interviews and broad open questions.

Ethics Approval

The questionnaire and methodology for this study was approved by the Human Research Ethics committee of the University of Bar-Ilan, Ramat Gan, Israel. D (Ethics approval entitled: The role of self-presentation on social networks sites).

Informed Consent

All participants were anonymous. At the beginning of the questionnaires, it was explained to the participants that their answers and personal details would remain confidential and that at any stage they could stop the interview and/or skip a question if she/he did not feel comfortable.

Data

The data will be available upon request.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Appendix

Table A1. Regression model for predicting self-esteem by self-identity status types.

Dependent variable	Model and pre-dictors	<i>B</i>	β	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
Self esteem	Step 1 (back-ground variable)				
	browsing time	-.05*	-.09*	.80*	.80*
	Step 2				
	browsing time	-.03	-.06		
	Moratorium	-.04***	-.35***	13.1***	12.3***
	Step 3				
	browsing time	-.03*	-.06*		
	Moratorium	-.04***	-.35***		
	Achievement	.03***	.25***	19.4***	6.3***
	Step 4				
	browsing time	-.04*	-.07*		
	Moratorium	-.03***	-.27***		
	Achievement	.03***	.28***		
	Foreclosure	-.02***	-.22***	23.4***	4***
	Step 5				
	browsing time	-.03*	-.06*		
	Moratorium	-.02***	-.21***		
	Achievement	.03***	.27***		
	Foreclosure	-.02***	-.18***		
	Diffusion	-.015***	-.14***	24.7***	1.3***

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table A2. Regression model for predicting self-presentation on social network sites by types of ego identity status.

Dependent variable	Model and predictors	<i>B</i>	β	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
False self-presentation	Gender (background variable)	.12*	.07*	1.8***	1.8***
	Browsing time (background variable)	.06**	.09**	3.5***	1.7***
	Foreclosure	.04***	.32***	19.9***	16.4***
	Moratorium	.02***	.16***	24.3***	4.4***
	Achievement	-.02***	-.12***	26.1***	1.7***
	Diffusion	.02***	.14***	27.4***	1.4***
Explorative self-presentation	Gender (background variable)	.21***	.12***	2.9***	2.9***
	Browsing time (background variable)	.10***	.13***	5.9***	3.1***
	Moratorium	.03***	.23***	21***	15.1***
	Foreclosure	.03***	.26***	27.7***	6.7***
	Diffusion	.02***	.13***	29***	1.3***
	Achievement	-.01**	-.08**	29.7**	.7**
Ideal self-presentation	Browsing time (background variable)	.16***	.19***	5***	5***
	Moratorium	.05***	.29***	17***	12***
	Foreclosure	.02***	.17***	19.9***	2.9***
	Achievement	.01*	.07*	20.4*	.5*
True self-presentation	Browsing time (background variable)	.08***	.12***	1.6***	1.6***
	Achievement	.06***	.41***	17.8***	16.2***
	Foreclosure	-.01**	-.09**	18.7**	.8**

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001.

Table A3. Regression model for predicting the manner of self-disclosure on social networks by types of ego-identity status.

Dependent variable	Model and predictors	<i>B</i>	β	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
Self-disclosure	Browsing time (background variable)	.11***	.14***	1.2**	1.2**
	Gender (background variable)	.18*	.09*	2.2**	1**
	Achievement	-.03***	-.14***	3.7***	1.5***
	Foreclosure	.02**	.13**	4.6**	.9**
	Diffusion	-.01*	-.09*	5.2*	.6*
Awareness and intention in self-presentation	Gender (background variable)	-.13*	-.07*	1.1**	1.1**
	Achievement	.06***	.34***	11***	9.9***
	Foreclosure	-.02***	-.06***	13.4***	2.4***

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001.