Finstas, Young Adults, and Stardom:

The Construction and Presentation of Identities on Instagram

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Abstract

Instagram is a popular social network site (SNS) that individuals use to share photos and videos with their friends, networks, and publicly with the world. However, as compared to other SNSs such as Facebook or Twitter, Instagram has not received as much research attention. This survey study opens new opportunities and avenues for further research on Instagram by quantifying the phenomenon in which a single individual uses multiple Instagram accounts to construct and present their online identities in a way that is entirely distinct and separate from their physical-world persona. The study specifically examines how the number of Instagram user profiles that an individual uses is related to their attitudes and behaviors on the Instagram platform. An online Qualtrics survey of Instagram users aged 18-24 (N=82) found that 64.6% of the population uses online one account and 35.4% used two or more accounts. The study demonstrate that there is a difference in attitude toward Instagram as well as social media more generally between users with one account and those with multiple. Whereas much work in the realm of SNSs has emphasized the Facebook platform, I have provided an initial study that considers Instagram, and the ways that young adults use this platform to construct and understand their identities. There remains significant opportunity to understand how these different attitudes are reflected in specific behaviors. This study has made an important first step to shift the study of SNSs toward Instagram, and perhaps other SNSs as well.

Keywords: Instagram, "finsta," online identity, SNS

For anybody who has had the opportunity to meet a beloved celebrity face-to-face in the physical world, there may be a moment of hesitation as they reconcile the differences between the personality they encounter in media texts and the actual person now standing in front of them. Dyer's (1979) star theory describes these differences, and addresses the artificial construction of star personas by Hollywood Studios and media industries. The star persona may be similar to, and based upon, a real person, but ultimately exists as a distinct and separate entity. For Dyer, the construction of celebrity was reserved for large media corporations; only through the sheer size and power of the Hollywood studio system could an ordinary person be elevated to star status. However, the increased prevalence of social media platforms has brought many of the methods, as well as effects, of stardom and the construction of artificial personas into the hands of everyday individuals. Though social media platforms such as Instagram, individuals are empowered to create and maintain not just one persona, but in fact multiple online identities. The increased prevalence of such social media platforms calls into question Dyer's restrictions on who has the means of constructing a star persona.

One social media phenomenon that has received significant attention recently in the popular press is the ongoing trend of a single individual having multiple Instagram user profiles. By maintaining multiple user profiles, young adults can develop a multitude of online personas. In popular discourse (Molina, 2017; Nanzala, 2018; Quinton, 2018) there have been many mentions of young adults using *finsta* accounts, a portmanteau of "fake" and "Instagram." While specific definitions vary, a finsta is generally characterized as a pared-down version of a primary Instagram account, with a more selective audience—a finsta may be known to close peers, but curated to reduce association with a person's real name and evade detection from parents, schools, and other authority figures (Duffy, 2017; Lipstein, 2018; Nanzala, 2018; Patterson,

2016; Pirani, 2018). In popular discourse, there are mixed views on use of finstas and their potential positive or negative influences, though notably there have been multiple instances of college students receiving disciplinary action in response to content posted on their finsta accounts (Eltagouri, 2018; Foreman & Habersham, 2018; Goodwin, 2018).

There have been some scholarly conversations around the use of digital media in the construction of online identity. While much work has centered on the use of media artifacts (Guzzetti, 2006; Joaquin, 2010; Moon, Lee, Lee, Choi, & Sung, 2016; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016) and the connection between Web-based resources and the physical world (Jacobs, 2006; Markham, 1998; Rennie & Patterson, 2009; Yi, 2009), scholarship has generally considered constructing online identities as a process that only generates a single persona. With few exceptions, little attention has been paid to the potential for a single individual to construct multiple online personas (Alvermann et al., 2012).

This study aims to examine how the Instagram photo-sharing platform is used to construct an online persona that is entirely distinct and separate from an individual's physical-world persona. In doing so, I complicate Dyer's theory of stardom by suggesting that star personas are accessible and able to be constructed, even outside of traditional media industries. Furthermore, I acknowledge the ability for individuals to use finstas and content curation to construct and maintain multiple distinct and separate personas.

With a particular focus on those who choose to maintain one or more Instagram profiles, the purpose of this survey study is to understand the use of social media in the creation and cultivation of online personas among young adults. The study specifically examines how the number of Instagram user profiles that an individual uses is related to their attitudes and behaviors on the Instagram platform.

Literature Review

Instagram as a Social Networking Site (SNS)

While there have been many studies done on social networking sites (SNS) generally (e.g. Hargittai & Hsieh, 2010; Waterloo, Baumgartner, Peter, & Valkenburg, 2018), there has been little work on Instagram specifically. Hargittai and Hsieh (2010) provided a general typology of SNS which includes frequency of use, levels of SNS engagement, and familiarity with various SNS platforms. Additional work has also considered the norms of expressing emotions on various SNS platforms (Waterloo et al., 2018). While much work has looked at SNS in a general sense, there have been a limited amount of studies that specifically consider the Instagram platform. Hu et al. (2014) offer a specific analysis of Instagram and a typology of Instagram photo content, user types, and the individual user's audience, while Poulsen (2018) analyzes Instagram's photo tools specifically and the semiotic meanings users have historically ascribed to these tools. Additionally, many studies have interrogated the motivations that users have for using Instagram, which range from narcissism and self-promotion to the establishment of personal reputation (Gibbs, Meese, Arnold, Nansen, & Carter, 2015; Moon et al., 2016; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Notably, much of this work has emphasized the photo content in the communicative process, such as the reasoning and motivation behind sharing specific content. Previous scholarship has emphasized the technology itself, while the ways that individuals use the technology has been largely a secondary focus. This study, however, considers the Instagram platform more broadly and explores the decisions that Instagram users make to manage their online identities, and the relationship between their online and offline personas.

Star Theory and Celebrity Persona

Dyer's *Stars* describes the conditions of stardom and celebrity within the context of Hollywood film. He suggests that stars are artificially constructed personas that exist as commodities and serve ideological ends (Dyer, 1979). Star theory has been dominant in film, television, and traditional media studies to describe the creation and management of Hollywood celebrities (Davisson, 2013; Mayne, 2016). Specifically, stars are created by talent management agencies and other Hollywood industries to specifically curate and compartmentalize the star persona as a distinct and separate identity from the actual individual (Dyer, 1986). However, star theory has typically only been applied to celebrities within the dominant film and television industries; the mechanisms of stardom have generally been inaccessible to everyday individuals. This study suggests that the technological affordances of the Instagram platform may enable a non-celebrity individual to create and manage separate online personas. The star persona is described as a commodity, constructed to generate profit. Separately, media audiences have also been positioned as commodities (Smythe, 1981), constructed to produce profit from advertisers, which has been extended into the era of new media and SNS as well (Caraway, 2011). However, these two commodities–the star commodity and the audience commodity–have yet to be reconciled into a single entity. This study of Instagram usage posits that the SNS enables individuals to craft their own distinct personas to define their identities and manage the identites' connections between online and offline spaces.

By crafting distinct personas, Instagram users are able to exist as both star commodities and audience commodities simultaneously. They are a star commodity in that their public profiles become mere reflections of their identities. These public profiles are then viewed and consumed by other viewers; the identity reflected in the public profile may be closely related to

their actual identity, but still exists as a distinct and separate persona. Instagram users are

simultaneously audience commodities through the process by which the SNS provides means for

advertisers to target messages to specific groups of users. Instagram is a free service to its users,

and generates revenue by using user profile information to deliver targeted advertisements.

Instagram users, therefore, exist in a dual state of being simultaneously star commodities and

audience commodities. By examining the use of multiple Instagram accounts by a single person,

this study begins to examine how star and audience commodities exist simultaneously in SNS

settings.

Nyms and Identities

Though specifically within the context of Instagram, there has been significant debate in recent

years surrounding the issues of online identities and how individuals should be empowered to

create and manage online personas. The term "nym" has emerged (Moll, 2014) as a word to

describe the name and persona that an individual person chooses to use in online communities, a

decision that can be interpreted as an act of empowerment (boyd, 2011a). The selection and

management of a nym is an important component of SNS use, and can be a key component of

setting the tone for future online communication (van der Nagel, 2017). An individual's nym

may have some connection to their offline persona, or may be entirely compartmentalized

(Frunzaru & Garbaşevschi, 2016; Gerrard, 2017; Jacobs, 2006; Phillips, 2015; Rennie &

Patterson, 2009; Yi, 2009). Jacobs (2006) emphasizes this connection between online and offline

personas, and suggests that the manner in which an individual chooses to use technology dictates

how reflective a person's nym may be of their offline persona. Frunzaru and Garbasevschi

(2016) emphasize that the Internet is a manifestation of reality, which Yi (2009) takes a step

further to suggest that online communication can serve as a means to understand and mediate

physical world identities. Despite this connection between online and offline personas, Gerrard

(2017) takes a more moderate stance and emphasizes that there are methods by which individuals

can fully compartmentalize some of their nyms and maintain a degree of separation among

online identities. Similarly, within the context of anonymous communities and the trolling

subculture, identity has been understood as a performative process. Although there is an actual

person in the physical world behind the keyboard, the way that they present themselves in

anonymous online communication may bear little relation to their offline personas (Phillips,

2015). Gradinaru (2013) summarizes general trends in the construction of online identities and

concludes that the on-going development of computer-mediated communication and SNS has

created new opportunities, but also significant complications, for the understanding and

management of personas. There is a connection between an individual's online and offline

personas, and those individuals do have some means by which they can curate and manage these

multiple identities. However, within the context of SNS research, there has yet to be significant

work surrounding a single offline individual that may choose to employ multiple nyms in online

communication settings.

　　　　While some work has shown that many adolescents do choose to manage multiple nyms

across multiple websites (Alvermann et al., 2012), this study departs from previous work by

examining the use of multiple nyms within a single SNS. Furthermore, while there has been

limited work on the construction of identities on Instagram (Choi & Lewallen, 2018; Ging &

Garvey, 2018; L. R. Smith & Sanderson, 2015), it has largely focused on the establishment and

management of a single nym for a single individual. This same limitation has persisted in other

literature on SNS more broadly as well. Although Alverman et al. (2012) gesture toward the

possibility of maintaining multiple online identities, and van der Nagel (2017) emphasizes the

importance of selecting a nym for setting the tone of online communication, the bulk of research

of SNS and online personas has emphasized a single nym vis-à-vis an individual's offline

identity and experiences. For instance, Guzzetti (2006) discusses the potential of online

communication and SNS as sites for the exploration of identity, but frames these websites as a

means for the affirmation, reflection, and reinforcement of offline identities. On other SNS such

as Facebook, the management of online personas has been discussed in close relation to offline

personas, something that users choose to "show rather than tell" (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin,

2008). Larsen (2008) uses the analogy of a jigsaw puzzle to understand the construction of online

identity. Users can pick and choose which individual pieces to include in the puzzle, but they all

must be used for the construction of a single, and not multiple, final images. While individuals

do have some ability to manage their online personas, there is an implication that there is a one-

to-one relationship between offline identity and online identity. There has yet to be significant

consideration of the construction and management of multiple online identities on a single SNS.

Returning to Instagram, this emphasis on a single nym and the cultivation of only a single online

identity has persisted. Smith and Sanderson (2015) discuss the use of Instagram by athletes for

the purposes of self-promotion. While this article emphasizes that there are multiple facets of

their offline personas, such as aspects of competition versus familiar and personal interactions,

when presented in the online space of Instagram, these multiple facets are coalesced into a single

online persona. Even in cases where an individual is not directly responsible for the creation and

management of their own online persona, such as parents posting content of their young children,

there is an implication that only a single online persona can exist (Choi & Lewallen, 2018). This

study builds upon previous work, but leaves open the possibility for a single individual to select

multiple nyms and construct multiple online personas within a single SNS. This study considers how common the practice of using multiple Instagram accounts is, and whether or not this practice is associated with differences in SNS attitudes or behaviors.

The Audience, Imagined or Otherwise

For many SNS-related studies, there has been some acknowledgment of the influence that the SNS audience may have on SNS users and how they choose to present themselves. Unlike the audiences of traditional forms of mass media, SNS audiences are unique in that each SNS user has a slightly different audience from one another (Litt, 2012). The affordances of SNS platforms enable users to curate content and control the audience that can access the content they post; this audience can range anywhere from a handful of close friends, to the entire public Internet (Litt, 2012). Hearn (2010) underscores the importance of the SNS audience by describing social currency and reputation as a new form of value that is highly influential in the management of online identity. Specifically, reputation does not arise directly from an individual's specific decisions but instead from the approval of other viewers (Hearn, 2010). Thus, the perceived audience will often heavily impact the ways individuals choose to present themselves and foster an online identity on SNS platforms (Hearn, 2010; Litt, 2012; Ranzini & Hoek, 2017). Perhaps most importantly, the audience that an individual user perceives may be an imagined audience, and might not actually be indicative of the true viewership of their SNS content (Ranzini & Hoek, 2017). Nevertheless, the pressure to manage first impressions in online communication settings nonetheless empowers this SNS audience, imagined or otherwise (Bacev-Giles & Haji, 2017). Friedman (2018) discusses the Instagram trend of the "#assholeparents" hashtag, which was used by parents to "show their children in various stages of meltdown, with accompanying

text explaining the alleged parental – usually maternal – transgression which led to the child's

misery" (170). At first glance, this seems like a subversion of traditional audience expectations

of family photos. But even though these photos did not represent the traditionally accepted

images of parenting, they met the audience's expectations by depicting the "true" story of

motherhood (Friedman, 2018). When deciding how to present one's self on Instagram and other

SNS, it is likely that the role of the audience is significant in how an individual manages their

online persona, and how close a reflection of their offline persona they choose to provide.

However, much like literature on online identities has focused on the cultivation and

construction of only a single online persona, there has been a similar emphasis on only a single

SNS audience in online communication settings. While there is certainly value in examining

SNS use from this angle, it leaves out the possibility for an individual to curate and

compartmentalize various aspects of their online communicative experiences. The specific

affordances of Instagram make it possible for one individual to create and manage multiple

nyms, and therefore the potential to construct wholly distinct and separate online identities. The

construction of an entirely separate persona has been acknowledged within television and cinema

studies of celebrity and stardom (Dyer, 1979, 1986), but as of yet has not been applied to

everyday individual users of SNSs. This study uses Instagram as a means to enter into this gap

within the literature by posing the following research questions:

RQ1: Among young adults, is there a difference in attitudes toward social media between

those who use one Instagram account and those who use more than one?

RQ2: Among young adults, is there a relationship between the number of Instagram

accounts an individual uses and their behaviors on the platform?

Methods

The primary purpose of this study was to empirically evaluate whether young adults' perception

and use of Instagram is influenced by the total number of Instagram accounts they regularly use.

An online anonymous survey was used to collect data about the ways that young adults use and

interact with the Instagram platform. Under a postpositivist worldview, this study aimed to

quantify Instagram usage and attitudes via what Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe as

"numeric measures of observations" (7) By using quantitative representations of Instagram uses

and attitudes, I was able to make statistical comparisons between groups of users that only use

one Instagram account, and those that use multiple. The use of a short online survey offered the

advantages of rapid turnaround in data collection as well as practicality for reaching a

sufficiently large sample size. Following an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design

(Creswell & Creswell, 2018), a small number of semi-structured interviews were conducted with

a subset of survey participants as follow-up. These interviews offered an initial qualitative

understanding of Instagram user behaviors and demonstrate the need for further Instagram

studies that employ a variety of methodologies.

Participants

By its own estimates, Instagram has over 1 billion monthly active users and over 500 million

daily active users (Instagram, 2016). It is unclear whether these figures refer to individual

persons, or individual Instagram accounts. Although Instagram does not provide detailed user

demographic information, a Pew Research Center survey found that 71% of U.S. Adults aged

18-24 say they use Instagram (A. Smith & Anderson, 2018). To minimize the potential influence

of age as an intervening variable on SNS attitudes and behaviors, the study only considered

Instagram users within this age range. To recruit participants, a simple graphic and recruitment

message (Figure 1) was posted to Instagram on the researcher's personal Instagram account. The

same message was also posted to the researcher's Facebook profile as a way to leverage their

personal and professional networks to spread the recruitment message. The recruitment message

included a link to the Qualtrics survey and encouraged viewers to share the link and recruitment
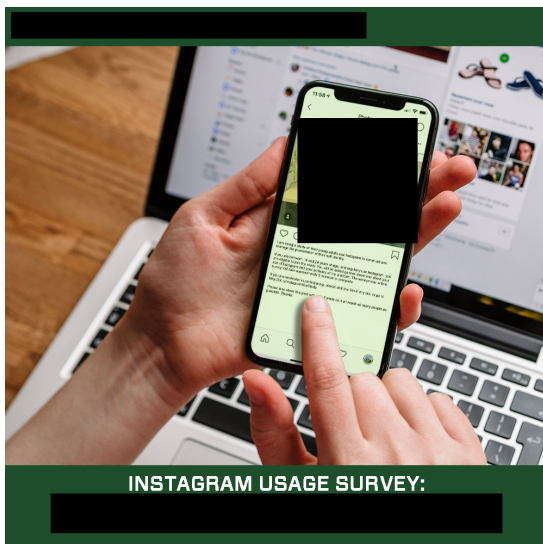
message with their own networks.

Figure 1: The Recruitment Graphic that was posted on Instagram and Facebook *(Redacted for*

Blind Review).

The recruitment message, as posted on Instagram and Facebook was:

> I am doing a study on how young adults use Instagram to construct and manage the
> presentation of their self-identity.

> If you are between 18 and 24 years of age, and regularly use Instagram, you are eligible
> to join the study. You will be asked general questions about your use of Instagram and
> your attitudes of the platform. The anonymous online survey will take approximately 5
> minutes to complete.

>If you are interested in participating, please visit the link in my bio, or go to *(URL Redacted for Blind Review)*
>
>Please also share this post with your friends so it can each as many people as possible. Thanks!

Data were collected via an online Qualtrics survey containing 18 questions. The survey included a set of pre-screening questions to limit survey respondents to 18-24 year old adults who regularly use Instagram. Though there were 108 survey responses, after applying these pre-screening questions I was left with N=82. Of these respondents, 53 reported only using one Instagram account while 29 reported using two or more. Additional demographic information was not collected in order to protect the anonymity of study participants. The online survey allowed participants to indicate their interest in taking part in follow-up telephone interviews. This ensured that any interview participants were a subset of those that also completed the online survey. From the 82 survey responses, 7 participants participated in follow-up interviews.

Procedures

Participants who click the survey link were taken to the online Qualtrics survey. The first page they were presented with was the consent form. If they checked the "I consent" option, they were taken to the pre-screening questions and then the main survey. The main survey asked general questions about how often they use Instagram, and what their attitudes of the platform are. I used scales of their Intensity of Instagram Usage as well as their General Social Media Usage and Attitudes. Versions of these scales have been used in previous studies.

Participants that indicated interest in the follow-up interviews were contacted via email several weeks after the survey. This recruitment email reminded participants of the survey they

had completed, and invited them to schedule a time to conduct the interview. Each interview

used the same interview protocol, was conducted via telephone. Though Lindolf and Taylor

(2017) do note that phone interviews lack the visual cues of face-to-face meetings, they

nevertheless provide convenience for participants and enabled me to interview participants from

a variety of locations. I recorded audio of each interview as well as produced a typed transcript

along with my notes. Prior to recruiting participants at both phases of this study, the research

procedure, survey questions, and interview protocol were submitted to and approved by an

institutional review board (IRB).

Measures

The survey included general questions about Instagram usage, such as the number of accounts

that an individual uses. There were specific questions regarding participants' curation of content

before posting to Instagram. For the purposes of this study, curation was defined as "the process

of choosing photos and videos to post, making edits to the photo and video content, and writing

captions before actually posting the content to Instagram." The survey's Instagram behavior

questions asked about participants' frequency of posting content, average time for content

curation, as well as how important audience perception is when they choose to post content to

one of their Instagram accounts. Because an Instagram-specific scale has yet to be developed,

these questions were asked in an exploratory sense, and were intended to provide an initial

measurements of some of the ways that Instagram is used by individuals.

In addition to these general behavior questions, multiple SNS scales were used to

quantify participants' attitudes and perceptions surrounding the use of Instagram. While many

SNS scales have emerged in the past decade (Sigerson & Cheng, 2018), Facebook has generally

been the most popular subject of attention (Aladwani, 2014; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007;

Orosz, Tóth-Király, & Bőthe, 2016; Yu, 2015). Other scales have measured SNS more broadly

(Li et al., 2016; Olufadi, 2016; Rosen, Whaling, Carrier, Cheever, & Rokkum, 2013), but it

appears that there are few, if any, scales that specifically address Instagram (Sigerson & Cheng,

2018). For this reason, this study took two prominent SNS scales and utilized their items with

minor modifications to be applicable to the Instagram platform.

The Facebook Intensity Scale (FBI) assesses an individual's level of Facebook use, and

their emotional connectedness to the platform (Ellison et al., 2007). It serves as an indicator of a

person's general attitudes to the platform and the integration of Facebook into their daily life

beyond a simple measurement of frequency and duration of Facebook use (Ellison et al., 2007).

The scale was not systematically validated in the researchers' original (2007) study, but was later

validated by Sigerson & Cheng (2018). The FBI scale was modified for this study by replacing

"Facebook" with "Instagram" throughout the scale's 8 items. Additionally, I made minor

adjustments to more accurately describe Instagram-specific features and nomenclature. For

example, "Approximately how many TOTAL Facebook friends do you have?" was replaced

with "How many total Instagram followers do you have?" To differentiate my new scale from

the original FBI scale, I refer to the modified scale as Instagram Intensity (IGI). Six items

measure general attitude toward Instagram, and two measure objective Instagram behavior

including time spent on Instagram per day and total number of Instagram followers. Ellison et al.

recommend asking all items as closed-ended questions, and using an ordinal scale for Item # 7

(Total Facebook Friends) and Item #8 (Facebook minutes), and suggest adjusting the response

categories based on the study population (Ellison et al., 2007). However, given the limited

knowledge of the population of young adults on Instagram, I asked these scale items as open-

ended questions, and transformed each by taking the log of each score prior to computing the

scale.

The Media and Technology Usage and Attitudes Scale (MTUAS) provides a

comprehensive measure of digital media activities and attitudes (Rosen et al., 2013). It builds

upon previous SNS and general technology scales that measure total use time, frequency of use

within a particular time period, generic attitude Likert scales, and experience sampling at a

particular point in time by measuring 44 separate items across 11 subscales (Rosen et al., 2013).

Unlike FBI, or my modified form of Instagram Use Intensity, MTUAS is meant to measure

general use of media and technology as well as individual's perceptions of each, rather than

emphasizing a single SNS. This provides the benefit of more easy comparison of different SNS

across multiple studies. MTUAS has been used across multiple studies of distinct populations

and has generally found to be reliable and valid (Sigerson & Cheng, 2018). For this study, I used

only the General Social Media Usage subscale, consisting of 9 items. Rosen et al. (2013) wrote

these items to include the word "Facebook," which is substituted with "Instagram" in this survey.

For example, MTUAS Item #33 asks the participant how frequently they "Check your Facebook

page from your smartphone." In the modified survey question, I asked how frequently they

"Check Instagram from your smartphone." Additional minor modifications were made to refer to

Instagram platform features, rather than features that are specific to the Facebook platform. Item

#38, which asked how frequently the participant "Comment[s] on postings, status updates,

photos, etc." was replaced with "Comment on photos or videos." MTUAS measures attitudes

toward social media more broadly, whereas IGI is specific to the Instagram platform. Thus, I

used both scales separately in my consideration of RQ1.

Results

Table 1

Frequency distribution of the number of Instagram accounts used by young adults.

Number of Accounts	Frequency	Percent
1	53	64.6
2	25	30.5
3	3	3.7
4	1	1.2
Total:	82	100

The data showed that among young adults, using multiple Instagram accounts is fairly common, as shown in Table 1. These data were consolidated into two groups: those with one Instagram account (N=53), and those with two or more accounts (N=29).

The two scales, IGI and MTAUS, were originally written to be used in studies of the Facebook platform. I modified the scale items to use the word "Instagram" rather than "Facebook," as well as other minor modifications to item wording–such as using "Instagram Followers" rather than "Facebook Friends." The IGI scale showed acceptable reliability (α = .629) and MTAUS showed good reliability (α = .822).

RQ1 asked whether there was a difference in social media attitudes between young adults that use only one Instagram account, and those that use more than one. I differentiated between attitude toward Instagram specifically and general attitude toward social media, measured by IGI and MTAUS, respectively.

For IGI, an independent t test showed a significant difference between young adults with one Instagram account (M = 2.4206, SD = .50512) and those with more than one Instagram account (M = 2.0908, SD = .45625). Levene's test for equality of variances was not significant

(F = .697, p = .406), so equality of variances can be assumed, t(80) = 2.923, p = 0.005, d = 0.675). Individuals with more than one account were associated with greater Instagram use as well as a stronger emotional connection to the platform.

For MTAUS, an independent t test showed a significant difference between young adults with one Instagram account (M = 5.1656, SD = .88216) and those with more than one Instagram account (M = 5.8008, SD = 1.18834). Levene's test for equality of variances was not significant (F = .841, p = .362), so equality of variances can be assumed, t(80) = -2.748, p = 0.007, d = -0.06). Individuals with more than one account were associated with more frequent use of social media in general.

RQ2 asked if there was a relationship between the number of Instagram accounts used by an individual and their general behaviors on the Instagram platform. Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between the number of Instagram accounts and each of the behavior items from the survey. There was a negative relationship between the number of Instagram accounts and the item "How frequently do you post something to any one of your Instagram accounts?" r(80) = -0.312, p = 0.005. However, there were not any significant correlations between number of Instagram accounts and any of the other behavior questions, including questions about the curation of content before posting.

The lack of correlations between number of accounts and the majority of the survey's behavior questions underscore the limitations of quantitative methods for understanding Instagram user behaviors and attitudes. The follow-up interviews that were conducted with a subset of the survey participants were better equipped to describe Instagram users in this level of detail. For instance, Participant 6 explained that for them Instagram had "been a place to reclaim my identity and project my identity, and also a place for me to document my health journey."

This individual reasoning and valuing of the Instagram platform could not be identified through the survey items alone.

Interview participants included Instagram users who used only one account, as well as those with more than one. From all of these interviews, several broad themes emerged. For instance, most users often use the Instagram app on a daily basis, but often just to pass time while waiting for something else. Multiple interviewees explained that Instagram has a different audience than other SNS platforms, such as Facebook, and that this audience often was a factor in how they chose to present themselves on the platform. Participant #5 explained that they felt pressured to present themselves in a positive light: "it makes me feel like I have to be more friendly than I would normally be. And that I want that to be what people take away from their interactions with me or my posts."

Multiple participants also specifically mentioned thinking about how they wanted to present themselves for professional or career purposes. Participant #3, for example, explained that there were several images they would post of their "finsta" instead of their primary account: "Maybe I'm wearing something that I wouldn't feel comfortable posting on a public platform. Like maybe something that's a little too revealing or something like that. Or has some allusion to drugs in it." Participant #1, who also uses multiple accounts, directly stated, "I definitely present different versions of myself on the two accounts."

Participants also provided their own definitions and understandings of the term "finsta." Though the phrase has been widely used in popular press descriptions of Instagram behavior, there has yet to be a single agreed-upon definition. This ambiguity was reflected in how many participants described their own thoughts on the platform. As Participant #4 explained:

> So to me the finsta seems to be a place a little less filtered and a little more goofy and silly. And it's usually more meme-focused, and people talk about maybe more personal or sensitive issues, or maybe even other people are purposely not following that Insta— that finsta.

Participant #3 offered a succinct definition of "finsta" as "the stuff that I would want to post on social media but feel some sort of social contract not to." However, it is important to note that in addition to multiple definitions, the use of the term "finsta" itself is not wholly universal. Some participants used the phrase, but only in reference to what they had heard from others; they did not use the term themselves. And some participants did not use the word at all, instead only describing Instagram behavior in other terms such as "multiple accounts" or "my work account."

While these interviews certainly provide valuable insight into actual Instagram user behavior and attitudes, I am careful to note that they represent only a small subset of survey participants. Given the small sample size (N=7), there is little ability to draw meaningful conclusions about the whole survey dataset. That said, the explanatory sequential design of this mixed-methods study produced useful qualitative data that offers avenues for future Instagram research.

Discussion

Dyer described the construction of star personas within the context of Hollywood and large film studios with entire offices dedicated to building and maintaining a celebrity's public image. A star persona was more than just the image of a popular actor that appeared in theaters, but rather the entire personality that was purposefully constructed and promoted by Hollywood studios; a star was entirely separate from the actual human being. However, the ability for an individual to construct a separate star persona was generally thought to be limited to celebrities and other public figures–people with access to film studios and other publicity agencies (Dyer, 1979). This

study of Instagram suggests that social media technology has enabled everyday individuals to construct and maintain multiple online personas. Stardom, in this sense, is no longer inaccessible to non-celebrity individuals. I demonstrate that among young adults, it is common practice to use more than one Instagram account to represent oneself in online spaces. 35.37% of survey respondents report using 2 or more Instagram accounts, confirming what has been widely reported within the popular press (Molina, 2017; Nanzala, 2018; Quinton, 2018). Moll discusses the possible effects and implications of using multiple personas in online spaces, and defines "nyms" as the names and personas that one chooses to utilize (Moll, 2014). An Instagram profile can thus be considered as an individual nym, and we demonstrate that among young adults it is not uncommon for one individual in the physical world to employ multiple nyms in the online world. However, the reasons that an individual has for choosing to construct and maintain multiple nyms is beyond the scope of the present study, so additional work is needed to assess reasons such as Duffy's suggestion that increased compartmentalization of online identity is an "act of digital self-surveillance" (Duffy, 2017). Additionally, our study examined only young adults that use Instagram, ages 18-24; therefore additional work is necessary to determine if the practice of using multiple Instagram accounts is common within other demographics as well.

RQ1 asked "Among young adults, is there a difference in attitudes toward social media between those who use one Instagram account and those who use more than one?" The data analysis showed that there are significant differences in attitudes toward social media between young adults that use one Instagram account and those that use two or more. There were differences observed for both IGI and MTUAS, though in opposite directions. Individuals with more than one Instagram account had a higher MTUAS than those with only one account, but a lower IGI. This difference may stem from the slight differences in what these two instruments

measure. MTUAS measures attitudes toward social media in general, and includes items that ask about specific behaviors such as checking social media pages, posting status updates, and clicking "like" on photos. IGI, on the other hand, measures attitudes about Instagram specifically, and its items emphasize the emotional connection to the platform rather than specific behaviors. Ellison et al. explain that FBI is intended as a measure of emotional connectedness and thus is "a better measure of Facebook usage than frequency or duration indices" (Ellison et al., 2007, p. 1150). Young adults with more than one Instagram account therefore have a lower emotional connection to the Instagram platform, but do feel more positively about the actions that they perform while using the platform. It is possible that these differences in IGI and MTUAS arise partially from Instagram's own policies, and how they differ from other SNS. Platforms such as Facebook and YouTube are more restrictive with "real-name" policies, and make it more difficult for a single individual in the physical world to maintain multiple nyms in these online spaces. Instagram, however, does not have the same kind of restrictions (Instagram, 2018). boyd suggests that there may be significant negative outcomes to these restrictive nym policies, and our observed differences in IGI and MTAUS may be an indication that young adults are aware of these implications, and choose to use Instagram because it does allow for one individual to use multiple nyms on the platform (boyd, 2011b). Further research is necessary to consider the differences in MTUAS between users of different SNS. Additional studies may also examine how individual Instagram users describe their attitudes toward the platform and other SNS, rather than the detached numeric measurement of IGI and MTUAS.

RQ2 asked "Among young adults, is there a relationship between the number of Instagram accounts an individual uses and their behaviors on the platform?" The study

considered how these differences in SNS attitudes may also be reflected in different behaviors on the Instagram platform. Differences in how individuals actually use the platform–such as frequency of posting, importance of audience perception, or time spent curating content–are not represented by IGI or MTUAS. Because there have been so few studies on Instagram to this date, we asked a broad set of questions about possible Instagram behavior. However, due to a relatively small sample size (N=82) compared to the total Instagram population of hundreds of millions, as well as a lack of correlation to the number of Instagram accounts used, it is not possible to draw meaningful conclusions about differences in Instagram behavior. Although we did observe a negative relationship between the number of Instagram accounts and the frequency of posting, it is also possible that this correlation is limited to our sample, and may not be indicative of the entire Instagram population.

Although much scholarship in the area of social media and online identities has focused on Facebook as a platform, we have found that many of the methods and instruments for that SNS can apply to Instagram, and possible to other sites as well. Ellison et al. have improved upon the initial FBI scale with additional items that are specific to the Facebook platform (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2011). However, the original scale can still be applied to other SNS by modifying the items that specifically reference Facebook or Facebook features. By editing the scale items to reference "Instagram" rather than "Facebook" we find that the instrument is still generally reliable. This modified scale, Instagram Intensity, may be further improved through additional research and understanding of the population of Instagram users. Particularly for IGI scale items #7 (Total Number of Followers) and #8 (Minutes Spent on Instagram), the scale will likely become more reliable when asked as closed-ended, rather than open-ended, questions. This suggests that future studies into attitudes and behaviors of Instagram

do not necessarily need to completely reinvent the wheel, and may instead simply adapt the methods and instruments from studies of Facebook and other SNS. However, in most cases simply replacing the word "Facebook" with "Instagram" is not sufficient to maintain the same reliability and validity, and additional modifications, such as changes to closed-ended ordinal scales may be necessary. Nonetheless, this is an important contribution to future Instagram studies, because we demonstrate that many SNS measures and instruments can be readily adapted. For instance, it is possible that FBI could be similarly modified for a study of Twitter, or Snapchat, rather than attempting to develop a scale fully from scratch.

Further work is needed to fully understand the relationship between the number of Instagram accounts someone uses and their actual behaviors on the Instagram platform. Due to the personal nature of constructing and maintaining multiple online nyms, this question is more suited for a qualitative research approach. For instance, there may be many reasons that an individual chooses to use multiple Instagram accounts. It is possible that some may choose to do so in an attempt to construct and individual star persona, but it may also arise from professional business obligations. Qualitative studies are better equipped consider these nuances, as well as consider additional questions, such as what does an individual consider when choosing to use multiple Instagram accounts? How do they choose what content to post to different accounts?

In my initial interviews, the study participants discussed several of these themes while describing what the Instagram SNS meant in their lives. For young adults, Instagram is a way to construct and present their identities. For Instagram users, it is not uncommon to think carefully about the possible professional implications of posting certain images, which often is described as a need to appear as positive as possible in their online self-presentation. For some, this has contributed to the decision to use multiple Instagram accounts, sometimes called "finstas," to

manage their online identities. However, this small number of interviews included in this study

significantly limits the conclusions that can be drawn. That said, this has been a useful initial

study to demonstrate the potential of qualitative methods to understand how the Instagram

platform is used.

Another interesting angle may be a study of the relationship between one individual's

different Instagram accounts, and how they describe those differences. Are these Instagram fully

separate nyms, such as a "finsta" that only bears little connection to the individual in the physical

world? Or are these accounts being used in a commercial sense, such as Instagram influencers,

who often make considerable salaries from maintaining their Instagram personas (O'Connor,

2017). This last question, specifically, may further connect Instagram and other SNSs to Dyer's

star theory, particularly within the context of his description of stars as commodities (Dyer,

1979). While these questions cannot be adequately addressed through this study design, they

represent the rich opportunity for further research into the use of Instagram and its relationship

with the construction of individual identity.

Conclusion

In Dyer's view, the construction of a separate star persona was restricted to celebrities and had to

be specifically created by Hollywood studies and publicity offices. But the 21st century's

proliferation of SNSs has now made it possible for virtually any individual to construct and

maintain their own separate personas. The affordances of the Instagram platform provide the

means for one individual in the physical world to maintain multiple nyms in the same online

space, rather than across multiple SNSs. This suggests that new media technology has

significantly changed individuals' relationship to media, and highlights significant changes to the

conditions of stardom.

Whereas much work in the realm of SNSs has emphasized the Facebook platform, I have

provided an initial study that considers Instagram, and the ways that young adults use this

platform to construct and understand their identities. While I have demonstrated a difference in

attitudes between those with just one Instagram account and those with multiple, there remains

significant opportunity to understand how these different attitudes are reflected in actual

behaviors. This study has made an important first step to shift the study of SNSs from its narrow

focus on Facebook toward Instagram, and perhaps other SNSs as well.

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