Example of essay on goffmans presentation of self and facebook

Life, Friendship

Mentor's Name

Goffman's theory on presentation of self is also applicable even in Facebook. However, it is important to consider at the onset the purpose why a diversity of individuals join Facebook, add friends, or send friend requests. In addition, what are the highlights being shown by FB users when they are already using the said website? While users continue to use the site, what could be the driving force behind their continued use (e. g., is it because of popularity?). In many case, users' motives, coupled with a concrete and distinct social focus, may be one of the dominant factors why individuals create social media profiles. Then, when they present themselves online on a regular or daily basis, they show, make or re-create an image of themselves that may be what they naturally are in person or just simply a disguise.

As symbolic interactionists explain, we construct our identities through our day-to-day interactions with people. For Goffman, we present our self just like in a dramaturgy or as exhibitionists . There are the front stage, back stage and off stage. In the front stage, we deliberately choose to project a given identity or portray an image about ourselves based on established social norms or script for the audience to hear. In the back stage, we perform according to our own or personal selves. At the off stage, which is between the front and back stages, it is where we make free or independent choices for ourselves with or without consideration of the unfolding of events. But, how can we apply Goffman's idea of self-presentation with the social networking site known as Facebook?

At the front stage, Facebook users use different expressions, try to conform and fit in, upload photos and videos, and post messages based on given

contexts. Although, individual users can opt to what to show in their timeline, they use extra caution by labeling whether some of their FB " friends" should really be under their circle of friends, acquaintances, or simply " others." On the other hand, in case users would like to send a confidential message, they may use the Facebook's private messaging (PM) feature. Hence, even when it is supposedly the front stage, not everything is shared for anyone to see, like, or share. Instead, they " re-create their offline self online [and] engaged editing facets of self" .

Concerning the back stage, users often screen out FB friends by simply accepting or discarding friend requests. In the event users accept a request, the requestor will then be able to view most of the public posts and messages of the friend adder. In case users will reject a request, the requestor may not be able to view most, if not all, of the private messages. In relation to Goffman's idea, the back stage actors have the decisions not to let just anyone to see their profiles, posts, messages, comments, shares, etc. Hence, whatever is shared, liked, or posted, outsiders will have no way of receiving or seeing those things – except when the timeline is also mostly for public viewing.

At the off stage, the users can actually engage with other Facebook users by utilizing other means. The users/performers can simply like other Facebook pages (e. g., fan pages), post comments, etc. even without actually revealing themselves, especially, when they use another Facebook account that they registered with. As such, it is hard to find out whether some Facebook users are really using their real names or other identities for reason of anonymity or pseudonimity. They prefer to resort to off stage performance to avoid

embarrassment or to detach from any unexpected, unwanted outcomes. With Goffman's self-presentation theory, it is easy to see how Facebook users use real identities or not depending on a number of factors such as the number of mutual friends that they have with other users. Most Facebook accounts that are new, without a profile picture, small numbers of friends, etc. may be attributable solely on newness. However, after some times, if those accounts increased in the number of friends, posts, likes, and shares, one of the reasons may be because the person is popular or controversial, has many friends online, has interest in other peoples' posts, is basking with reflected glories (or positive association with well-known figures, cutting off reflected failures, etc. Such users could simply be well-known to others or kept on sending friend requests to many individuals whom they know, happen to know, or for whatever other reasons.

In conclusion, although Goffman's theory on self-presentation is not necessarily adopted for use in an online social networking media (i. e., Facebook), it has contributed to theory and practice that blended with social and culture. Whether front, back or off stage, Goffman's dramaturgical approach is appropriate for Facebook self-presentation. Despite the fact that there is no conclusive evidence self-presenting solely in any of the stages mentioned, all individual performances or exhibitions could either be genuine ones or simply based on manipulative confidence tricksters. What should be kept in mind that the physical (offline) person is still different and much more diverse as the online version.

References

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