Investigating Identity and "Finsta" Use Amongst Emerging Adults

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Introduction

- Instagram is a social networking site based around pictures and captions (Moreau, 2019) and has implications for a college-aged adults in a time of transition and identity department because of the comparison of themselves against what they see amongst their peers.
- Self-presentation is central to social media and emerging adults who try to communicate an image or information about themselves to other people. Self-presentation can be positive, authentic, or deep and relate to how clear one's identity is (Yang, Holden, & Carter, 2017).
- "Finsta" (fake Instagram accounts) users post more unfiltered and authentic content to a smaller audience they select (Forsey, n.d.).
- Study investigated implications of "Finstas" on identity development for emerging adults with Finstas and how they use them.

Hypotheses

- **H1**: Greater use of "Finsta" accounts for expressing angry or sad feelings will be positively related to deep online self-presentation on their Finsta.
- **H2**: Greater use of "Finsta" accounts for genuine humor will be positively related to greater authentic online self-presentation on their Finsta.
- **H3**: Those who engaged in deep online self-presentation on their "Finsta" account will have higher rates of identity distress and lower rates of identity clarity.

Method

Participants
- 112 Elizabethtown College students with a Finsta and regular Instagram account

Measures
- Social Media Self-Presentation Scale (adapted from Yang, Holden, & Carter, 2017)
- Finsta survey
- Identity Distress Survey (Berman, Montgomery, & Kurtines, 2004)
- Identity Clarity Scale (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981)

Results

- **H1 was supported.** Sad & angry positively significantly related to deep online social media self presentation.
- **H2 was NOT supported**. Greater use of humorous content on Finstas significantly related to decreases of authentic self-presentations.
- **H3 was partially supported**. Deep self-presentation was significantly associated with higher rates of identity distress, but not significant rates of lower identity clarity.

Discussion

- Humor surprisingly detracted from deep and authentic self-presentation.
- Anger was not related to authenticity at all, but positively related to deep self-presentation and negatively related to positive self-presentation on Finstas.
- Negative emotions (e.g., sadness and anger) seemed to play higher in deep/authentic self-presentations on Finsta accounts than positive emotions.
- Although deep self-presentation indicated a relationship with higher rates of identity distress, another unknown variable could be influencing the lower rates of identity clarity.

Table 1

Correlations between identity clarity, identity distress, social media self-presentation styles, comparison styles, and types of content

Source	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Identity Clarity	--										
2. Identity Distress	.42**	--									
3. Deep Social Media Self-Presentation on Finsta	-.14	.26**	--								
4. Authentic Social Media Self-Presentation on Finsta	.15	.03	.45**	--							
5. Positive Social Media Self-Presentation on Finsta	.23	-.21	-.66**	-.24	--						
6. Deep Social Media Self-Presentation on Instagram	.22	.20	.20	.07	-.07	--					
7. Authentic Social Media Self-Presentation on Instagram	.49**	-.18	-.05	.34**	.22	.32**	--				
8. Positive Social Media Self-Presentation on Instagram	-.18	.15	.08	.08	.14	-.53**	-.23	--			
9. Sad Finsta Content	-.32**	.2	.51**	.32**	-.57**	-.13	-.08	.19	--		
10. Angry Finsta Content	-.04	.1	.36**	.07	-.38**	.04	-.12	.07	.39**	--	
11. Humorous Finsta Content	.09	-.13	-.44**	-.27**	.38*	.05	.01	-.07	-.42**	-.28**	--

Note. ** = $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed)

References

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