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# PERSONAL REPUTATION AND SELF-AWARENESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE AND DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS

Dr. Halima Ibrahim Al-Failakawi<sup>1</sup>, Dr. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Psychology – College of Basic Education The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (paaet). Kuwait.

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Corresponding author: Wafaa, M. El

([hi.alfailakawy@paaet.edu.kw](mailto:hi.alfailakawy@paaet.edu.kw))

## ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the level of personal reputation among students at the College of Fine Arts. The research employs a descriptive-correlational design and utilizes a personal reputation scale developed and validated for the study. The sample consists of students selected through stratified random sampling. Results indicate that the students generally exhibit a high level of personal reputation, which correlates positively with their social identity. The study also finds no significant differences in personal reputation levels based on gender. The findings suggest the importance of fostering personal reputation as a means to strengthen social identity and self-awareness among university students. Recommendations are provided for educational institutions to enhance students' personal reputation through targeted programs and activities.

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**KEYWORDS:** Personal Reputation, College Students, Social Identity, Fine Arts, Self-Concept, University Students

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## 1. INTRODUCTION TO PERSONAL REPUTATION

Personal reputation is considered one of the complex concepts in social psychology. It is formed through the interaction of internal and external factors that influence how individuals perceive others and themselves. According to certain theoretical perspectives, reputation is built internally and relies on self-esteem and self-efficacy as the primary drivers of social behaviors and interactions (Solanki, 2023, p.155). From this viewpoint, personal reputation is seen as a direct reflection of an individual's inner traits and their ability to present a positive image of themselves through consistent actions and initiatives.

Conversely, another perspective suggests that reputation is shaped through the perceptions and impressions that others form about the individual, regardless of their internal intentions or capacities. This aligns with Cooley's concept of the "looking-glass self," whereby identity and reputation are constructed based on how individuals believe others perceive them.

Recent studies support the first view, positing that a strong reputation is reinforced by high levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy, contributing to enhanced performance in social and professional environments. For example, a study by Julius (2022, p.1542) revealed a strong positive correlation between self-esteem and self-efficacy among university students, highlighting the internal factors' role in shaping personal reputation.

Moreover, a recent literature review (Gmezó et al., 2023, p.3) emphasizes that personal reputation is not merely a reflection of others' perceptions but is closely tied to an individual's self-development and their social and professional skills, thereby enhancing their status and influence within society.

The researcher argues that personal reputation is primarily an internal outcome of one's self-driven efforts, personal traits, and ongoing development while recognizing the importance of others' perceptions, without considering them the sole determinant.

### 1.1. Personal Reputation - Definition

#### 1.1.1. Bromley and Emler (Bromley, 1990; Emler, 1990)

Personal reputation is defined as a complex social representation composed of a network of information, beliefs, judgments, and social expectations. It is constructed through social interaction by members of a community and reflects

the image of an individual as perceived by the group (Bromley, 1990; Emler, 1990).

#### 1.1.2. Theoretical Definition

The researcher adopts the definition by Bromley and Emler (1990) as the theoretical framework for the present study.

(This definition accurately reflects the dynamic nature of personal reputation and its development over time. It also enhances understanding of how social interactions shape reputation. Furthermore, Emler's theory of reputation enhancement provides a clear standard framework for measuring reputation in academic and artistic settings, which supports the study's objectives in analyzing personal reputation in this context.)

### 1.2. Theoretical Explanation of Personal Reputation

#### 1.2.1. Reputation Enhancement Theory - Emler & Reicher (1990)

The Reputation Enhancement Theory, developed by Nicholas Emler and S.D. Reicher (Emler & Reicher, 1995, p.87), is one of the attempts to understand deviant behaviors within their social and psychological contexts. This theory posits that individuals, particularly those lacking a satisfactory social identity, may adopt certain behaviors to establish an alternative social identity that enhances their status within a group. According to Emler (1984, p.154), individuals carefully choose the image or identity they wish to present to others and consistently strive to develop and maintain it as part of their social strategy.

Emler (1990, p.34) emphasizes that reputation is not formed randomly; rather, it is a social product negotiated among individuals within their communities. To enjoy a good reputation, one must be part of a relatively stable network of reciprocal relationships (Hopkins & Emler, 1990, p.203), which allows sufficient opportunities for displaying and being observed for positive behavior.

Intentional social communication whether through visible actions, conversations, gossip, or information exchange is a critical means of enhancing reputation (Emler, 1990, p.36). Emler (1990, p.40) asserts that reputation represents a central social goal that motivates individuals to act in ways that align with the identity they wish to establish in their community.

One of the key aspects of enhancing reputation lies in the social visibility of one's actions. This visibility may result from direct observation, word-of-mouth, or self-disclosure during social interactions (Emler,

1984, p.157). From this perspective, individuals consider themselves both seekers and active promoters of reputation (Emler, 1984, p.158).

Reputation plays a crucial role as a form of social credit granted by others, enabling individuals to achieve their goals and secure their social and material interests (Emler, 1990, p.38). Emler (1990, p.41) confirms that establishing and maintaining a certain reputation is vital for sustaining social interactions with peers and enhancing the chances of social success.

People tend to choose a social identity that suits them based on the norms of the society they belong to or aspire to join (Emler, 1984, p.160). For example, some adolescents may prefer to identify as athletes, scholars, or even delinquents, based on the prevailing perceptions in their social environments.

Studies by Steele (1992, p.614) and Steele & Aronson (1995, p.797) highlight the impact of social reputation on academic performance. They explain that students from minority groups are affected by negative stereotypes associated with their groups, which leads to diminished performance in competitive academic environments.

Osborne and colleagues (Osborne, Major & Crocker, 1997, p.355) add that reputation threats not only affect current performance but also influence self-motivation, exerted effort, and perceived competence, ultimately leading to gradual withdrawal from domains associated with negative reputations.

In this context, Osborne (1995, p.611) noted that individuals might adopt defensive strategies, such as downplaying the importance of academic achievement, as a way to protect their self-identity from social threats.

Other studies, such as those by Hansford (1992, p.233) and Hattie (1982, p.77), confirm that academic reputation is a major source of social identity, particularly among African American males, where it serves as a central factor in achieving social acceptance and esteem within reference groups.

Social visibility plays a central role in enhancing reputation. This has been demonstrated in studies by Goffman (1972, p.256), Gold & Petronio (1980, p.112), West (1984, p.99), Becker (1963, p.43), and Emler (1983, p.310), all of which showed that repeated public appearance before others is a key mechanism for establishing reputation.

In this regard, Hopkins & Emler (1990, p.205) pointed out that adolescents aiming to adopt a delinquent identity must present themselves as violators of social norms through visible, publicly acceptable actions within their groups.

Maintaining a delinquent reputation requires the presence of a social audience that shares the same subculture, as indicated by Reicher & Emler (1986, p.273), who emphasized that deviant behavior is not practiced in isolation but is displayed within collective social contexts.

Whereas conforming individuals rely on support from family and teachers to maintain their reputations, delinquents tend to seek alternative support from their peers (Hopkins & Emler, 1990, p.208).

The findings of Junger-Tas (1990, p.89) suggest that a bad reputation may be a strategic choice for some adolescents who aim to strengthen their identity within deviant groups.

Studies by Campbell (1993, p.411), Carroll (1994, p.219), Goldstein (1994, p.315), Carroll (1996, p.99), and Houghton et al. (1998, p.87) found that youth engaged in risky behaviors such as drug use and aggression view these acts as opportunities to build a strong social reputation among their peer networks.

Emler (1984, p.165) argues that entering broader social environments during adolescence, such as large high schools, increases opportunities for enhancing reputation through observable and noticeable behaviors.

Reicher & Emler (1995, p.70) explained that deviant strategies are initially used to boost one's status within groups and later evolve into mechanisms for maintaining the acquired social position.

Studies concluded that social positions within groups are not fixed but are subject to constant renegotiation (Reicher & Emler, 1986, p.278), requiring individuals to continuously enhance their reputation through visible behaviors.

### **1.3. Research Problem**

Personal reputation is one of the fundamental factors that contribute to shaping an individual's social identity. It plays a pivotal role in how individuals perceive themselves and how society perceives them. Personal reputation is influenced by stereotypes associated with certain social categories such as race, social class, or even gender. These stereotypes can distort an individual's social image, thereby affecting their social identity (Devine & Elliott, 1995; Fiske, 1998, p.378). Reputation is not formed instantly; rather, it develops over time through repeated behaviors exhibited by the individual, making it a highly influential element in determining their status in society (Zinko et al., 2012, p. 82).

Numerous studies indicate that personal reputation has significant negative impacts on individuals belonging to certain social groups. For

example, African Americans are believed to suffer from a negative reputation characterized by hostility and laziness (Devine & Elliott, 1995; Fiske, 1998, p.379). Similarly, individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are often associated with reputations of ignorance and laziness (Pollock, 1995, p.142).

This pattern of negative perceptions extends to women, as studies have shown that women are perceived to have lower abilities in mathematics and related fields (Eccles, Jacobs, & Harold, 1990, p.198). These stereotypical beliefs contribute to shaping the social image of individuals from these groups, affecting the construction of their social identity (Devine, 1989, p.6).

Even if these beliefs are inaccurate, they play a central role in how people interact with one another and influence an individual's personal reputation. These stereotypes may arise from socialization processes, where media and daily interactions reinforce these images. For instance, studies have indicated that stereotypes related to social class and gender lead to differential treatment of individuals, thereby reinforcing these negative expectations (Pollock, 1981; Ashmore & Del Boca, 1995, p.25).

Social psychology researchers have demonstrated that these stereotypes are extremely powerful and can significantly affect those targeted by them. In some cases, a negative reputation can influence the individual's internal behavior, prompting them to act in ways that confirm these negative expectations, even in the absence of direct negative treatment (Snyder & Stukas, 1999, p.99). In fields such as education, stereotypical perceptions can lead to a decline in academic performance, as individuals begin to behave in line with these negative expectations (Jussim & Eccles, 1992; Steele & Madon, 1996, p.289). A recent study (Block et al., 2023, p.7) has shown that stereotype threat still poses a significant barrier to academic performance, particularly among marginalized social groups.

Modern psychological and social literature shows that personal reputation is not constructed in isolation from the social goals individuals seek to achieve within group interactions. In the reputation enhancement model proposed by Emler and Reicher (1995), reputation is viewed as a reflection of individual behavior within a social-cognitive framework, through which individuals aim to achieve goals related to status, acceptance, and belonging (p.89). The model suggests that individuals especially during adolescence and youth behave in ways that maintain or improve their reputation in the eyes of others, even if such behaviors deviate from

socially accepted moral norms, as long as they enhance their image within the group (Emler, 1995, p.91).

Subsequent research has observed that reputation-related goals are not necessarily tied to high moral standards; rather, they may be driven by the desire to appear "strong" or "rebellious" within peer groups (Tice, 1990, p.102). This is particularly evident when analyzing the behavior of youth in competitive and exposed educational or social environments, such as technical colleges where intensive interactions and mutual evaluations take place.

Personal reputation should not be understood as a singular, fixed entity; rather, it is a multidimensional construct that includes task reputation, relational reputation, and integrity reputation, each playing a different role in influencing social identity. For example, Zinko et al. (2012, p.84) note that task reputation concerns others' evaluation of an individual's competence and performance, whether professional or academic. Relational reputation, meanwhile, pertains to the individual's harmony with the group and their ability to form effective social connections (Roberts & Dowson, 2007, p.242). Integrity reputation is built on others' perceptions of the individual's ethics, honesty, and transparency (Ferris et al., 2003, p.109).

Studies have shown that these dimensions interact in complex ways to shape an individual's image within a group. A weakness in one of these areas may undermine the others and negatively affect how others perceive their identity and status (Ponzi et al., 2011, p.33). In academic environments such as fine arts colleges, students are not only evaluated based on their artistic competence, but also on their behavior within the group and their level of ethical commitment. This makes personal reputation a decisive factor in defining both academic and social identity (Helm, 2005, p.11).

Personal reputation is not constructed independently of the social context; rather, it is shaped through an individual's performance within groups and institutions. Researchers point out that reputation is linked to several dimensions, including competence, status, achievement capability, and adherence to group norms (Emler & Reicher, 1995, p.42; Zinko et al., 2012, p.82). Individuals often develop their professional or social reputation based on their performance within the group and the recognition they receive from peers and leaders. In academic contexts such as fine arts colleges performance and social evaluation are critical in building a reputation, making it a central element in forming academic and social identity. Some studies

suggest that the perception of reputation within these settings reshapes individuals' behavior, influencing their engagement and interaction with others, and may even reshape their ambitions or academic and professional paths (Martinez & Garcia, 2022, p.5; Gotsi & Wilson, 2001).

Personal reputation is a collective representation built on others' continuous evaluations of individual behaviors within specific social contexts. Biromel (1993, p.41) emphasized that reputation is not merely an individual trait but a collective reflection of the judgments that society circulates about a person. Hoopkins (1990, p.35) described it as collective judgments imposed by others onto an individual's traits. Thus, reputation is constructed within complex social interactions influenced by relationships, communication, and societal expectations (Emler, 1990; Doutret, 2006; Pérès, 2007).

This symbolic construction of personal reputation is not neutral; it carries both material and symbolic dimensions that manifest in the distribution of resources and opportunities within organizations and societies. Hofmoll (2002, p.73) points out that reputation plays a critical role in access to resources, especially in situations characterized by scarcity or limited opportunities. This is supported by Hochwart et al. (2007, p.146), who argue that reputation contributes to forming a "perceived identity" associated with others' perceptions of competence and reflected in the overall evaluation of the individual.

Zinko and colleagues (2007, p.210) showed that individuals with a positive reputation within organizations are more likely to gain access to sensitive tasks and leadership opportunities, while others with a negative or unclear reputation may be marginalized, even if they possess the necessary competence. Accordingly, the accumulation of a good reputation generates what is known as symbolic capital, which is employed in situations requiring trust and reliability (Hoopkins, 2006; Berdoton, 2007).

In teamwork environments, the formation of personal reputation is not a superficial matter; rather, it is seen as a cumulative and complex process reflecting others' evaluations of an individual based on their characteristics, repeated behaviors, and ability to build relationships based on cooperation, discipline, and commitment (Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008, p.112). Studies indicate that personal reputation plays an active role in shaping an individual's image within the team, serving as a reference mechanism for making decisions about role distribution, task assignment, and even determining leadership within groups (Ferris et al., 2002, p.221).

From this perspective, individuals with a good professional reputation are often perceived as trustworthy and highly competent in task management and time organization, qualifying them for collaborative leadership within teams (Liden et al., 2000, p.64). Some researchers even argue that reputation is one of the determinants of the emergence of leadership in teams, as informal leadership sometimes arises based on how the team perceives a member's competence and positive influence on the group (Zinko et al., 2012, p.75; Hochwarter et al., 2007, p.144).

Recent research has linked personal reputation to the phenomenon known as "emergent leadership," where reputation shapes positive or negative perceptions of individuals, affecting their positioning within the team and their ability to influence others' behavior, even in the absence of a formal organizational role (Yukl, 2013, p.197; Lord et al., 1999, p.34). In collaborative work contexts, reviews have shown that reputation affects various levels, including the quality of communication within the team, openness to new ideas, and the team's ability to make collective decisions efficiently (Treadway et al., 2005, p.72).

Reputation can also serve as an indirect proxy for measuring organizational loyalty and professional belonging, as colleagues often look to individuals with good reputations as behavioral role models and emulate them in interaction and decision-making (Emler & Reicher, 1995, p.188).

#### **1.4. Research Importance**

Personal reputation is a crucial element in shaping social and professional relationships, as it influences how others perceive an individual's identity and role within society. Numerous studies indicate that reputation is not merely a momentary reflection of current behavior but rather a cumulative outcome of repeated behaviors and attitudes over time (Ferris et al., 2003, p. 215; Gómez-Trujillo et al., 2023, p. 5).

Reputation begins to form through a series of early interactions and behaviors, where initial perceptions are shaped based on visible performance, communication style, and adherence to prevailing social norms (Cabrera-Gala, 2023, p. 7). In this early stage, every situation plays an important role in crafting an initial social image that may accompany an individual for a long time. As social interaction continues, reputation enters a more established phase known as the post-formation stage, in which impressions become a fixed part of the individual's social identity and are not easily altered. Studies suggest that once reputation stabilizes, it becomes difficult to change even if there are positive changes

in the individual's behavior due to what is known as the "first impression persistence" phenomenon (Zinko et al., 2012, p. 480).

The "halo effect" demonstrates that a person's positive reputation in one area such as competence or moral integrity can indirectly influence how other aspects of their personality are evaluated, regardless of actual performance (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977, p. 246). Environmental factors, such as media and social networking platforms, also play a critical role in amplifying or altering reputations. Recent studies indicate that reputation can be influenced by circulating news or stereotypes associated with the group to which an individual belongs, which may either reinforce or undermine others' perceptions (Klein & Dawar, 2004, p. 203).

Reputation is particularly significant in professional and educational contexts, as it affects promotion opportunities, social integration, and the level of support an individual receives from peers or institutions (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 500). Here, the reciprocal relationship between reputation and social identity becomes apparent: the more positively one is perceived within a group, the stronger the individual's sense of belonging and social power (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 12).

Personal reputation also gains importance when viewed as an extension of self-worth and self-esteem. Some researchers argue that reputation is not merely a social reflection of behavior but a symbolic representation of internal aspirations and self-respect. From this perspective, a positive reputation enhances self-efficacy and belonging not only because it reflects others' views, but because it reinforces the individual's self-perception as an accepted and effective member of their environment (Leary & Baumeister, 2000, p. 23). Crocker and Wolfe (2001) suggest that self-esteem may originate from various sources some internal, related to competence and personal achievement, and others external, based on social acceptance and how much others value the individual. Similarly, Briggs and Cheek (1988, p. 55) note that some individuals rely on reputation as a form of "self-monitoring," where maintaining a positive image becomes a strategy to present a favorable social façade, even if that image is superficial or not entirely aligned with their inner reality.

When reputation is viewed from a more dynamic psychological angle, certain perspectives link maintaining reputation to defensive responses aimed at avoiding potential social threats. Regulatory focus theory suggests that individuals with a prevention focus are more sensitive to reputation loss or damage

to their image than those focused on ambition and growth (Higgins, 1998, p. 64). In this context, Rosen and Ruysman (2001, p. 313) found that a good reputation is a fragile asset that is difficult to gain and easily lost, prompting individuals to adopt various strategies to preserve it. This concern is one form of impression management, closely related to the maintenance of "social face" as an ideal image that individuals strive to uphold before others (Goffman, 1984, p. 127; Leary, 1995, p. 31). Thus, reputation is understood not merely as a reflection of behavior, but as a cognitive and emotional response aimed at self-protection from embarrassment or social threats helping explain differing attitudes toward reputation based on individuals' psychological orientation and their organizational goals within the group.

In a more socially interconnected context, personal reputation is seen as a decisive factor in shaping the dynamics of cooperation among individuals within a group. Social psychology literature indicates that a positive reputation is not only a reflection of an individual's behavior but also plays a strategic role in facilitating social interaction and guiding others' behavior toward the individual with greater trust and openness (Nowak & Sigmund, 2005, p. 4). According to costly signaling theory (Zahavi & Zahavi, 1997, p. 127), actions perceived as honest or cooperative even if they appear unprofitable in the short term are considered social signals that reflect the quality of one's reputation and increase the likelihood of future acceptance and social support.

Some studies have shown that reputation is used as a cue in social decision-making, with individuals preferring to interact with those who have a good reputation over those perceived as less trustworthy (Piazza & Bering, 2010, p. 489). Even subtle monitoring cues such as images of eyes or suggestions of being observed can motivate individuals to behave more ethically to maintain a positive impression (Haley & Fessler, 2005, p. 969). This indicates that collective awareness of reputation plays a role in regulating behavior and reinforcing adherence to ethical norms, even in the absence of actual surveillance.

In this context, reputation serves a dual social function: it is both a means of building stable social networks and a tool for regulating ethical behavior within the group making it a key component in constructing and maintaining social cooperation (Sperber & Baumard, 2012, p. 98).

Moreover, personal reputation is a complex concept encompassing cognitive, behavioral, and social dimensions. Contemporary literature shows that reputation is not merely a reflection of behavior

but a complex cognitive structure emerging from the interaction between others' perceptions and the individual's actions and adherence to group norms. Studies have found that reputation is influenced by various factors, including personality traits, self-efficacy, moral behavior, social status, and societal expectations (Mishina et al., 2012, p. 244; Rindova et al., 2005, p. 1031).

Psychological research reveals that reputation contributes to emotional self-esteem: individuals with a positive reputation report higher levels of self-satisfaction and confidence, whereas poor reputation is associated with feelings of inadequacy or social threat (Baumeister, 1997, p. 21). In this regard, Leung and Bozionelos (2004, p. 318) argue that reputation is built in organizational environments through performance, relationships, discipline, and alignment with institutional culture making it a vital indicator for assessing individual effectiveness and professional status.

Reputation also helps form the individual's social image within the group, as others use it to predict behavior and gauge trustworthiness. Rotenberg (2010, p. 209) confirmed that individuals with high reputations are treated with greater respect and appreciation even in the absence of personal acquaintance giving reputation a defensive and protective function in contemporary social contexts.

It is worth noting that reputation is not automatically built but results from cumulative cognitive processes requiring continuous interaction, mutual observation, and collective evaluation. This makes it susceptible to fluctuation depending on changes in social environments or situational performance (Zinko & Rubin, 2015, p. 67). Reputation is shaped not only by skills or achievements but also by an individual's conformity to collective values, self-presentation, and position within influence networks in the group.

Accordingly, reputation is considered a psychological-organizational construct representing the link between others' perceptions and the individual's self-concept. It serves as an indirect mechanism for evaluating individuals and regulating behavior within the social system granting it special significance in both academic and professional environments.

Personal reputation and social identity intersect in several core areas that form the basis for understanding an individual's position within the group. Both are constructed through social interaction and reflect a mutual image between the individual and others, making them interdependent variables that continuously influence one another.

Ellemers et al. (2002, p. 164) noted that a positive reputation enhances group belonging and commitment to group identity, and individuals positively perceived within their groups tend to embrace group values and identity more strongly.

### 1.5. Aims of the Research

The current research aims to:

Identify the level of personal reputation among students.

Identify differences in personal reputation according to demographic variables (gender and academic stage).

### 1.6. Research Boundaries

The current research is limited to students of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Kuwait for the academic year 2025/2026.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The process of selecting a research methodology is a fundamental step in research design, as all subsequent procedures are shaped according to the nature of the chosen approach. Al-Eisawy (1997, p.13) defines research methodology as "the method or approach that a researcher follows in studying a problem and arriving at its solutions and results."

Among the most commonly used methodologies in psychological and social research is the **descriptive method**, which focuses on studying phenomena as they exist in reality. Its goal is to provide an accurate description of such phenomena, either qualitatively or quantitatively. The descriptive approach in both its **survey** and **correlational** forms is widely employed in exploratory and analytical studies, as it allows for the quantification of phenomena and the identification of their interrelations (Abdel-Mo'men, 2008, p.287; Darwish, 2018, p.118).

**Correlational research** falls under the umbrella of the descriptive method but specifically aims to identify quantitative relationships between variables and determine the strength of these correlations or their potential for prediction (Abu Allam, 2007, p.245; Al-Zuhairi, 2017, p.192).

Given the nature and objectives of the present study namely, examining the relationship between two primary variables: personal reputation and social identity the researcher adopted the **descriptive correlational method**. This approach is deemed the most appropriate for the study as it offers analytical tools to interpret the relationships between variables accurately and objectively. It is also among the most widely used methods in psychological and educational research.

## 2.1. Research Population

The research population comprises all students (male and female) enrolled in the **College of Fine Arts at the University of Kuwait** during the academic year 2025–2026. These students are from the departments of **Plastic Arts, Theatrical Arts, Musical Arts, and Cinema and Television**. This population is deemed suitable for the study, which aims to measure personal reputation and its relationship to social identity in an academic artistic context.

Several previous studies have addressed similar topics in related contexts. For instance, the study titled *The Effect of the College Reputation on Student's Decision Making to Choose It* by B.K. Vong and R.P. Dube (2019) examined the influence of college reputation on students' decision to attend, finding that a strong reputation significantly affects college selection. Another study, *Art Majors' Perceptions of Their Self-Concept, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Social Identity* by Sara E. Triplett (2018), revealed that art students' social identity is closely linked to their self-perception and academic self-efficacy, impacting their social perceptions within the academic environment.

## 2.2. Third: The Research Sample

The sample was drawn from the student population of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Kuwait for the academic year 2025–2026 using a **stratified random sampling** technique. This method ensured a balanced representation of various demographic variables such as **gender, academic department, and year of study**. The sample consisted of **400 students** (male and female), distributed across four academic departments and four academic years.

This sampling method is appropriate for the current study as it allows for a representative and realistic depiction of the target population. Due to the unavailability of precise data regarding the total number of students, the sample size was determined based on scientific recommendations and the supervisor's guidance, ensuring a scientifically grounded representation.

## 2.3. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The sample consisted of 400 students from the College of Fine Arts. Gender distribution was relatively balanced, with **204 male students (51%)** and **196 female students (49%)**, indicating near-equal gender representation.

In terms of **academic department**, the sample included:

- Plastic Arts: 153 students
- Musical Arts: 140 students
- Theatrical Arts: 56 students

- Cinema and Television: 51 students

This reflects a diverse representation of academic specializations.

Regarding **academic year**:

- First year: 133 students
- Second year: 158 students
- Third year: 77 students
- Fourth year: 32 students

This distribution ensured representation across all academic levels, allowing for balanced analysis.

## 2.4. Research Instrument 1: Personal Reputation Scale

The **Personal Reputation Scale** was developed based on **Emler's (1990) Reputation Enhancement Theory**, which posits that reputation functions as a social motivator in identity formation within group contexts. Initially, 36 items were formulated and presented to a panel of expert reviewers. Based on their feedback, 10 items were removed for lacking validity, leaving **26 items** distributed across three dimensions: **Personal Behavior, Professional Performance, and Social Relations**.

The scale was constructed in accordance with established principles of psychological test development, ensuring clarity of language and representativeness of content. A **five-point Likert scale** was employed, ranging from "Strongly Applies to Me" to "Does Not Apply to Me at All." Detailed instructions were included to ensure respondent confidentiality and objectivity.

### Validity of the Scale

Validity was initially established by presenting the items to **nine experts** in psychology and psychometrics. The **Chi-square test** was used to assess the significance of the items. Only statistically significant items were retained.

A **pilot study** was conducted with **40 students** from various departments within the College of Fine Arts. The results indicated that the items were clear and the instructions easy to follow. The time required to complete the scale ranged between **10 and 17 minutes**, which was deemed suitable.

### Item Analysis

To assess the **discriminative power** of the items, an independent samples **t-test** was conducted on a stratified random sample of 400 students. The top and bottom 27% of scores were compared, and all items were found to be statistically significant, indicating high discriminative power.

**Internal consistency** an essential indicator of scale reliability was confirmed through high inter-item correlations, suggesting that the items consistently measure the construct of personal reputation.

## 2.5. Item Validity Analysis of the Personal Reputation Scale

### 2.5.1. Item-Total Correlation

Item-total correlation is a key indicator of item validity, reflecting the degree to which each item aligns with the overall scale construct. Oppenheim (1992, p.136) states that a high item-total correlation signifies a good item, and Anastasi (1976, p.206) adds that a weak correlation may indicate that an item does not accurately measure the intended trait.

In this study, **Pearson's correlation coefficient** was used to calculate the correlation between each item and the total scale score. All correlations were statistically significant at the **0.05 level** with **398 degrees of freedom**, ranging between **0.141 and 0.544**, indicating strong internal consistency and sound scale construction (Oppenheim, 1992; Anastasi, 1976).

### 2.5.2. Item-Dimension Correlation

This type of analysis verifies whether each item measures the intended sub-dimension. Oppenheim (1992) and Anastasi (1976) emphasize that an item should correlate highly with the subscale it is meant to assess.

Pearson correlations were calculated between each item and the score for its respective sub-dimension. All correlations were statistically significant at the **0.05 level**, confirming that the items effectively measure their assigned dimensions and contribute to construct validity.

### 2.5.3. Inter-Correlations Among Dimensions and Total Scale Score

To assess internal coherence, **correlation matrices** were computed between the three dimensions (**Personal Behavior, Professional Performance, and Social Interaction**) and the overall scale score using Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Results showed strong, statistically significant positive correlations:

- Personal Behavior and total score: **0.809**
- Professional Performance and total score: **0.790**
- Social Interaction and total score: **0.721**

Additionally, significant correlations were found among the dimensions themselves, supporting the structural integrity and **construct validity** of the scale (Oppenheim, 1992; Anastasi, 1976).

## 3. PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES

### 3.1. Validity Indicators

Validity is defined as the extent to which a scale accurately measures the construct it intends to assess. It is a fundamental requirement for any effective

measurement tool. A highly valid scale can be relied upon to represent the psychological or educational construct it targets (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p.179).

The current scale demonstrated validity through the following methods:

#### 3.1.1. Face Validity

Face validity refers to the extent to which a scale appears on the surface to measure what it is intended to measure, as perceived by experts and respondents alike. According to Kidder, Judd, and Smith (1991, p.132), this type of validity does not rely on complex statistical analyses but rather on subjective judgment regarding whether the scale seems appropriate for measuring the targeted construct.

In this study, face validity was established by presenting the **Personal Reputation Scale** to a panel of **nine experts** specializing in psychology and psychological measurement. The experts evaluated each item for clarity, linguistic accuracy, and relevance to the underlying construct. Their feedback led to adjustments in wording and the deletion of items deemed inappropriate or redundant, ensuring that the scale appeared suitable and credible for assessing personal reputation in the student population.

#### 3.1.2. Construct Validity

Construct validity refers to the extent to which a scale accurately measures the theoretical construct it is intended to assess. It is considered one of the most important and comprehensive types of validity. According to Oppenheim (1992, p.160) and Anastasi (1976, p.136), construct validity is established through various statistical techniques that verify the internal structure of the scale and the consistency of relationships among its dimensions.

In the present study, construct validity was assessed through **item-total correlations, item-dimension correlations, and inter-dimension correlations** using **Pearson's correlation coefficient**. All results showed **statistically significant positive relationships**, confirming that the scale items are coherent and measure a unified psychological construct. These findings provide robust evidence for the internal consistency and structural soundness of the **Personal Reputation Scale**.

### 3.2. Reliability of the Personal Reputation Scale

Reliability refers to the **degree of consistency and stability** of a measurement tool over time and across different contexts. A reliable scale yields consistent results when applied to similar groups under similar conditions. Cronbach (1980, p.120) emphasizes that

reliability is a prerequisite for validity if a scale is not reliable, it cannot be valid.

To assess the reliability of the **Personal Reputation Scale**, two statistical methods were used:

### 3.2.1. Test-Retest Reliability

The test-retest method evaluates the stability of the scale over time. The scale was administered to a group of **40 students** from the College of Fine Arts and then re-administered **two weeks later** to the same group. The results of both administrations were compared using **Pearson's correlation coefficient**, yielding a reliability coefficient of **0.84**, which is considered high and indicates strong temporal stability.

### 3.2.2. Internal Consistency (Cronbach's Alpha)

Internal consistency measures how well the items of a scale interrelate and function as a cohesive whole. **Cronbach's alpha coefficient** was calculated for the responses of **400 students** from the research sample. The resulting alpha value was **0.88**, which falls within the excellent range, indicating high internal reliability and consistency of the scale items.

These findings confirm that the **Personal Reputation Scale** possesses strong psychometric properties, including both validity and reliability, and is suitable for use in measuring the construct of personal reputation among university students.

## 4. FIELD PROCEDURES

After completing the validation and psychometric evaluation of the research instruments (Personal Reputation Scale and Social Identity Scale), the researcher proceeded to implement the study in the field. The following steps were taken:

1. **Obtaining Official Approvals:**  
The researcher obtained formal approval from the College of Fine Arts at the University of Kuwait to carry out the research within its departments. This ensured access to the student population and facilitated smooth coordination with faculty members.
2. **Sampling and Distribution:**  
A stratified random sample was selected from students across various departments of the College of Fine Arts. The researcher ensured proportional representation based on gender and academic specialization to maintain the representativeness of the sample.
3. **Administration of the Tools:**  
The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the students, explaining the purpose of the study and emphasizing the confidentiality of responses. Students were

assured that participation was voluntary and that the data collected would be used exclusively for academic research.

4. **Data Collection:**  
Students were given sufficient time to respond to the items of the two scales in a calm and focused environment. The completed questionnaires were collected immediately after completion to prevent data loss and ensure high response rates.
5. **Data Coding and Entry:**  
After collecting the data, the researcher coded the responses and entered them into the computer using the **Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)** for statistical analysis.

## 5. STATISTICAL DATA ANALYSIS

After completing the data collection from the research sample, the responses were encoded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. The researcher conducted the appropriate statistical analyses in alignment with the research objectives and hypotheses. The statistical methods used included:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:**  
Frequencies, percentages, arithmetic means, and standard deviations were calculated to describe the characteristics of the sample and the distribution of responses across the items of the two scales.
2. **Pearson Correlation Coefficient:**  
This was used to identify the nature and strength of the correlation between personal reputation and social identity among students.
3. **T-test for One Sample:**  
Applied to determine whether the mean scores for the personal reputation and social identity variables significantly differed from the hypothetical average.
4. **T-test for Two Independent Samples:**  
Used to test for statistically significant differences in mean scores based on gender (male/female).
5. **One-Way ANOVA:**  
Employed to examine whether statistically significant differences existed in the scores based on the students' academic specialization.

These statistical tools were selected to ensure a comprehensive and accurate analysis of the collected data in relation to the research objectives.

## 6. PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

This section presents the findings derived from statistical analyses and interprets them in light of the research objectives and hypotheses:

**6.1. Results Related to the First Objective**

*“Identifying the level of personal reputation among students of the College of Fine Arts.”*

To achieve this, the researcher calculated the arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the

participants’ scores on the **personal reputation scale** and compared them to the hypothetical mean (3). A one-sample t-test was used, and the results are shown in the following table:

*Table 1*

Variable	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Hypothetical Mean	t-value	Significance Level	Indication
Personal Reputation	3.76	0.45	3.00	19.87	0.000	Significant

**6.1.1. Interpretation**

The results indicate that the arithmetic mean (3.76) of personal reputation is significantly higher than the hypothetical mean (3), with a significance level of (0.000), which is less than (0.05). This means that students of the College of Fine Arts enjoy a **high level of personal reputation**.

**6.2. Results Related to the Second Objective**

*“Identifying the level of social identity among students of the College of Fine Arts.”*

To accomplish this, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for the **social identity scale** were calculated, and a one-sample t-test was conducted.

*Table 2*

Variable	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Hypothetical Mean	t-value	Significance Level	Indication
Social Identity	3.59	0.52	3.00	14.22	0.000	Significant

**6.2.1. Interpretation**

The arithmetic mean of social identity (3.59) is significantly higher than the hypothetical average (3), with a high statistical significance ( $p < 0.05$ ). This confirms that students possess a **high level of social identity**.

**6.3. Results Related to the Third Objective**

*“Identifying the relationship between personal reputation and social identity among students of the College of Fine Arts.”*

To test this, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated:

*Table 3*

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance Level	Indication
Personal Reputation & Social Identity	0.71	0.000	Significant

**6.3.1. Interpretation**

There is a **positive, strong, and statistically significant correlation** between personal reputation and social identity among students. This indicates that students who have a higher personal reputation also tend to have a stronger sense of social identity.

*social identity levels according to the variable of gender among students of the College of Fine Arts.”*

To investigate this objective, the researcher applied the independent samples t-test to compare the means of male and female students on both the personal reputation and social identity scales. The results are shown in the following tables:

**6.4. Results Related to the Fourth Objective**

*“Identifying differences in personal reputation and*

**6.4.1. Differences in Personal Reputation by Gender**

*Table 4*

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
Male	150	3.70	0.48	1.85	0.066
Female	150	3.82	0.42		

**6.4.2. Interpretation**

The difference in the mean scores of personal reputation between male and female students is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.066 > 0.05$ ). Therefore,

there are **no significant gender differences** in personal reputation among students.

**6.5. Differences in Social Identity by Gender**

*Table 5*

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
Male	150	3.54	0.55	1.52	0.130
Female	150	3.64	0.49		

**6.5.1. Interpretation**

Similarly, the difference between male and female students in social identity scores is not statistically

significant ( $p = 0.130 > 0.05$ ). Hence, **no significant gender differences** exist in social identity levels.

## 7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Students of the College of Fine Arts exhibit **high levels** of both personal reputation and social identity.
- There is a **strong positive correlation** between personal reputation and social identity.
- Gender does not significantly affect either personal reputation or social identity levels among the students.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

1. The study revealed that students at the College of Fine Arts exhibit high levels of personal reputation and social identity, indicating a strong awareness of their social and personal selves.
2. There is a significant positive correlation between personal reputation and social identity, suggesting that enhancing personal reputation is associated with a stronger sense of social identity among students.
3. No statistically significant differences were found in the levels of personal reputation or social identity between male and female students, indicating similar social and personal

experiences across genders within the College of Fine Arts.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Academic and administrative bodies at the College of Fine Arts should work towards supporting and enhancing students' personal reputation and social identity through extracurricular programs and activities that foster self-confidence and belonging.
2. It is recommended to develop workshops and training courses that strengthen students' social communication skills and self-awareness to enhance social bonds and collective identity.
3. Given the absence of gender differences in these variables, equal opportunities should be provided to all students, regardless of gender, to participate in activities that promote personal reputation and social identity.
4. Further future research should be conducted to explore other factors influencing personal reputation and social identity, such as family environment, cultural background, and educational experiences.

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