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THE PRESENTATION OF THE SELF AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: COUNTERING THE ACCOUNTANT'S STEREOTYPE

Professor Lee D. Parker

School of Commerce
The University of South Australia
lee.parker@unisa.edu.au

Professor Samantha Warren

Essex Business School
University of Essex
swarren@essex.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

This study presents a qualitative investigation of accountants' construction of their professional identities through the lens of Goffman's dramaturgical perspective. Viewing professional identity construction as a matter of impression management, the investigation employs an auto-photography methodology involving unstructured photo-driven interviews with accountants working in Australia and the UK. It reveals that while the traditional accounting stereotype still persists at macro and micro social levels, accountants attempt to counter this with personalised strategies while also attempting to develop a professional identity that is a subset of their overall life values. Their professional orientation is found to embrace role broadening and change while not necessarily aiming for upward professional mobility.

Keywords: Identity, Impression Management, Photography, Role