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Providing Self-identity for the Visually Impaired People via Digital Platforms (*)

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Abstract

The current study aimed to identify how visually impaired people present their self-identity via digital platforms, by employing the theory of Goffman (Goffman, 1959). The study followed the multiple case study approach, to achieve this, the content of the personal profiles of six visually impaired participants was analyzed, and the content of their tweets published for a full year was analyzed. The results showed that people with visual impairments were able to build their self-identity with merit, in an aesthetically unconventional way, and professionally in their ability to assign header images and write a comprehensive introductory summary as presented by others without disabilities. The results also indicated that the Arabic language dominated the participants' tweets, and most of them were in the form of text only. As for the photos shared on their personal profiles, they were all static, formal, and consisted of a single shot. The results of the analysis of the header image indicated that 3 individuals refrained from sharing photos of themselves, and one individual showed a photo indicating disability, while two images did not indicate this. The results of the analysis of the "personal profile" image also indicated that one individual used a photo indicating visual impairment tools, and the photos of 5 individuals did not indicate this, but rather provided some implicit suggestions indicating their disability, and the context of most of these photos was "professional". It was also found that 4 individuals shared photos indicating ethnic identity, while only two individuals did not indicate this.

Regarding the profile, all sample members stated their real names, as they preferred to appear with their real personalities as public, influential figures with a goal and vision. The results also revealed that participants employed a number of strategies to present their self-identity to the public, most notably "the strategy of demonstrating competence, the strategy of performance, and the strategy of dignity and prestige", while avoiding some strategies such as "pleading and intimidation". They also tried to show a number of impressions to others in several ways, most notably "self-promotion, self-promotion, flattery and appreciation of others."

(*)The Paper was received on November 18, 2024, and accepted for publication on December 25, 2024.

They also showed two types of impression management during their presentation of themselves, impressions they gave explicitly to their audience that they are visually impaired. And impressions that appeared on them and from which the audience inferred that they are from this category.

The study recommended the need to expand the scope of future digital media research to include studying their mental and virtual image.

Keywords: Self-identity, Visually Impaired, Digital Platforms, X Digital Platform.