

ABSTRACT

This research problem focuses on how impression management on TikTok by final year university students not only presents themselves differently from their actual reality, but also as a natural strategy to achieve certain social goals. This research aims to understand how college students present themselves or their self-image on TikTok social media accounts by following social expectations, but with the intention of presenting a self-image that will be accepted by others. As Goffman sees it, we endlessly manage the impressions we build in front of others, including efforts to present ourselves as individuals who express their feelings on social media. The method used is a qualitative method with a narrative research approach. Data collection was done through interviews, observation, and literature review. The findings show that on the front stage, students present a self-image that is in accordance with social expectations, especially related to their role as students. They express emotions such as busyness, fatigue, and sadness in the thesis process and use real settings and accounts that reflect their academic identity. However, students also use TikTok to have fun and attract attention by creating content that dramatizes their experiences. On the other hand, on the backstage, students display a more authentic side of themselves and are free from social pressure, using TikTok to express deeper emotions and seek social support. This study concludes that TikTok functions not only as a front stage, where college students manage their public impression, but also as a digital back stage, where they can be more honest and open about their personal feelings and experiences.

Keywords: *Dramaturgy, impression management, social media*