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True-self and the uses and gratifications of Instagram among college-aged females

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TRUE SELF AND THE USES AND GRATIFICATIONS OF INSTAGRAM AMONG
COLLEGE-AGED FEMALES

by

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ABSTRACT

True Self and the Uses and Gratifications of Instagram among College-Aged Females

by

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With more than 300 million daily users, Instagram has rapidly become one of the most widely used social networking apps worldwide. This study investigates relationships between motivations for using Instagram, whether users are portraying their true-selves and how their usage affects life satisfaction and well-being. A quantitative survey was used to collect data from 200 students at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas students. Participants were asked to provide answers regarding their habits for using Instagram, whether their online portrayal of self reflected their true self and determine overall life satisfaction. The motives studied in this research include: interpersonal communication, entertainment, information seeking, diversion and identity (Sheldon and Bryant 2015; Ting 2014; Papacharissi and Mendelson 2011; Sundar and Limperos 2013). The research question asked if there was a relationship between gender and usage of Instagram, results indicated there was less than one percent difference in usage among gender. Results support the hypothesis that there was a significant, positive relationship between the presentation of true self and life satisfaction. Other notable findings include the merging of two uses and gratification factors to become identity and social affinity; negative relationships between true-self and escape motive; and a negative relationship between the escape motive and life satisfaction.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Studies on the relationship between Facebook and how users of social networking sites use identity construction to enhance self-image have been generated since the social networking boom in the early 2000's (Tidwell & Walther, 2000; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008; Cheung, 2014; Perloff, 2014). Using researchers such as Attrill (2015); Bargh, McKenna and Fitzsimons (2002); and Katz, Blumer and Gurevitch (1974), this thesis examines the relationship between the true-self concept and motivations for using the social networking site Instagram.

Instagram is a free mobile photo and video-sharing app, which serves two-fold as a social networking service. Facebook purchased the site for \$1 billion in 2012 (Luckerson, 2016). Instagram makes its revenue from advertising, like most social networking sites. Users express non-verbal captions using emoticons, add filters to alter photographs, add hashtags to group together categories, and frames to put together a digital storyline. In an effort to make Instagram more authentic, four features were added in 2016: a 24-hour photo-sharing feature, similar Snapchat's stories, a feed-ranking algorithm, live video broadcast, and ephemeral messaging (Wagner, 2017). The first feature allows users to post a photo or video lasting 10 seconds, with the ability to draw on or add text to the image. The image or video disappears after a 24-hour duration and users are able to modify the audience they broadcast to. Instagram made these changes in accordance with the changes noticed on the site; users were no longer using the app to share photos and videos with friends and family. The use of Instagram shifted to a brand-focused crowd, enticing celebrities, marketers and advertisers. Predictions from eMarketer suggest that three-quarters of all U.S. companies with more than 100 employees will use Instagram for

marketing in 2017 (Wagner, 2017). According to the website, as of June 2016, there were 500 million users of Instagram, 300 million of which, used the site daily (www.instagram.com). Users 18 to 29 years old represented the largest group, with a greater representation from women (Duggan, et al., 2015; Greenwood, et al., 2016). Adult females lead the numbers in social media, spending about 10 minutes to men's 7 minutes on mobile social apps (Nielsen, 2012). Women drive the content on Instagram and are predictably more affected by their experiences on social media networks more than men (Greenwood, et al., 2016; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Malik et al., 2015). Because young women are the primary users of social networking sites, this thesis will focus implicitly on the contemporary social media effects of perception among females aged 18 to 29.

Significance and Purpose of the Study

The objective for this study is to better understand how Instagram users portray their true-self online by learning the motives for self-disclosure and online expression. The purpose of this study is twofold. The first is to determine users' motivations for posting to Instagram. The second is to explore the relationship between user motivations and the true-self concept in relation to life satisfaction and well-being.

Various studies on Facebook, MySpace and dating sites have been conducted from self-presentation perspectives, however few use Instagram as a platform for study (McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002; see Smith & Sanderson, 2015). By conducting research in this area, scholars, as well as the general public will have more understanding on the effects of Instagram on the presentation of self of the adult female. The significance of noting well-being and life satisfaction may provide understanding into how users communicate the way in which they do and how it effects their perception of self.

The Self

Although the work of Goffman (1959) regarding the self has changed over time and is interpreted by many researchers, his work in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* states that the “true” or “real” attitudes, beliefs, and emotions of the individual can be ascertained only indirectly, through what appears to be involuntary expressive behavior. This means a person can express in a certain fashion but are also able to intentionally express in a specific way. Goffman referred to life as a stage with actors who portray different characters, as do everyday people in varying social situations. Many factors influence how people determine how they will portray their selves to others, including searching for hints, cues, expressive gestures, etc. People are able to present in a way that is favorable, thus engaging in impression management. Attrill (2015) interprets the self as malleable depending on the social situation and interaction with partners. She believes people have the basic tools to adapt to the situations in which they find themselves.

The traditional view is that the self is uniform, structured, consistent over time and comprised from a number of psychological and physical features that abstract the essential traits from the individual’s past behavior (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Burke (1980) suggested that the self was too stable to be as flexible as prior research advocates. The notion that the self is stable makes sense when looking at the self over time. There is stability, but there is also change, development and growth.

Alternatively, Burke (1980) also stated that self-images, which can be viewed as working copies of the basic identities, are what guide performance. These self images, or possible selves, are only flexible temporarily, in critical everyday functioning. Self-images are relevant to determining the concept of true-self and whether those who post online are doing so with their

true-self concept in mind. The belief that the self is a stable construct but has self-images that can be fluid, make for more believable approach to the notion of a flexible core self. For example, if a person on Instagram posts a series of images: one while in a work environment; one relaxing with family; and one in costume for a performance—these can all be versions of a person's true-self concept. It is the self-images that are highlighting values from the true-self.

While most empirical work on the self-concept suggests the self is a stable construct, researchers like Gergen (1972), Tedeschi and Lindskold (1976) suggested the self is malleable and can change quite dramatically depending on the nature of the social situation. Markus and Nurius (1986) studied the conceptual links between cognition and motivation. They examined stability versus malleability and the relationship between self-concept and behavior. Their belief was that the self-concept is a significant regulator of behavior. Markus and Nurius (1986) came to this definition of possible selves, "An individual is free to create any variety of possible selves, yet the pool of possible selves derives from the categories made salient by the individual's particular sociocultural and historical context and from the models, images, and symbols provided by the media and by the individual's immediate social experiences," (p. 964).

As mentioned above, some researchers believe the self is an organizer of behavior, always anticipating and always orienting to the future (Blumer, 1969; Markus & Nurius, 1986). "Possible selves provide for a complex and variable self-concept but are authentic in the sense that they represent the individual's persistent hopes, fears, and indicate what could be realized given appropriate social situations," (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The concept of possible selves reflects an individual's degree of cognitive and affective elaboration. It reflects the potential for growth, change and possible future selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Rosenberg (1986) simplified the self-concept as the totality of a person's thoughts and feelings in reference to

oneself. Those who use Instagram for photo sharing do so to fulfill a need. Needs like self-expression, self-presentation, to communicate, nurture or maintain social relationships, are reasons why so many young people spend time and effort contributing online (Malik et al., 2013).

While researchers vary in beliefs of the flexibility of the self, Attrill (2015) believed the self-construct is determined by one's own perceptions and is shaped from the individual's experiences in the offline world. She stated a person's self-knowledge guides how the self is constructed and how as humans we change and manipulate aspects of our character and behavior. "Your self-knowledge is therefore probably one of the most powerful cognitive tools that you possess," (p. 5). In this thesis, Rosenberg and Roger's definitions of true-self are the applied definitions when referring to the true-self concept. To reiterate, the true-self is the totality of a person's thoughts and feelings about oneself (Rosenberg, 1986) and is distinct from the ideal self and possible selves. It is a present, not a future version of the self. Unlike the social self, the "persona," the true-self is not easily expressed to others (Bargh, McKenna & Fitzsimons, 2002; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Jung, 1953; Rogers, 1951).

The Shaping of the Online Self

Communication channels on the internet are vast—instant messaging, email, blogs, social networking sites, photo and video sharing apps, etc. Since the infancy of the internet, communication and interactions online have been slowly altering how people speak to one another. According to Goffman (1959) there are two kinds of communication—expressions given and expressions given off. Expressions can be explicitly stated both verbally and nonverbally. Those that are given off are cues the recipient interprets. These could be visual cues

such as body language, expression, and paralinguistic cues, like tone of voice. Instagram and the overall internet environment create an area of control for one to decide how much, within the confines of the social-media platform's architecture, and what they would like to reveal, an example of expressions given. As communication moves toward online interaction and less of face to face, users are more inclined to leave intentional cues for the viewer to interpret (Zaho et al., 2008). Walther (1996) proposed that computer mediated communication enabled individuals to use the absence of cues in both synchronous and asynchronous modes of communication to their favor. Asynchronous communication refers to a delay in response due to a lapse in time, while synchronous occurs in real time. Because of asynchronous communication, Instagram users are equipped to craft their profile by sorting photos of anything from their basic interests, to modifying content to highlight one variation of a possible self and as often as they like.

The internalization of the ideal self is influenced by a multitude of media, symbolic social online forces, peers, and cultural norms (Mehdizadeh, 2010; Seidman, 2012; Perloff, 2014). Theories about self-presentation were originally introduced for face-to-face interaction, however studies by Dominick (1999) and Wong (2012) apply self-presentation tactics to internet use and later Facebook. Jones and Pittman (1982) classified five categories for self-presentation in face-to-face settings: self-promotion; ingratiation; supplication; exemplification and intimidation. Dominick (1999) observed three of those categories, which applied to behavior online. Ingratiation, the act of presenting a likeable image; supplication which is used to gain support or sympathy from others by showing helplessness; and enhancement, used for self-promotion and displaying a skill or knowledge in front of others (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Similar self-presentation tactics are applied to a study on self-presentation on Instagram in Hong Kong by researcher Ting (2014). The author employed the uses and gratification theory, stating Instagram

usage satisfies motives previously used for face-to-face presentation. This shows a changing dynamic of how self-presentation tactics originally used for face-to-face communication are converting into computer-mediated communication over the internet and now through social networking sites.

Rogers (1959) claimed that people are cognizant of the fact that they are one type of person in one social setting and another type in other situations. Research by Bargh, McKenna and Fitzsimons (2002) suggested that because of the relative anonymity of the internet, communication settings and the absence of physical “gating features” of face-to-face communication, the presentation of one’s self has changed. Their use of the term ‘gating features’ refer to cues in which a person uses to assess a person’s credibility of their identity. A gating feature could be referred to as stuttering or visible social shyness. Bargh, McKenna and Fitzsimons conducted a study and found that one’s true self was more likely to be active online, rather than face-to-face. The tendency to project the ideal-self online, plus the absence of traditional gating features that dominate relationship formation is a contributor to the establishment of close relationships online. Thus, self-disclosure created through the internet creates a potential for people to exert their true-selves while online (Bargh, McKenna & Fitzsimons, 2002). “Anonymity can be maintained through withholding information. The combination of disembodiment and anonymity creates a technologically mediated environment in which a new mode of identity production emerges” (Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008).

Unlike face-to-face communication, computer-mediated communication is primarily textual. Tidwell and Walther (2002) had participants engage in conversation over multiple communication channels with the opposite sex. After a brief conversation by both face-to-face and over email, participants completed a survey about the communication in which they had just

participated. “Computer-mediated interactions exhibited a greater proportion of more direct than intimate uncertainty reduction behaviors than unmediated participants did” (2002, p.332). The authors argued that the absence of nonverbal cues, accompanied by editing capabilities, identity cues and temporal characteristics, may have prompted users of computer-mediated communication to engage in a more selective self-presentation and partner idealization, enacting exchange more intimate than an interaction face-to-face. This study showed how nonverbal cues can actually aid in pre-interaction rehearsal and selective framing of self-presentation.

There are alternating beliefs of the effects of computer-mediated communication and how they have changed since face-to-face communication. The contemporary belief has evolved to show that the internet has opened up a way for users to present versions of their online self, which are different and separate from their offline selves (Byam, 1995; Turkle, 1995; McKenna and Bargh, 2000). Online and social media users are able to present themselves in a light that is favorable to him or her. It is relatively easy for the individual to manipulate their profile at will. There are four differences that describe why interaction and communication on the internet is different from real life: it is possible to be anonymous online; the internet vastly expands the range of interaction partners; physical cues are not present and therefore not an influential factor; and lastly, time—time becomes an immaterial concept online (McKenna and Bargh, 2000).

Motives for Posting Online

In the past, the most frequent studied media for use and gratification researchers were newspaper, radio, television and film (Herzog, 1944; Maslow, 1970; Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch, 1973). Media range from print, radio, to television, cable and film, to internet, video games, social networking sites and now mobile apps on smart phones and other devices.

The uses and gratifications theory, according to Katz, Blumer and Gurevitch, determined that individual differences influence motivations for engaging in media (1973). According to their research, the audience is perceived as active in choosing the media they consume. Needs gratification and media choice rely on the audience member. Media compete with other sources of need satisfaction. People are generally aware of these needs and self-report their interests and motives or at least recognize them. These researchers gave three distinct sources for audience gratification: media content, exposure to the media *per se*, and the social context that typifies the situation of different media. Unlike other media, social networking sites require users to take on an active role of participation, whether commenting on pages, liking photos or following other users. This participation is driven by various motives for interacting on the site, whether to engage with others, for entertainment or something entirely different. The users of such sites are motivated to fulfill a need, or gratification. This research summarizes previous uses and gratification theories and provides its own interpretation of motives for social media use.

Sheldon and Bryant (2015) summarized years of uses and gratifications research. They found that the most common audience motives for using media were: to escape problems or for emotional release; personal relationships: social utility of information in conversation; personal identity: value reinforcement and self-understanding; and surveillance: knowledge about others. Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) combined measures of traditional media with new media motives to show why people use the internet. Their findings showed that people use the internet for reasons including those to pass time, information seeking, convenience and entertainment. Sundar and Limperos (2013) reviewed 20 uses and gratifications studies from 1940 to 2013 and found a considerable overlap between gratifications for both old and new media, suggesting the core reasons are the same. The uses and gratifications perspective has verified that reasons for

watching television include the following motivations: arousal; escape; learning or information seeking; habit; surveillance; social interaction or companionship; to pass time; and for relaxation and entertainment (Greenberg, 1974; Rubin, 1981, 1983), some of which apply to more contemporary media such as social media.

Coyne, Padilla-Walker and Howard (2013) conducted a study to determine how adults aged 18 to 29 spent their time using traditional and new forms of media. Results revealed most of the time is spent on the internet or listening to music. This study found that the participant used media to gratify the following needs: autonomy; identity; and intimacy. In this research autonomy referred to the increasing exercise emerging adults engage in to decide what types of media are consistent with their value system. Emerging adults see themselves as an adult in some aspects while not others. Media can play a role in the many aspects of identity formation during the emergence of adulthood. Identity development is a lengthy process. This body of research suggested intimacy might be enhanced or undermined through the use of media. Media are used to meet, contact, communicate and develop relationships. Intimacy can prosper online over time. The authors believed that college students were likely using cell phone messaging and social networking sites to plan face-to-face communication with friends. Cell phones are used as additional mechanisms for meeting new people and keeping in touch with others. It appeared that for most young adults, use of social networking sites complimented or helped facilitate real-world relationships, rather than replacing or hindering them. What an individual posts on social media networks becomes a defining statement in who a person is. Posting various content related to whom a person may be is a means of trying on different possible selves (Manago, Graham, Greenfield, & Salimkhan, 2008; Coyne, Padilla-Walker & Howard, 2013).

According to Marcus (2015), Instagram is based more on one's personal identity rather than relational identity because of the format of photo and video format. Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) found that those who were more satisfied with life and more comfortable with personal interaction preferred more informational seeking gratifications, while those less satisfied were motivated by escape or diversion from the real world.

There are many reasons why users report using social networking sites. Research by Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) report the following reasons: to keep in touch with old friends; to keep in touch with current friends; to post or look at pictures; to make new friends; and to locate old friends. Some of the less commonly reported reasons were: to learn about events; to post social functions; to feel connected; to share information; for academic purposes; and lastly, for dating purposes. Determining motive for posting to Instagram will help the researcher understand how the true-self construct is presented and whether the user is satisfied with their life and state of well-being. By studying the uses and gratifications of Instagram use, we determine what needs are require fulfillment and what motives need to be satisfied. This information helps develop a case for the true-self construct and presentation of self online.

Well-being and Life Satisfaction

According to Mehdizadeh (2010), a person's overall self-evaluation is either implicit or explicit. Implicit self-esteem is automatic and unconscious, while explicit is more conscious and reflective. They suggest that all humans have a vital need to maintain or raise their self-esteem. Having a raised self-esteem then leads to positive well-being and life satisfaction. The relationship between the internet and well-being is a complex one. Research conducted by

Gordon, Juang and Syed (2007) suggests it is not how much time is spent online that effects well-being, but rather, what is being done online that creates the effect. Having a large audience on a social network is associated with higher self-esteem, according to surveys conducted by Manago, Taylor and Greenfield (2012). The younger adults who used Facebook more often, showed higher life satisfaction than those who did not. They also formed more meaningful friendships in the virtual world than when having a mutually reciprocal private or public exchange offline. The majority of the studies in this paper have used Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale. For the purpose of this thesis, well-being will be referred to as the general condition of an individual or group's mental state. Life satisfaction will be determined by how satisfied or unsatisfied respondents are with their current situation.

Organization of Thesis

Chapter One provided a general overview of the importance of conducting research on Instagram and the relationship to motivations for posting online, relevance to the true-self concept, well-being and life satisfaction. Chapter Two provides further research of literature review of self-presentation and true self, the uses and gratifications for posting online, and how well-being and life satisfaction are relevant to a persons self concept. Chapter Three will discuss the methodology in how the research will be conducted. Chapter four provides the results and analysis. Conclusively, chapter five will contain the discussion of results, limitations and implications of future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the research literature on constructs including: 1) perception and presentation of self online; 2) true-self concept and self-idealization; 3) uses and gratifications and motives, and 4) social media's effect on self-esteem, well-being and life satisfaction. Discussion of each study will include methods utilized, which in most cases are experimental surveys and questionnaires.

Perception and Presentation of Self Online

Prior to Instagram, social media users primarily looked to Facebook for photo sharing and interaction. The following studies examined the role of Facebook in photo sharing, self-presentation, and the susceptibility to negative social comparison. The section concludes with a study from Ting (2014) on Instagram and the relationship between motive, usage and self-perception.

Dorthey, Fiebert, and Warren (2013) studied the behaviors of Facebook user's photo sharing and impression management by applying an analysis of covariance and the Bonferroni correction in a cross-sectional analysis. Authors collected data from 220 Facebook profiles. This study was based on previous work about personality and social networking, conducted by Amichai-Hamburger and Vinitzky (2010). Previous research suggests users of social networking sites practice behaviors that highlight accurate versions or perceptions of their online selves. It was hypothesized that users would post predominantly positive photos. The researchers measured frequency of posts, whether the posts had text, and the respective tone, whether

positive, negative or neutral. Based on their online behaviors, respondents were placed into five typologies: activist; observer; entrepreneur; scrap booker and social butterfly. Respondents were 98 men, 122 women, with a mean age of 26.7. The hypothesis was supported, showing that most photo posts were positive in tone and positive photos led to greater online social interaction. Trends from this research noted that online behaviors resulted in differential responses based on behaviors presented. Results overall, showed 69 percent of photo posts were positive in nature, 26 percent neutral and 5 percent negative. Regarding the typologies, scrap booker represented the majority of photo posts and on average received the most likes. A one-way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) indicated significant effects when friend count was held constant, $F(2, 2206) = 27.33, p < .01$. Pairwise comparisons utilizing the Bonferroni correction indicated that positive photos ($M = 10.03, SE = .30$) received more likes than both neutral ($M = 6.00, SE = .45$) and negative ($M = 6.66, SD = 1.13$) photos, $p < .01$ and $p < .001$. On the whole, results showed social networking sites like Facebook and Instagram, which are visually driven, allowed the user to control the aspects which they feel should be conveyed to their audience. The users of these sites created their own self-promotional content and shaped it to be analogous to their own perspective.

Seidman (2013) conducted research on self-perception and how it pertained to the uses of Facebook and the five-factor structure referred to as The Big Five, to fulfill belonging and self-presentational needs. The five factors were: extraversion; agreeableness; openness; neuroticism; and conscientiousness (Gosling, Rentfrow & Swann, 2003). The author looked at two types of belongingness motives: acceptance seeking and connection/caring in relation to behavior on Facebook. Ten hypotheses were posed, two for each of the five factors. All relational tests examined whether there was a positive association between communication, expression of self-

aspects, attention seeking, emotional disclosure, and information seeking. Results stated agreeableness was unrelated to Facebook communication, however users were more likely to use Facebook to seek acceptance and maintain connection. Extraversion was associated with communication. Neuroticism was also associated with communication and was the only trait that had a relationship to information seeking. Conscientiousness was unrelated to both communication and information seeking, though negatively correlated with acceptance seeking and connection. High agreeableness and neuroticism were the best predictors of belongingness. Extraversion was positively related to emotional disclosure, an association partially mediated by actual self-expression ($z = 2.17, p < .05$). Seidman's research infers that extraverts simply feel more comfortable expressing themselves, especially their authentic selves.

De Vries and Kühne (2015) applied a cross-sectional analysis to study the indirect relationship between Facebook use and self-perception through negative social comparison. The authors drew from Festinger (1954) as the frame for the social comparison process. Data collected for this research were obtained by conducting a survey on 340 respondents. The hypothesis stated Facebook use was related to a greater degree of negative social comparison and lower self-perception among emerging adults. They compared the relationship between intensity of Facebook use among the emerging adult, and whether negative comparison online was weaker among those who described themselves as being happier. The survey asked respondents to answer questions reflecting negative comparisons on Facebook, perception of self, life satisfaction as well as controlled for other variables such as: age; nationality; and gender. Both hypotheses were supported by the findings. The relationship between Facebook use and the perception of self was mediated by a negative comparison. Indirect relationships between self-perceived social competence and use of Facebook, $B =$

– .035, $SE = .017$ (Bt bca 95% CI: – .073/– .005), and physical attractiveness, $B = -.049$, $SE = .015$ (Bt bca 95% CI: – .084/– .024), were negative and statistically significant. An indirect relationship between Facebook use and self-perception among happier individuals demonstrated life satisfaction was a significant factor in how respondents viewed themselves, $B = .213$, $SE = .069$, $p = .002$. The authors measured the construct by asking participants to what extent they agreed with the following two statements: “When I read news feeds I often think that 1) others have better lives than I do; 2) others are doing better than I am.” The total score reflected on a negative social comparison. Scores ranged between 2 and 10 ($M = 4.7$, $SD = 2.4$). Pearson correlation between the two questions was .87 ($p = .000$). This study concluded that those who viewed themselves and their online environment in a negative manner were those who had a stronger negative relationship with Facebook and self-perception.

Ting (2014) investigated the relationship between motives, usage, self-presentation and the number of followers on Instagram by applying the uses and gratification theory and the impression management approach. The theoretical base was derived from research on social networking sites and social capital (Ellison, et al., 2007; Steinfield, et al., 2012), motives for Instagram use (Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000), and self-presentation (Lee et al., 1999; and Wong, 2012). Five research questions and four hypotheses were provided. The research objectives identified the patterns of Instagram use, motives, and self-presentation on Instagram. Ting examined the relationship between the variables mentioned and the popularity among the 181 university students who participated in the survey and questionnaire at City University of Hong Kong. The questionnaire was divided into five parts: Instagram usage; motives for use; self-presentation; number of followers; and demographic information. The four main motives measured were: information seeking ($\alpha = 0.87$), interpersonal communication ($\alpha = 0.84$), self-

expression ($\alpha = 0.76$) and escape ($\alpha = 0.83$). There was a positive correlation between all four motives on Instagram and total Instagram usage, with the stronger motive found in information seeking ($r = .341, p < 0.1$). All three types of self-presentation were significantly positively related to all four kinds of motives. All hypotheses were supported. Results indicated that most students used Instagram every day (58.6 percent). Ting found that people tended to present themselves in a positive light rather than leaving a negative impression. According to Ting, individuals could fulfill their motives by participating in different activities on Instagram, therefore, a stronger motive implied a higher frequency of Instagram use, (p. 29).

True-Self Concept and Self-Idealization

Tosun (2012) and Bargh, McKenna, and Fitzsimons (2002) looked at Facebook use and expressing “true self” on the internet. These studies, though different, compared the true-self concept and whether internet interaction allowed for users to be authentic. Back (2010) conducted a study on how Facebook profiles are shaped to reflect personality and the idealized self. These studies serve as a collection of research that reflects how users of social networking sites present their selves online, whether true-self or idealized.

Tosun (2012) used a survey to determine major uses for Facebook among Turkish undergraduates. Early research centered on use and gratifications of the internet, eventually expanding into the realm of social media. Three hypotheses were provided. The goal of these hypotheses was to determine if people with different levels of “true self on the net” had different motives for Facebook. “True self on the net” refers to the level of disclosure users have while posting information about themselves online (p. 1511). Factor analysis was conducted to examine the factor structure of the measurement of motives for Facebook use. Correlations

among these motives were examined. Ten factors were extracted: managing long-distance friendships; passive observations; initiating or terminating romantic relationships; establishing new friendships; active forms of photo-related activities; games and entertainment; and organizing social activities. Reliability analyses were conducted for each factor. Reliability coefficients ranged between .69 and .86. Researchers used a questionnaire developed by Amichai-Hamberger, Wainapel and Fox (2002) to learn about participants inner self and interactions on the online world. According to the analysis, the endorsement of Facebook use motives differed significantly from each other, $F(6810) = 244.35, p < .001, \eta^2 = .64$. All mean values were found to be significantly different: “managing long-distance friendships” had the highest mean ($M = 3.15, SD = .59$); “games and entertainment” ($M = 2.78, SD = .78$); “photo sharing” ($M = 2.29, SD = .67$); “organizing social activities” ($M = 2.53, SD = .68$); “establishing new friendships” ($M = 1.30, SD = .51$); “managing romantic relationships” ($M = 1.78, SD = .70$) and “passive observations” ($M = 1.07, SD = .22$). The main motive determined was for users to maintain long-distance relationships.

Bargh, McKenna, and Fitzsimons (2002) took a different approach in asking whether a person was better able to express him or herself online, therefore making others see their actual self and provide a positive impression. In this study, researchers differentiated between true-self, actual self, the idealized self and possible selves. Authors surveyed 46 college students. In experiment one, researchers used the accessibility of self-concept “Me/Not-Me” response task developed by Markus (1977). Markus (1977) created a reaction time task where students were presented with personality traits and asked to identify if certain traits were “me” or “not me”. Experiment two used 36 participants to conduct the same as experiment, but did not vary the length of time participants believed they would be interacting. A control group was included.

Experiment three used 40 students to test the hypothesis that individuals would be able to express their true selves over the internet. Both hypotheses were supported and found that people were better able to present aspects of their true or inner selves over the internet. The data were analyzed using repeated measures ANOVA, with the first two factors as between participant's variables and the latter two as within-participants variables. Participants responded more rapidly to their actual self-descriptive traits than their true-self descriptions, $F(1, 19) = 16.12, p = .001$. This effect was qualified by a significant interaction between self-concept and interaction mode, $F(1, 19) = 8.65, p = .008$. Results found that there was a greater tendency to project one's ideal or hoped-for partner qualities onto those whom one initially met and liked online. Early research conducted by Bargh and McKenna (2000), determined four major differences why communication on the internet may be different from face-to-face: 1) the ability to be anonymous online; 2) the internet vastly expands the range of interaction partners; 3) lack of physical cues, and not an influential factor; 4) time—time becomes relatively immaterial online. Authors suggest that the motive is determined by how a person is affected by a given communication medium.

Back's (2010) research briefly examined whether users of Facebook shape their profiles to reflect their personality or their idealized self. The authors argued that creating an idealized version of self on a site like Facebook would be difficult because of the accountability factor from friends or family online and the ability to leave comments. Information from the user is mirrored from personal environments and onto social networking sites. Each of the 236 participants described themselves as they would ideally like to be. Accuracy was determined by correlating the aggregated observer ratings with the accuracy criterion. To understand the effect of self-idealization, researchers measured the partial correlations between profile owners' ideal-

self ratings and aggregated observer ratings, controlling for the accuracy criterion. Significance testing was done by means of one-sample *t*-tests, using observer as the unit of analysis however no actual numbers were included in the study. Results found that users were more likely to exhibit their actual selves rather than an ideal self online.

Uses and Gratifications and Motives

Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011), Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008), Malik, Dhir, and Nieminen (2015), and Sheldon and Bryant (2016) conducted studies on the uses and gratifications of Facebook and Instagram, determining motives for each. These studies serve as a collection of work on which the theoretical portion of this thesis is based. The following section guides the reader in understanding how uses and gratifications relate to a newer form of media, social media and how user motives relate.

The purpose of the research conducted by Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011) was twofold: 1) to determine motives for Facebook use; and 2) how motives, social and psychological antecedents interact with social capital generated on Facebook. The theoretical base came from several studies on Facebook from the early 2000's, including some of the early uses and gratification models from the 1970's and 1980's. Researchers surveyed 344 students on Facebook use. Overall, participants spent an average of 74 minutes online ($SD = 77.53$) per week. More specifically, 83.7 percent of the participants reported to daily checks of their Facebook page (p. 10). Researchers looked at the activities in which participants engaged, friend count, the number of photos displayed on their page, add-ons, and how many groups each participant belonged to. Papacharissi and Mendelson combined interpersonal (inclusion/companionship), media (entertainment, habit, information, social interaction, escape,

pass time, and relaxation), newer media (coolness factor/novelty of technology, self-expression), and professional advancement motives to construct 11 categories of possible Facebook motives: pass time; relaxation; entertainment; information sharing; professional advancement; companionship; social interaction; cool and new technology; self expression; habit; escape, (p. 11). Using a Likert scale, respondents were asked how similar these reasons were to their own motives for using Facebook. The analysis accounted for 69 percent of the variance. The factor analysis of the motive statements yielded nine interpretable factors: expressive information sharing, habitual pass time, relaxing entertainment, cool and new trend, companionship, professional advancement, escape, social interaction, and new friendships. Habitual pastime ($M = 3.82, SD = .75$) and relaxing entertainment ($M = 3.02, SD = .68$) had the highest scores. Escapism ($M = 2.54, SD = .87$) and companionship ($M = 2.35, SD = .95$), two traditional media use motives associated closely with television use, were moderately salient for this population, confirming the ability of Facebook to converge traditional and new media needs, (p. 19). The highest correlations among motive noted between companionship and escapism ($r = .45$), companionship and relaxing entertainment ($r = .40$), escapism and habitual pass time ($r = .43$), and escapism and relaxing entertainment ($r = .44$), $p < .001$. These results indicate users are ritualistic and relatively passive in behavior.

Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) conducted a study to evaluate why college students use friend-networking sites, what the characteristics are of the typical college user, and what the uses and gratifications may be. The theoretical base is derived from uses and gratifications theory along with contemporary researchers on the impact of friend-networking sites. No hypotheses were stated, however, the objective of the research was presented. The uses and gratifications for this research were: to keep in touch with old friends, to keep in touch with current friends, to post

or look at pictures, to make new friends, to locate old friends, to learn about events, to post social functions, to share information about yourself, for academic purposes and for dating. The 116 participants were given a packet involving questions on their motives for using friend-networking sites. Most participants used friend-networking sites to keep in touch with old friends (96 percent) and new (91 percent), while others used them to post photos (57 percent). Researchers used ANOVA to look at the differences in uses and gratifications among sex. Results indicated women changed their appearance more often than men. Men were more likely to use friend-networking sites for dating purposes. Most respondents were freshmen, so the range of analysis was quite narrow.

Research conducted by Sheldon and Bryant (2016) investigated the motives for use and relationship to contextual age and narcissism of Instagram users. Authors implemented the uses and gratifications theory by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974) to establish their claim that individual differences influence motivations for engaging with different media. The authors included contextual age as a factor when measuring the relationship to internet use. Researchers also utilized the uses and gratifications approach to study narcissism. "A person's social and psychological characteristics influence not only motives for communicating (their gratifications sought), but also gratifications obtained," (p. 90). The assumption with uses and gratifications theory is that people are free to choose and use media based on what they need. Some may use social networks sites to meet new people, to explore personal identity, merely post photographs, or as a diversion from life offline. Authors used a list of motives based on previous research of uses and gratifications theory. Four research questions were posed. The main question asked what the motivations for Instagram were; the second asked how contextual age and narcissism related to motives for Instagram use; how these factors predict behavioral outcomes; and which

of the aforementioned factors best predict why people do not use Instagram. Using a study from Rubin and Rubin (1982), the authors used a life position scale to measure life satisfaction, interpersonal interaction, and social activity. All responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The mean for the interpersonal interaction dimension was 3.54 (SD = .81; Cronbach's α = 0.71). The mean for life satisfaction was 3.82 (SD = .78; Cronbach's α = 0.78). The mean for social activity was 3.38 (SD = .85; Cronbach's α = 0.70). To measure narcissism, researchers used the 10-item Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale derived from Murray's (1938) Narcissism Scale. Results from the factor analysis yielded four interpretable factors: surveillance and knowledge about others, documentation, coolness, and creativity. Results showed that there were multiple significant relationships between contextual age, narcissism, and motives for Instagram usage. Gender was the strongest predictor of the amount of time spent on Instagram, explaining a 5 percent variance, followed by surveillance, the creativity motive, and life satisfaction. The coolness motive was the most significant predictor of the amount of time spent editing photos before posting them on Instagram with a 12 percent variance.

The purpose of research conducted by Malik, et al (2015) was to shed light on how little research has been conducted in user gratification of photo sharing on Facebook. The researcher applied uses and gratifications theory to understand and address this gap. Researchers sent out an online survey to 442 users. A resulting 368 usable surveys were included for analysis. Researchers used a cross-sectional survey. No hypotheses were stated, however researchers declared four research questions: 1) what are the gratifications sought by Facebook users from photo sharing; 2) to what extent are Facebook users' gratifications for photo sharing associated with gender; 3) to what extent are Facebook users' gratifications for photo sharing associated with age; 4) to what extent are Facebook users' gratifications for photo sharing associated with

the number of photos shared on Facebook. Gratifications for sharing on Facebook were comprised of 26 statements, in which six different gratifications were identified: affection, attention seeking, disclosure, habit, information sharing, and social influence. Gender differences were identified among the habit and disclosure gratifications. Exploratory factor analysis was used to examine the underlying gratification structure for online photo sharing. All items were examined with the Maximum Likelihood Estimation algorithm with Varimax Rotation. Age had a significant correlation with disclosure ($r = .15, N = 368$) and social influence ($r = .15, N = 368$). No relationship between age and the other gratifications was found. Significant gender differences were revealed using the independent sample t -test. Results suggested males tended to seek more habit ($t = 3.37, p < .01, \text{Mean} = 2.56, \text{SD} = .89$ vs. $\text{Mean} = 2.25, \text{SD} = .87$) and disclosure type gratifications ($t = 3.10, p < .01, \text{Mean} = 2.97, \text{SD} = .83$ vs. $\text{Mean} = 2.71, \text{SD} = .74$) compared to females. Pearson correlation analysis was used to investigate the relationship shared between the six photo sharing gratifications. Results revealed habit was in low positive correlation with disclosure ($r = .23$), attention seeking ($r = .24$), social influence ($r = .25$) and information sharing ($r = .17$). No relationship between habit and affection was found. Similarly, affection had low positive correlation with disclosure ($r = .14$) and attention seeking ($r = .15$). Results indicated that photos are shared on Facebook with an intention to gain popularity and attention among the network users. The study provided a general perspective of photo sharing on social networking sites, specifically focusing on Facebook. Other sites can be utilized in the future to determine how other photo sharing sites differ in gratifications and motive.

Social Media, Self Esteem and Life Satisfaction

The final section looks at four studies that use Facebook and other social networking sites to analyze how they affect well-being, communication patterns, and life satisfaction. This section directly links social networking sites with the concepts of self, personality and well-being.

Gonzales and Hancock (2011) posed two questions in relation to self-esteem. The first asked whether Facebook operated on self-esteem the same way non-digital information affected self-esteem. The second question asked if the opportunity to present more positive information about the self while filtering negative information meant that reviewing one's own Facebook site could enhance self-esteem. In total, four hypotheses were posed, with one and two being contrasting statements on whether Facebook had a more negative or positive effect on self-esteem. Hypothesis two asked if exposure to one's Facebook site would have a more positive effect on self-esteem than a control condition or traditional self-awareness stimuli (e.g., mirror). Hypotheses three stated participants who exclusively examined their own profile would report higher self-esteem than participants who viewed other profiles in addition to their own. Lastly, hypothesis four stated participants who chose to make changes to their profile would report higher self-esteem as opposed to those who did not. Researchers measured self-esteem and selective self-presentation by using Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale and examining behavior through the Hyperpersonal Model. Twenty-one participants were put into three groups; one group was exposed to a mirror, one to their own Facebook page, and the control group, to neither. All hypotheses except the first were supported. Hypotheses one and two underwent different linear contrast analysis, while hypothesis one was insignificant, hypothesis two was supported $F(1, 59) = 8.60, p < 0.01, \eta^2 = 0.13$. The key finding was that Facebook did not have a more negative effect on self-esteem than traditional objective self-awareness. Participants who

left their profile open during the study had a higher self-esteem level than those who visited other profiles.

Mehdizadeh (2010) conducted research on how the self-promotional content of Facebook affected self-esteem and narcissism of users. Personality self-reports and access to personal web pages were collected from 100 users at York University. Five hypotheses regarding narcissism, self-esteem and Facebook activity were tested. Correlation analysis revealed that those with higher narcissism responses and lower self-esteem were related to greater activity online. Consistent with other researchers from this thesis, Mehdizadeh used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale to measure the self-esteem of the participants. Narcissism was assessed using a Narcissism Personality Inventory (NPI)-16. Five features of the Facebook page were coded for the extent to which they were self-promoting: the about me section; the main photo; the first 20 pictures on the view photos of me section; notes section; and the status updates section. A Pearson correlation addressed the relationship between narcissism ($M = 8.21, SD = 4.81$) and Facebook activity. Higher scores on the narcissism test were positively correlated with the number of times Facebook was checked per day, $r = 0.462, p < 0.01$. Similarly, Pearson's correlation was used in testing the relationship between self-esteem and Facebook activity ($M = 17.05, SD = 4.96$). Here there was a significant negative correlation between self-esteem and the number of times Facebook was checked per day, $r = -4.58, p < 0.01$. Significant positive correlations were found between the narcissism test scores and self-promotion in the main photo, view photos, status updates and notes. A Pearson correlation analysis failed to show a significant correlation between narcissism and the about me section self-promotion. The association between narcissism and self-esteem was used to predict that individuals with low self-esteem would be correlated with a greater number of self-promotional content on their Facebook pages. In accordance with

this insight, a significant negative correlation was found between participant self-esteem and main photo self-promotion. There is a chance main photos could have enhanced to cover up undesirable features by participants with low self-esteem in order to enable the actualization of their ideal selves. However, results failed to show any significant correlations between self-esteem and self-promotional content in view photos, about me, status updates, or notes sections.

Research conducted by Manago, Taylor, and Greenfield (2012), utilized linear and hierarchical linear regressions to determine self-esteem rating. Six hypotheses were posed and four research questions ranging from the anatomy of Facebook networks, to common behaviors and network composition and psychological implications were asked. The ten questions were narrowed into three main topics: anatomy of Facebook network, relationships between anatomy and communication, and psychological implications of Facebook use. Respondents were measured on life satisfaction and perceived online support. Participants used an unbiased sampling of 20 friends. Size of network reported by participants ranged from 29 friends to 1,200 friends. The most common network size fell in the range between 200 friends and 299 friends, which provided a mean of 440, and a median of 370. Analyses with network size include only participants reporting network size ($n = 69$). They were asked how often they communicated with their friends, both publically and in private. Results were characterized on a 7-point scale, with 0 being never and 7 being every day. Results confirmed support for the hypothesis that Facebook facilitates large impersonal social networks with relatively superficial relations. There was a significant positive correlation of network size and number of close connections, $r(69) = .43, p = .0001$. This suggested close connections increased, as opposed to acquaintance type friendships. Participants spent little over an hour on Facebook each day, in largely superficial conversation. There was a positive correlation between self-esteem and audience size, although

researchers do not know whether high self-esteem leads to higher estimates of audience size or larger perceived audiences are a source of self-esteem, $r(69) = .24, p = 0.18$.

Using large-scale surveys and qualitative methods, Awan and Gauntlett (2013) explored how young people used social networking sites and instant messaging tools to negotiate their identities, maintain relationships and to learn their online practices. This was the only statement posed in the article, with no hypothesis or question stated. The study also looked at self-expression through creativity and how online relationships facilitate openness and trust. Data were collected from surveying and interviewing 138 students ages 14 to 15, from six locations across England. Respondents were asked to construct an “identity box,” expressing their identities and the place of media in their lives. Fieldwork was conducted during a five-month span in school classrooms with the supervision of a teacher. Data were collected over seven days, allowing students to reflect on their internal and external attributes while constructing their box. Afterward, interviews were conducted without teachers present to allow privacy for the students. Data drew upon the participant’s own interpretation of their identity box. Findings were broken down in the following themes: connecting and convenience; openness and control; privacy and authenticity. Results were divided into the groups’ connectivity and convenience, openness and control, and privacy and authenticity. Researchers found that young people did not engage on social networking sites and instant messaging to build new relationships, but instead to maintain contact and develop already made relationships. It was also noted that students used their online time as a “time-filling” activity or entertainment. Participants revealed they did not use social networking sites to present an ideal version of themselves, but instead to highlight general characteristics of their identity.

Summary of Literature

This review of literature indicates several points. First, previous research suggests that the four categories: perception and presentation of self online; true-self concept; uses and gratifications and motives; and social media's effect of self-esteem and life satisfaction appear to be interrelated. Second, the majority of these studies consist of a quantitative survey analysis and large scale questionnaires. Most of the previous research is based on the same theoretical basis, quoting Rogers (1959); Rosenberg (1986); and Katz, Blumer and Gurevitch (1974), along with many of the recent researchers studying social networking sites and the psychological factors of uses and gratifications on the internet. Researchers like Bargh, McKenna and Fitzsimons (2002); Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008); Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011); and deVries and Kühne (2015) are considered pioneers in their research on social networking sites and heavily quoted by recent studies.

These studies inform the reader about learned behaviors of presentation of self online, some of the motivations for posting to social networking sites, behaviors that affect or enhance well-being, and the prominence of women as participants in previous research. Ting (2014) noted that the emerging female adult uses social media, specifically Instagram, to gratify the following needs: autonomy, identity and intimacy. Fiebert and Warren (2013) demonstrated how Facebook became a part of society's daily routine, examining photo-posting activity. Awan and Gauntlett (2013) observed how young people used social networking sites to experiment with their identity. Seidman (2013) observed self-presentation and belonging on Facebook. Mehdizadeh (2010) conducted similar research, examining self-promotional content and how Facebook affects self-esteem. Lastly, DeVries and Kuhne (2015) studied individual susceptibility to negative social comparison on Facebook. These studies relate in that the state of self is reflected

online. The current study will build on these previous studies and determine if true-self is presented via Instagram and any uses and gratifications for that behavior.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Little research has studied the presentation of true-self on Instagram—let alone determined uses and gratifications for this social networking site and how these variables relate to life satisfaction. The variables true-self, motive and life satisfaction are likely interrelated through Instagram and social media. Examining how and why people use Instagram will determine the effects on their life satisfaction. This chapter detailed the rationale, hypotheses and measures for this study, while also explaining the instruments used to collect data.

Rationale for Hypotheses and Research Question

Studying how and why users interact on the site can determine how users present themselves in an online environment and if there are any effects on their satisfaction of life. Unlike other social media sites, which rely heavily on social interaction, Instagram is based more on one's personal identity because it allows users to create a visual photo album of their lives (Marcus, 2015). By measuring identity expressive motives, this study will help the researcher better understand why young women use Instagram, if they present their true-selves online and if their use motives have an affect on their life satisfaction. Observing and analyzing communication through the varying media provide information on how emerging technologies have the ability to alter how we interact online.

H1: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between Instagram use and true self on the part of female users.

True-self Concept

The self-concept as defined by Zhao et al., (2008) is the totality of a person's thoughts and feelings in reference to one self as an object. Instagram is a unique application because it allows users to create an identity from scratch, contributing photo and video support to their preferred version of self. Identity construction is both a personal and public process. Individuals make claims about their identity and others (the audience) endorse those claims by "likes" or follower count (Mehdizadeh, 2010). In research conducted by Back et al. (2010), Facebook was used to determine if users present their actual or idealized selves online. Results determined Facebook profiles reflected participants' actual selves. The difference between actual self and true self could date back to theorists Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969). Attrill's (2015) interpretation states that the true-self is the core self, while the actual self is more fluid and situational. In research by deVries and Kühne (2015), there is an indirect relationship between Facebook use and self-perception among happier individuals demonstrated life satisfaction. This suggests there may be a relationship among Instagram users who present their true-self and have a high life satisfaction score. This thesis will determine whether users present their true selves on Instagram and how the true-self is affected when use motives are introduced.

H2: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between true self and high life satisfaction among female users.

Uses and Gratifications Theory applied to Instagram

Previous research measuring the uses and gratifications of social media determined the ability to converge traditional media with new media needs (Smock et al., 2011; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011; Ting, 2014; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). However, it is not straightforward which of these uses and gratifications taken from traditional media apply to newer technologies or social media. Previous research suggests there are the same five gratifications that provide useful for social media, specifically Instagram: interpersonal relationships; information seeking; escape; self-expression; and entertainment (Tosun, 2012; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011; Rubin, 1981; Lee et al., 2015). Interpersonal relationships as a use motive means to communicate with others and to socialize (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). The information seeking use motive simply means to educate oneself, or seek out new information. The entertainment use motive is used when users surf the site as a form of entertainment or enjoyment and also to pass time. Escapism or diversion as a use motive refers to needing an escape from everyday problems and routines (Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch, 1974). The fifth and last use motive, self-expression or personal identity, is used to feel a sense of belonging, value reinforcement and self-understanding. The uses and gratifications chosen for this thesis were based on the direct motives used from research by Sheldon and Bryant (2015). These motives were confirmed from the four other studies researching uses and gratifications and social networking sites (Sundar & Limperos, 2013; Coyne, Padilla-Walker, & Howard, 2013; Marcus, et al, 2015; and Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). Ting (2014) uncovered a strong relationship between Instagram usage and information seeking ($r = 3.41, p < 0.1$). Of the four uses and gratifications tested in the study by Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011), pastime ($M = 3.82, SD = .75$) and entertainment ($M = 3.02, SD = .68$), had the highest scores. Escape and

companionship had the lowest. However, escapism and companionship, two typically traditional media use motives usually associated with television use, were moderately salient for the population, thus confirming the ability of Facebook to converge traditional and new media needs. Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011) separated “pastime” and “entertainment”. For this study, they are combined as “entertainment”. Similar to Instagram, Facebook users shared photos on the platform to seek affection, as they expected others would “like” and comment on their shared photos. This finding is consistent with earlier research that suggests that the more likes or comments a person has, could indicate that other users of the network appreciated the photos posted by the content generator (Malik et al., 2015). Users are generally aware of their needs and self-report their interests and motives or at least recognize them (Katz, Blumer, & Gurevitch, 1974). Research from above led to the following five hypotheses on presentation of self and motive of Instagram among female participants:

H3: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between the presentation of true self and the interpersonal use motive for female participants of Instagram.

H4: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between the presentation of true self and the information seeking use motive for female participants of Instagram.

H5: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between the presentation of true self and the entertainment use motive for female participants of Instagram.

H6: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between the presentation of true self and the personal identity use motive for female participants of Instagram.

H7: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between the presentation of

true self and the escape use motive for female participants of Instagram.

Life Satisfaction and Well-being

Papacharissi & Rubin (2000) found that those who were more satisfied with life and more comfortable with personal interaction preferred more informational seeking gratifications, while those less satisfied were motivated by escape or diversion from the real world. Understanding the self is an important aspect to understanding how social media can affect self-esteem and satisfaction with life (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011). According to Manago, Taylor and Greenfield (2012), the younger adults who used Facebook more often than their peers, showed a higher life satisfaction than those who did not. They formed more meaningful friendships in the virtual world than when having a mutually reciprocal private or public exchange offline. Understanding how social media affects life satisfaction and well-being, specifically Instagram, could influence the existing stigma. Research cited in this thesis has demonstrated a relationship between presentation of the self online with well-being (Awan & Gauntlett, 2013; Manago, Taylor & Greenfield, 2012; and Mehdizadeh, 2010). The following five hypotheses suggest each of the five uses and gratifications motivates will be related to life satisfaction among female participants:

H8: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between interpersonal motive and life satisfaction among female participants.

H9: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between information seeking motive and life satisfaction among female participants.

H10: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between entertainment motive and life satisfaction among female participants.

H11: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between escape motive and life satisfaction among female participants.

H12: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between personal identity motive and life satisfaction among female participants.

Because Instagram is a relatively new social media mobile application and site, and the app continues to update, there is little research on the impact of its users. There are a variety of motivations for using this application among the wide range of social networking sites (Ting, 2014). Instagram is used primarily for photo and video sharing. It allows users to create a visual impression of their selves for others to observe (Ting, 2014). The primary reason for conducting research on Instagram opposed to other social network sites is twofold: the research in this area is sparse; and because the site is popular among millennials, the largest demographic of the site (www.instagram.com). As mentioned in the introduction, women aged 18 to 29 make up the majority of its users (Duggan et al., 2015). Although some research suggests female participants are the major users of social networking sites, the research question tested will determine if female participants of the targeted demographic use Instagram more frequently than their male peers.

RQ1: Do female participants use Instagram more frequently than males?

Sampling and Procedure

Previous authors have uncovered particular relationships between presentation of self online and the uses and gratifications of social media (Ting, 2014; Malik et al., 2015). Following

Institutional Review Board approval, participants were recruited through classes offered at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV). Some participants received extra credit for their participation. A survey was administered to a convenience sample of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in the colleges of Business, Liberal Arts and Urban Affairs. College students are the target audience in a majority of the studies in this thesis (Back et al., 2010; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Chou & Edge, 2012; Coyne, Padilla-Walker & Howard, 2013; Ting, 2014; and deVries & Kühne, 2015). College students also fit the demographic of most Instagram users, especially among young women (Duggan et al., 2015).

Survey was the method implemented most from this body of research. Babbie (1992) stated surveys were the most flexible, cost efficient, and timely in terms of survey creation and distribution of the instruments. For the nature of this study and according to previous research, a survey was the most appropriate method for measuring true-self, motive and life-satisfaction (see Appendix A). The target-completed sample was approximately 145 UNLV female respondents based on the utilization of bivariate Pearson correlations looking at the relationships between true-self and life satisfaction with each of the five individual motives as the independent variable (Cohen, 1992). This target sample of 145 female students comprised a portion of the larger sample of study including 200 participants. The target sample had a history of Instagram use. The survey took approximately 5 minutes to complete and was administered through the Qualtrics online survey system inside the Emerging Technology Lab inside The Greenspun College of Urban Affairs building at UNLV. Participants began the survey online, where they were first presented with a consent page, a brief overview of the subject matter and instructions. They were then instructed to provide their age, gender and major. Next, participants were prompted to provide details about their Instagram usage. The scale measures assessing true-self,

uses and gratifications, and life satisfaction scales followed (Amichai-Hamburger, Wainapel, & Fox, 2002; Sheldon & Bryant, 2015; Ting, 2014; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011; Huebner, 1991). Following the survey questions, participants were directed to the end of the questionnaire and thanked for their participation.

Measures

The survey included statements for the measures: 1) age, gender and major; 2) Instagram usage; 3) true-self; 4) uses and gratifications for using Instagram; and 5) life-satisfaction and well being.

Age

The first section of the survey asked participants to provide age. Age is an important factor because data show women aged 18-29 are the main users of Instagram (Duggan et al., 2014). Instagram is also a popular site among college-aged users.

Gender

The second section asked participants to provide their gender: male or female. Previous studies suggested there were either more women in the sample size or that women were more likely to be affected by the research, for this reason gender is an important measure (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Back et al., 2010; Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000).

Major

Because this study was conducted at a university and to better gauge participation, users were asked to provide their field of concentration or major in a drop-down menu which consisted of the listed majors within the colleges of Business, Liberal Arts and Urban Affairs: 1)

Communication Studies; 2) Criminal Justice; 3) Journalism and Media Studies; 4) Marriage and Family Therapy; 5) Public Policy and Leadership; 6) Social Work; 7) Sociology; 8) undecided; 9) double-major; and 10) other.

Instagram Usage

The next section of the survey asked participants whether they are users of Instagram and to identify their usage. The first question asked if participants had Instagram accounts. If participants responded “no,” they were directed to the end of the survey and thanked for their participation. In research conducted by Lee et al. (2015), participants were asked to determine on a scale from 0 to 50, how often they used Instagram per day. Frequency results from that study show participants used Instagram 4.17 times per day. For this thesis, we use the same language to determine usage. The question asks, “On a scale from 1-50, approximately how often do you use Instagram per day? Engagement includes leaving a comment, “liking” a photo or video, posting a photo or video, scrolling through your timeline or searching for a user.”

True-self

The true-self section of the survey asked participants to identify their true self through a four question survey developed by Amichai-Hamburger, Wainapel, & Fox (2002). This survey was used by researchers to form hypotheses on Facebook use motives and presentation of true-self online (Tosun, 2012; Siedman, 2013). For this thesis, the survey was applied to Instagram. All questions in this section used a 5-point Likert Scale. The questions asked: do you think you reveal more about yourself to people you know from the internet than to non-internet friends; are there things your internet friends know about you that you cannot share with non-internet

friends; how likely are you to express yourself in different facets online than you do to others offline; and how likely would your friends and family be surprised if they were to read the things you posted online? The four items were scale standardized and then the average was found in order to form a “real me” index. The higher the score indicates that the “real me” is more firmly placed on the internet. Reliability for the “real me” questionnaire is to be reported when calculated, in comparison to the .75 reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s Alpha) in Tosun (2012). All of these questions can be found in the survey in Appendix A.

Use and Gratifications

Most central to the study, respondents were asked to indicate how much were their own reasons for using Instagram. Twenty statements were used to determine each of the five motives: 1) interpersonal communication; 2) information seeking; 3) entertainment; 4) escapism; 5) self-expression. Statements were derived from the following research: Ting, 2014; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Seidman, 2013; Malik et al., 2015; and Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994; and Rubin, 1981). Research conducted by Ting (2014) provided the reliability of the four motives: interpersonal communication ($\alpha = .84$); information seeking ($\alpha = .87$); escapism ($\alpha = .83$); and self-expression ($\alpha = .76$). Entertainment ($\alpha = .72$) was excluded as the motives listed in Ting (2014), therefore reliability was used from Rubin (1981). Lee et al. (2015) found similar reliability among social interaction ($\alpha = .87$), escapism ($\alpha = .81$), and self-expression ($\alpha = .89$). Options on the 5-point Likert scale include: very true of me; true of me; neutral; untrue of me; and very untrue of me. This approach of using a scale to determine motive and gratifications is the most common method among qualitative and quantitative studies. There were 20 statements comprised to determine each of the five motives (Papacharissi & Mendelson,

2011; Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000; Ting, 2014). Statements were placed in random order to prevent any biases from forming when completing the survey. Motives social interaction and companionship were combined in the Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011) study, and therefore, combined in this study to form interpersonal communication.

Life Satisfaction and Well Being

The last section of the survey includes 10 questions from Rosenberg's Life Satisfaction scale. Participants were asked to identify on a 5-point Likert scale to what degree they agree or disagree on various statements. To measure life satisfaction and well-being, the Rosenberg Self Esteem scale was used with Huebner's (1991) Life Satisfaction scale (Mehdizadeh, 2010; Manago, Taylor & Greenfield, 2012). The Rosenberg scale is a 10-item scale that measures self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. Manago, Taylor and Greenfield (2012) used regression analysis with self-esteem as a covariate to determine whether higher proportions of close connections on a site filled with more distant kinds of relations predicted college students' life satisfaction. The data suggested that emerging adults who took advantage of Facebook as an efficient tool for collecting large networks of friends rather than using it to maintain a network, were happier with their lives than those who did not $F(1,67) = 5.57, p = .0001, adjusted R^2 = .216$. Findings from Siedman (2013) showed that focusing on motivations for Facebook use, rather than frequency of specific behaviors, may aid in understanding the relationship between personality and Facebook use. In this thesis we apply those findings to Instagram.

Analysis Plan

Chapter Four reports the internal consistency of the scale measures after the administration of the survey. Item analysis provides information on how individual items for each scale will relate to other items (e.g. true-self, uses and gratifications for Instagram). The internal consistency a *priori* level of alpha was established via Coefficient Alpha at .70 (Cronbach, 1951). Factor analysis was used to analyze sub-dimensions within scale-items. A .40 coefficient criterion level was used to determine a *priori* (Spector, 1992). All hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment correlation.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter includes the analysis and results from the administered survey of true self and the uses and gratifications of Instagram. The analysis begins with a test of reliability and internal consistency for scales discussed in chapter three: true-self; motives for using Instagram; and life satisfaction. Previous scholars have indicated that gender plays a major role in usage of Instagram, suggesting college-aged women are not only the major users, but are generally more affected by the content on the site (Mehdizadeh, 2010; Duggan et al, 2015; & Malik et al, 2015) thus gender was considered when testing the research question.

Demographics

The participant sample consisted of 200 undergraduate and graduate students ranging from eight colleges and departments at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. Two respondents did not complete the survey, leaving 198 ($N = 198$) total participants. The survey consisted of 26 percent male and 74 percent female participants. The mean age was 21.2. The majority of participants represented were from the School of Journalism and Media Studies, making up 58.1 percent. Criminal Justice majors, Communication majors, undecided, double-majors and other made up the rest, with few from Social Work (1.5 percent) and Sociology (1.0 percent).

Instagram Usage

When asked how often participants used Instagram each day, respondents used the app 26.35 on average times per day. Females ($n = 145$) used the app 25.38 times per day.

Table 1.
Frequency of Demographic Information (N=198)

Demographic Variables	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	51	25.8
Female	147	74.2
<i>Age</i>		
18	42	21.2
19	33	16.7
20	29	14.6
21	30	15.2
22	24	12.1
23	9	4.5
24	10	5.1
25	4	2.0
26	3	1.5
27	1	.5
28 or older	11	5.5
<i>College/Major of Study</i>		
Communication Studies	8	4.0
Criminal Justice	24	12.1
Journalism and Media Studies	115	58.1
Social Work	3	1.5
Sociology	2	1.0
Undecided	10	5.1
Double-major	9	4.5
Other	27	13

Internal Consistency

The internal consistency *a priori* level of alpha was established via Coefficient Alpha at .70 (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach's alpha was used to test internal consistency for scale-type items, regarding the four items associated with true-self. All four items for the construct were retained and Cronbach's reliability measure was $\alpha = .71$ (see Table 2 in Appendix B). The next scale was uses and gratifications, testing the internal consistency of motives for using Instagram. All 20 of these items were retained and the Cronbach's reliability was $\alpha = .86$. When testing internal consistency for life satisfaction and well-being, five of the ten items were reverse scored as according to the Rosenberg (1965) 10-item Life Satisfaction Scale. All life satisfaction items were retained and Cronbach's reliability was $\alpha = .88$.

Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was used to determine the statistical analysis of the factors that were best represented by the number of the scale items (Spector, 1992). This analysis was used to help identify the most applicable measures to accommodate in further analysis.

True Self

One factor was identified for true-self, with an eigenvalue of 2.08. The true-self factor accounted for 52.01 percent of the total variance. All items included were: do you think you reveal more about yourself to people you know from the internet than to non-internet friends; are there things your internet friends know about you that you cannot share with non-internet friends; how likely are you to express yourself in different facets online than you do to others

offline; and how likely would your friends and family be surprised if they were to read the things you posted online?

Uses and Gratifications

For uses and gratifications, four factors were identified. Five factors were originally predicted, based upon previous research. Two factors merged, causing changes to some of the hypotheses. Factor 1 merged interpersonal relationships, with the identity factor. The eigenvalue was 6.43 and 32 percent of the variance explained. This factor consisted of five items combining identity and social affinity motives for Instagram use. Items retained were: to be understood; to feel important; to make me feel less alone; to feel a sense of belonging; and when there's no one else to talk with.

Factor 2 was used to identify entertainment with an eigenvalue of 2.14, explaining 11 percent of the variance. This factor consisted of three items measuring entertainment motives. Items retained were: to get enjoyment; to relax; to unwind.

Factor 3 was used to identify escape with an eigenvalue of 1.45 and explained 7 percent of the variance. This factor consisted of three items measuring escape and diversion motives for Instagram use. Items retained were: to forget about school, work or other things; to get away from what I'm doing; to escape from every day problems.

Factor 4 was used to identify information seeking with an eigenvalue of 1.28 and explained 6 percent of the variance. This factor consisted of three items measuring information seeking motives. Items retained were: to learn new information; to get free information; and to see what is out there. Table 3 in Appendix B summarizes the factor loadings for all uses and gratifications variables.

Life Satisfaction

Two factors were identified as high and low life satisfaction. Factor 1 was used to identify high life satisfaction with an eigenvalue of 5.19, accounting for 52 percent of the variance. Factor 1 consisted of five items, expressing high life satisfaction: on the whole, I am satisfied with myself; I feel that I have a number of good qualities; I am able to do things as well as most other people; I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others; and I take a positive attitude toward myself. Factor 2 was used to identify low life satisfaction with an eigenvalue of 1.12, accounting for 11 percent of the variance. Factor 2 consisted of five items: at times I think I am no good at all; I feel I do not have much to be proud of; I certainly feel useless at times; I wish I could have more respect for myself; and, all in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

Hypothesis one stated: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between Instagram use and true self on the part of female users. Hypothesis one was not supported. Pearson product correlation showed that there was negative and insignificant correlation ($r = -.063, p = .001$).

Hypothesis two stated: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between true self and high life satisfaction among female users. This hypothesis was supported and Pearson product correlation showed that there was a significant correlation approaching moderate ($r = .272, p < 0.01$).

Hypothesis three stated: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between the presentation of true self and the interpersonal use motive for female participants of Instagram. The factors interpersonal use and identity were combined, changing the outcome and support of this hypothesis. Results indicated a negative linear relationship between the combined factor (renamed identity and social affinity) and true-self, concluding no support for this hypothesis. This relationship was however, statistically significant ($r = -.380, p < 0.01$).

Hypothesis four stated: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between the presentation of true self and the information seeking use motive for female participants of Instagram. Results indicated no significance or support for this hypothesis ($r = -.088, p < 0.01$).

Hypothesis five stated: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between the presentation of true self and the entertainment use motive for female participants of Instagram. Results indicated no significance or support for this hypothesis ($r = .017, p < 0.01$).

Hypothesis six stated: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between the presentation of true self and the personal identity use motive for female participants of Instagram. As mentioned above, the factors interpersonal use and identity were combined. Results indicated a negative linear relationship between the combined factor and true-self, concluding no support for this hypothesis. This relationship was statistically significant ($r = -.380, p < 0.01$).

Hypothesis seven stated: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between the presentation of true self and the escape use motive for female participants of Instagram. Results indicated a negative, but significant relationship between true-self and escape ($r = -.182, p < 0.01$). Because the relationship was significant, but negative, there was no support for this

hypothesis.

Hypothesis eight stated: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between interpersonal motive and life satisfaction among female participants. The factors interpersonal use and identity were combined, changing the outcome and support of this hypothesis. Results indicated a significant but negative linear relationship between the combined factor and life satisfaction ($r = -.242, p < 0.01$), concluding no support for this hypothesis.

Hypothesis nine stated: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between information seeking motive and life satisfaction among female participants. Results indicated no significance or support for this hypothesis ($r = .012, p < 0.01$).

Hypothesis ten stated: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between entertainment motive and life satisfaction among female participants. Results indicated no significance or support for this hypothesis ($r = .091, p < 0.01$).

Hypothesis eleven stated: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between escape motive and life satisfaction among female participants. Results indicated a negative, but significant relationship between escape and life satisfaction ($r = -.171, p < 0.01$). Because the relationship was significant, but negative, there was no support for this hypothesis.

Hypothesis twelve stated: There will be a significant, positive linear relationship between personal identity motive and life satisfaction among female participants. As mentioned above, the factors interpersonal use and identity were combined. Results indicated a significant but

negative linear relationship between the combined factor and life satisfaction ($r = -.242, p < 0.01$), concluding no support for this hypothesis.

Research Question

The research question asked: Do female participants use Instagram more frequently than males? The results indicated the research question was insignificant. Females ($n = 145$) used Instagram at a mean of 26.38 times per day, while males ($n = 50$) used Instagram 26.26 times per day.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This chapter contains discussion and the analysis of the findings for the current thesis. This chapter analyzes the results in a thorough and detailed manner. The results, implications, strengths, limitations and recommendations for future research are included in this chapter.

General Discussion and Implications

There were four major assumptions of the research question and hypotheses: 1) that females used Instagram more frequently than males, and thus were more affected by the platform and content; 2) that presentation of true-self and life satisfaction of users were interrelated; 3) there was a relationship between uses and gratifications of Instagram users and the presentation of true-self; and lastly, 4) that each of the motives derived had a relationship with life satisfaction.

This thesis found that women used Instagram only slightly more than males (less than 1 percent of a difference). Previous research has shown that females have been the dominant users of social media, especially on Instagram (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016; Alhabash & Ma, 2017). According to Sheldon and Bryant (2013), gender was once the strongest predictor of time spent on Instagram. Statistics from the Pew Research Center Social Media Fact Sheet from January 2017 shows that 59 percent of Instagram users are between 18-29, conclusive with the findings in this research. Pew Research Center also showed that women (32 percent) used the site more frequently than men (23 percent). This body of research focused primarily on women, however the finding on gender could predict that usage is shifting to more narrow separation between

male and female use. It could also mean that college students in general use the site more frequently than other populations and therefore the gender differences are lower. Though gender differences between uses and gratifications were not tested, research from Raacke and Bonds-Raacke found that sex differences did not occur in most cases when comparing motive for users, indicated that men and women meet the same needs by using the same site (2008). Their results did however, find differences that show women were more likely to engage in online communication to maintain personal relationships with friends, family and coworkers, while men were more likely to use online communication to pursue romantic or sexual interests. Motive uses were not separated by gender in this thesis, since all data were analyzed of females.

Hypothesis one predicted a positive, linear relationship between Instagram use and true-self. There was no support for this hypothesis. This finding may suggest that usage has no reflection a person's likelihood of posting photos and videos that reveal their true-self. The negative relationship could propose users are portraying idealistic or ought versions of their selves. Instagram influencers, like YouTube stars make up a variety of genres on social media and encourage a creative autonomy that highlights a distinct and visually pleasing aesthetic (Duffy & Hund, 2015). This phenomenon could be the reason why users of Instagram and blogs like Tumblr emphasize scripted or idealistic versions of the self. This finding shows that the frequency of usage has no effect on whether a person presents a depiction of true-self on Instagram.

Hypothesis two predicted a positive and significant relationship between true-self and life satisfaction. This hypothesis was the only of 12 that was fully supported. The finding suggests that those with higher life satisfaction are more comfortable posting their authentic, true-selves on Instagram. DeVries and Kühne (2015) found an indirect relationship between Facebook use

and self-perception among happier individuals, which demonstrated higher life satisfaction. This finding is accurate with the support for this hypothesis, which could be transferable to Instagram. Research by Attrill suggested personality traits drove a person's online presentation of self, rather than the reverse (2015). It is probable that this is also true of life satisfaction and well-being. Research on true-self suggests high levels of authenticity, meaning low discrepancy between a person's online profile and how they felt they actually are, were positively correlated with measures of subjective well-being (Mengers, 2014). Research from Burke and Ruppel (2015) found that people were motivated to manage the impression others formed of them and became anxious when they were unable to convey these desired impressions to others. Accordingly, people who are able to express their selves freely, generally have a higher life satisfaction or at least, a heightened experience with the ability to express oneself. Previous research backs the claim that expression of true-self is positively correlated with a high life satisfaction score.

Hypothesis three and six predicted a significant, positive linear relationship between the presentation of true self and the interpersonal and identity use motive for female participants of Instagram. This hypothesis was not fully supported. The interpersonal use motive was renamed identity and social affinity due to the two factors merging. The relationship between true-self and the identity and social affinity variables was negative, though significant ($a = -.380, p < 0.01$). These results showed a few key points: that users are on Instagram to gratify the need for self-expression and social connection and do not separate these gratifications; that users may be aware that other users may not be portraying accurate depictions of true-self on the site; and lastly, that the motives originally thought to apply to Instagram have changed/or are changing. The ought-self is a concept separate from the ideal self, but appears to apply to the platform of

Instagram. The ought-self is the self a person believes they need to be based on other peoples' norms, standards and expectations (Attrill, 2015). The way that the platform of Instagram is set up, it allows users to create visual aspects of their lives that may highlight some areas but mask others. This action is not lying *per se*, but rather a display of the ought-self and not the true-self, as originally predicted. Back (2010) argued it would be difficult to display an idealistic version of self via social media due to the accountability from peers and followers. These results indicated users acknowledge and may not care that their ought or idealistic versions of self are on display. Rogers (1951) held that people were cognizant of the notion that they were one way in social settings and another way behind closed doors. This idea remains relevant within the social media construct that users are cognizant of their choices to display certain versions of themselves online. The uses and gratifications of media have changed over time to acclimate to newer forms of media. Interpersonal interaction, social activity, mobility, life satisfaction, health, contextual age and economic security emotions have been found to influence media use (Rubin & Rubin 1982). According to Gonzales and Hancock (2011), the internet did not create new motivation for self-presentation, however it did provide new tools, like social media, to implement such motives. Instagram serves as a vehicle for self-exploration and the motives for using this media are changing.

Hypothesis four predicted a significant, positive linear relationship between the presentation of true self and the information seeking use motive. This hypothesis was not supported or significant. This finding simply means there was no relationship to the act of seeking information and displaying true-self online. Information seeking has long been a motive gratified through traditional and newer media. It is often combined with surveillance, knowledge about others, and documentation (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016).

Similarly, hypothesis five assumed a relationship between the presentation of true self and the entertainment use motive. This hypothesis was not supported or significant. This finding, like mentioned above, means there was no relationship to entertainment via Instagram and the display of true-self online. Habit, pass-time, and to relax are versions and phrases often associated with entertainment (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2010). This motive often gets combined with other motives, depending on the platform or media.

Finally, hypothesis seven predicted there would be a significant, positive linear relationship between the presentation of true self and the escape use motive for female participants of Instagram. This hypothesis was not fully supported. The relationship between true-self and escape was negative but significant ($a = -.182, p < 0.05$). Perhaps this finding means that users of Instagram are on the site to escape real life and acknowledge that the platform encourages an environment that magnifies the ideal or ought self. More research in this area is necessary to explore the relationship between true-self and escape further. No current study of Instagram and motive expands on this correlation.

The only hypothesis from hypotheses eight through twelve worth noting is hypothesis eleven, which stated: there will be a significant, positive linear relationship between escape motive and life satisfaction among female participants. This hypothesis was not supported, though significant. The interesting finding here could mean that users of Instagram who are on the site for escape-like gratifications also have a lower life satisfaction score. More research on motive, usage and life satisfaction on social media is necessary to determine a thorough assessment of the relationships.

The other four hypotheses show that there are no relationships between life satisfaction and identity and social affinity, information seeking or entertainment type motives. This could

suggest that the life satisfaction of an individual has no impact on these specific uses and gratifications of media or vice versa. It is probable that studies which research self-esteem or personality and social media would say otherwise. This finding could also mean that the motives identity and social affiliation, information seeking and entertainment are all neutral in terms of satisfaction with life and social media use.

Overall, there is much to speculate regarding these findings. The most important finding was the new factor that emerged from self-expression use motive and the interpersonal connection use motive. Similar to uses and gratifications in traditional media, like the radio and television, users of media engage on various platforms for a combination of reasons. Through this study, findings show that motives for media use can change, are changing and are oriented to the platform. The original uses and gratifications categories developed for understanding television have been applied to newer media in numerous studies (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016; Malik, Dhir & Nieminen, 2015). As a result, new categories have emerged distinct to each media platform. The importance with this study is that when applying traditional uses and gratifications to newer media, new and platform relevant motives appear. This confirms the belief that users of media engage with platforms differently.

Other important findings include: the lack of difference in usage between sexes; and the negative relationships that derived from escape, true-self and life satisfaction. Instagram is a unique social site that continues to change. The environment of the site encourages visual expression and impression management. It could be that as the platform changes, the motives for use will also change. These findings suggest that there are other pieces to the puzzle, which need solving.

STRENGTHS

A major strength derived from this study was the examination of analysis measures, which were robust and consistent with prior research in this area. The reliability yielded from scale items using Coefficient Alpha .70 (Cronbach, 1951) was highly reliable. All items from each of the three constructs were retained. True-self yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of .71, the 20 items from uses and gratifications yielded $a = .86$, and the ten items from life satisfaction yielded $a = .88$. Reliability from Ting (2015) ranged from Cronbach's alpha of .69 to $a = .86$, while Sheldon and Bryant (2016) ranged from a Cronbach's alpha of .70 to $a = .78$.

Another strength of this research was reliability of the life satisfaction scale. The scale was derived from Rosenberg's Self Esteem scale and used with Huebner's (1991) Life Satisfaction scale. Researchers Mehdizadeh (2010) and Manago, Taylor and Greenfield (2012) used this method to determine relationships between life satisfaction and use on Facebook. Manago, Taylor and Greenfield (2012) emphasized the psychological importance of audience in the Facebook environment, which translated fairly easily onto Instagram. Mehdizadeh (2010) found that higher narcissism paired with low self-esteem led to greater activity online, as well as more self-promotional content. These findings are semi-related to this study, regarding the psychological aspects that affect users of social media, including the effects on their life satisfaction and well-being. Narcissists prefer online communities where shallow relationships can thrive. In these online ecosystems, users have complete control over their self-presentation, making it easier to frame the version of themselves they most want shared (Manago, et al., 2008; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016).

The consistency of age with previous research was yet another strength of this study. Previous studies have shown that the major users of Instagram are adults ages 18-29 (Duggan et

al., 2015). The mean age of this sample size was 21.2. Users ages 18-29 made up 98.9 percent of the sample. Most prior research analyzed in this thesis use college populations, which are consistent with the age range of users of Instagram and most social sites.

LIMITATIONS

Perhaps a different method of retrieving participation may have allowed for a greater number of respondents. Although the target sample size was reached, there were frequent scheduling conflicts with class times and availability of the lab where the survey was administered. One way to be certain of this approach is to double the sample size and repeat the study and determine if there are any differences in statistical data.

Another limitation could include the scale items for gratifications sought versus gratifications obtained. It was assumed based on previous research that traditional use motives and gratifications were transferable to newer media, such as escapism for both television viewing and social media (Smock et al, 2011; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011; Seidman, 2013; Smock et al, 2011). This thesis shows that not only are these uses and gratifications from traditional media semi-transferable, they are also changing and are determined by each of the emerging platforms. Sundar and Limperos (2013) found uses and gratifications from television that were adaptable to newer media, however other studies have found combined uses and gratifications as the vehicle for motives change. If other uses and gratifications were chosen for this research, other factors may have been established, leading to alternative findings and results.

Lastly, the usage of a survey alone served as a limitation. Incorporating an interview or focus group element to the study could have led to a more in-depth analysis or range of findings. According to Babbie (1992), despite surveys being flexible and cost efficient, they also tend to

be weaker regarding validity. Social research on a topic inquiring about uses and gratifications and social media requires more of an extensive analysis in order to understand what the user is thinking during use and the effects after. Though this study uncovered interesting findings, the survey alone limited the amount of detail participants revealed.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Given the limitations stated above, there may be opportunities for future research in a few distinct areas. Future research could incorporate the different motives used in studies by Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011); Sheldon and Bryant (2016); or Malik et al. (2015) to show the degree of disparity that reflect uses and gratifications and social media. Future work could also include a different or new social networking site using a wide range of uses and gratifications to determine the motives of users. The importance of understanding the uses and gratifications of media helps other disciplines understand its effects on society and determine where changes in habits are being made.

Implementing different questions in the survey to receive an exhaustive analysis of use and gratifications from participants could be another method used for future research. Using another method to compliment survey research, such as conducting a focus group or interviews may be helpful to understanding the relationships between presentation of self, motive and life satisfaction. Added context from interviews and focus groups could emphasize the data represented in the survey analysis.

Although not explicitly studied in this research, exploring the different versions of self could be useful to understanding the relationship between true-self and life satisfaction regarding social media. Using impression management to explore the relationship between true-self and the

idealistic self could be beneficial to determining how the use of social media affects users. Impression management and motive exploration would be an effective compliment to the research conducted in this thesis. Mehdizadeh (2010) conducted research on narcissism and self-esteem on Facebook and although there are reasons to explore narcissism and Instagram, the acknowledgement of self-idealization is to be understood with Instagram first. Future researchers should understand the dynamic between motive and self before leaping into research on narcissism and other personality traits or characteristics.

CONCLUSION

The premise of this study was to determine if there were relationships between presentation of the true self, uses and gratifications and how those relate to life satisfaction on Instagram among females users. Although the majority of hypotheses were not fully supported, this study did generate significant findings that contribute to existing literature on presentation of true self on Instagram, the uses and gratifications of a college student population on social media, and the effects on their life satisfaction and overall well-being.

By conducting a four-part survey taken by college-aged adults, findings displayed no difference between male and female usage of Instagram. The escape motive had significant and negative relationships to true-self and life satisfaction. This finding needs more exploration. Other results found relationships between true-self and life satisfaction and a new factor was derived, creating potential new uses and gratifications motives for social media.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the notion that relationships between the presentation of the self are important to platforms of social media like Facebook and Instagram. Motives for using the site vary and may not be linked to true-self. Life satisfaction is an indicator

of some of the motives, but more research is needed in this area. Through this study we learned there may be other versions of the self portrayed on Instagram and that the motives for being on the site are not straightforward.

Overall, there is substantial support that there are links between these variables and that more research is required.

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT



Information Consent

Department of Journalism and Media Studies

TITLE OF STUDY: TRUE SELF AND THE USES AND GRATIFICATIONS OF INSTAGRAM AMONG ADULT FEMALES

INVESTIGATOR(S): Dr. Paul Traudt and Jocelyn Apodaca

For questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Jocelyn Apodaca at 575-202-4978.

For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted, contact the **UNLV Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects at 702-895-2794, toll free at 877-895-2794 or via email at IRB@unlv.edu**

Purpose of the Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between personal motives and Instagram use.

Participants

You are being asked to participate in the study because you fit these criteria: you are an adult ages 18-29 and may use Instagram.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: answer questions on a survey to the best of your abilities.

Benefits of Participation

There may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, your participation will help us better understand why people use social media.

Risks of Participation

There are risks involved in all research studies. This study may include only minimal risks. You may be uncomfortable when answering some survey questions.

Cost /Compensation

There will be no financial cost to you to participate in this study. The study will take less than 10 minutes of your time. You will not be financially compensated for your time, but you will receive an additional 1% toward your earned total in class for participating.

Confidentiality

All information gathered in this study will be kept as confidential as possible. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be destroyed.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with UNLV. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Participant Consent:

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I have been able to ask questions about the research study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

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APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT



Q1. What is your age?

Q2. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Q3. What is your major?

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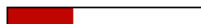
Q4. Please answer honestly and to the best of your abilities.

Do you have an Instagram account?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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Q5. On a scale from 0 to 50, approximately how often do you use Instagram per day? (Includes leaving a comment, liking a photo or video, posting a photo or video, scrolling through your timeline or searching for a user.

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Q6. You reveal more about yourself to people you know from the internet than to non-internet friends?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Q7. There are things your internet friends know about you that you cannot share with non-internet friends?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Q8. You express in different facets of yourself online than you do to others offline?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Q9. Your friends and family would be surprised if they were to read the things you posted online?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Q10. Indicate how true the following reasons are for your use of Instagram.

	Very true of me	True of me	Neutral	Untrue of me	Very untrue of me
To interact with my friends and family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To learn new information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To entertain myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To escape from everyday problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To feel a sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To communicate with distant friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To relax	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To talk to someone when there's no one else to talk with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To be understood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get away from my family and others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To feel important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To learn new things about myself and others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To unwind	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To make me feel less alone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get enjoyment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To see what is out there	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To express myself freely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get away from what I'm doing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get free information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To forget about school, work or other things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11.

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel I do not have much to be proud of	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On a whole, I am satisfied with myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I take a positive attitude toward myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish I could have more respect for myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At times I think I am no good at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I certainly feel useless at times	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to do things as well as most other people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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UNLV

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

Survey Powered By Qualtrics

Table 2
Reliability of Constructs

Cronbach's α of Internal Consistency	Mean	Std. Deviation
True-self	α (N = 145)	
	$\alpha = .71$	
You reveal more about yourself to people you know from the internet than to non-internet friends	2.41	1.152
There are things your internet friends know about you that you cannot share with non-internet friends	2.14	1.245
You express in different facets of yourself online than you do to others offline	3.11	1.125
You friends and family would be surprised if they were to read the things you posted online	2.19	1.114
Motives	α (N = 138)	
	$\alpha = .86$	
Interact with my friends and family	1.93	.968
Learn new information	2.30	1.021
Entertain myself	1.40	.668
Escape from every day problems	2.69	1.207
Feel a sense of belonging	3.04	1.014
Communicate with distant friends	2.05	1.076
Relax	2.00	.846

Talk to someone when there's no one else to talk with	3.54	1.209
Be Understood	3.50	1.122
Get away from my family and others	3.70	1.188
Feel important	3.26	1.198
Learn new things about myself and others	2.49	1.089
Unwind	2.28	.980
Make me feel less alone	3.36	1.170
Get enjoyment	1.78	.732
See what is out there	1.61	.633
Express myself freely	2.10	.954
Get away from what I'm doing	2.20	1.154
Get free information	2.17	1.080
Forget about school, work or other things	2.01	.936

Life Satisfaction α (N = 139)

$\alpha = .88$

On a whole, I am satisfied with myself	2.01	.952
At times I think I am no good	2.82	1.270
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	1.71	.792
I am able to do things as well as most other people	2.00	.909
I feel I do not have much to be proud of	2.15	1.090
I certainly feel useless at times	2.97	1.215

I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others 1.88 .852

I wish I could have more respect for myself 2.93 1.30

Table 3

Factor Loadings for Motives

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Interact with my friends and family				
Learn new information				.758
Entertain myself		.484	.472	
Escape from everyday problems	.438		.596	
Feel a sense of belonging	.720			
Communicate with distant friends				
Relax		.710		
Talk to someone when there's no one else to talk with	.657			
Be Understood	.817			
Get away from my family and others	.569		.526	
Feel important	.771			

Learn new things about myself and others	.400	.506	.451
Unwind		.685	
Make me feel less alone	.753		
Get enjoyment		.769	
See what is out there		.569	.457
Express myself freely		.470	
Get away from what I'm doing			.694
Get free information			.723
Forget about school, work or other things		.695	

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Master of Arts, Journalism and Media Studies

May 2017

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

GPA: 3.9

Master's Thesis:

- True-Self, and the uses and gratifications of Instagram among college-aged females

Bachelor of Arts, Journalism and Mass Communication

December 2017

New Mexico State University

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Apodaca, J. (Oct. 2016). Are you who you say you are? Displaying true-self on Instagram

Presentation at the UNLV Rebel Grad Slam Research Rumble

Three-Minute Thesis Competition, Las Vegas, NV

- 3rd Place in semi-final round, scholarship winner

Apodaca, J. (April, 2017) Presentation of true-self, motive and life satisfaction on Instagram among college-aged females. Poster presentation at UNLV Inspiration, Innovation and Impact: A Celebration of Graduate Student Research, Las Vegas, NV

- 2nd Place in Poster Presentation, scholarship winner

Apodaca, J. (April, 2017) Presentation of true-self, motive and life satisfaction on Instagram among college-aged females. Poster presentation at the 8th Annual Graduate Research Symposium, UNLV Greenspun College of Urban Affairs Graduate Symposium, Las Vegas, NV

STUDENT/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2015 Hack the Gender Gap USC Women's Hackathon

Oct. 2015

Immersive Journalism and Virtual Reality, Los Angeles, CA

- Participant/competitor

2016 Mobile Me & You Conference

Oct. 2016

Northwestern Medill School of Journalism, Media and Integrated Marketing Communications

- Participant

Bots and Chatbots Hackathon

Feb. 2017

Reynolds School of Journalism and Center for Advanced Media Studies

- Participant/competitor

Graduate Research Certificate

May 2017

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Intermediate Spanish
 - Experience with digital content creation, social media management, audience engagement, copyediting and proofreading
 - Basic Adobe Photoshop and PC software editing programs for audio, photo and video
 - Survey and Research using SPSS, NodeXL and Qualtrics
-

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**University of Nevada, Graduate Teaching Assistant**

Las Vegas, NV August

2015-May 2017

- Instructed Journalism 100, facilitated discussion among four sections of 20-30 students and delivered lectures on social and emerging media to 100+ students
- Trained students in writing press releases, producing audio stories, recording and editing photo and video packages, assembling press kits, and designing online portfolios; all assignments required use of mobile journalism tools

New Mexico State University, News Writer

Las Cruces, NM November

2013-July 2015

- Conducted research (interviews with key stakeholders, secondary research), wrote, shot, and edited both print and online packages to tell the NMSU vision through words, images and videos
- Covered a wide spectrum of beats, including: Sustainability, College of Agricultural Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Fish Wildlife and Conservation Ecology, rodeo, 4-H, FFA, campus media, financial aid, registrar and admissions (more than 100 published press releases and news stories)

Las Cruces Sun-News and Si Las Cruces Magazine, Freelance Writer

Las Cruces, NM July

2013-November 2013

- Produced content for online and print in various beats following AP Style guidelines, pitched stories, conducted research interviews, shot and edited photos, aided with magazine layout and design