

Self-concept Dynamics of Instagram User With Dual Account (Public and Private Account)

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ABSTRACT

The current study aimed at depicting the dynamics of self-concept of the Instagram user who possesses two accounts. The first account (public account) exhibits the user's identifiable identity, while the second account (private account) does not show the original identity of the user. The present study employed narrative qualitative approach aiming at viewing the self-concept dynamics of the dual account user. Three participants were selected by using purposive sampling. The data were collected by using an in-depth interview. The present study employed moderately schedules interview and voice recorder. The analysis data of the study was done by verbatim coding and data triangulation. The finding of the study showed that in the public account, the participants would behave by self-image they intend to build, while in private account, the participants did not attempt to create a positive self-image or impression. The result of the present study can be used as a reference for understanding the self-concept of social media users with dual account.

Kata kunci: self-concept, dual account, public account, private account, instagram

INTRODUCTION

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as an Internet-based application built based on the ideology and technology of Web 2.0, where its users are capable of creating and sharing their profile contents. They stated that social network is one of the social media that allows its users to connect by creating a personal information profile, inviting friends and colleagues to access it, sending online messages and short messages, like Instagram. Instagram is a social network application that is launched in 2010. This application is built based on photo or video-sharing that can be uploaded and

saved forever (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015). Since Facebook purchased Instagram in 2012, it becomes one of the most popular applications in the world, including Indonesia. Based on a survey conducted by We Are Social in 2017, Instagram enjoys the third most active social media in Indonesia by 39%. According to Country Director Facebook Indonesia, Sri Widowati, currently, there are forty-five million active Instagram users every month. In early 2016, there were only twenty-two million active Instagram users in Indonesia. This number exhibits an increase in the number of active users by

double in one year ("Pengguna Instagram," 2017).

Cited from the Instagram official website, this application holds a feature that allows its users to upload a photo or video permanently (feed) and/or temporarily for 24 hours (Instagram stories) ("Introducing Instagram, 2016"). For every uploaded photo or video, there is a column for comments, likes, reply, send direct messages, and features to edit them so that everyone can set what kind of photos or videos they want other people to see (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015). Instagram allows its user to build their desired self-image by setting their profile account (Rui & Stefanone, 2012). The provided feature becomes one of the means for Instagram users to build their self-image. In addition to utilizing Instagram features, many Instagram users nowadays create two accounts.

The increase in Instagram users is associated with new Instagram accounts. These new accounts are not always created by first-time users. In other words, there is a possibility that the existing users create another account. This is in line with the result of a survey conducted by Winarni (2017) on 113 social media users in Jakarta. Sixty-Eight respondents state that they own two social media accounts, the society calls this as a second account.

Regarding these two accounts, the users usually manage their first account to be visible for everyone (public account) and manage their second account to be visible only for certain people (private account). This feature is provided by Instagram, by using this feature, the users can set their profile, whether or not they want to have their account locked. As it is stated in the Instagram official page (Instagram, 2018), when other accounts want to see the profile of private account, those accounts should request permission to the private account owner. By locking their account, the users can filter anyone who wants to see their account contents. Accordingly, for private accounts, the owner only accepts request from those who are personally close to them

(Kang, Brown, & Kiesler, 2013). The use of dual account is considered an attempt made by the users to select photos or videos they want other people to see.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue that the interaction occurs in social media is not synchronous so that an individual cannot be able to see other people responses, expressions, and hopes directly. Leary and Allen (2010) state that in social media, an individual will interact with other people using the impression that is formed between one another. By understanding this, an individual thinks about how he is seen or is judged by others. They behave in a certain manner to establish an impression he wants to be (Leary & Allen, 2011).

Leary and Allen (2011) state that there is a psychological factor affecting an individual in determining and selecting strategies to interact with others, namely self-concept. Self-concept is a product of one's self-reflection and other people' evaluation (Bracken, 1996). According to Bracken (1996), self-concept can be seen from six dimensions as follow: (1) individual's view on his existence in social environment (social dimension), (2) Individual's view on his general ability (competency dimension), (3) Individual's view on emotional response toward the environment (affective dimensions), (4) individual's dimension toward his academic ability (academic dimension), (5) individual's view on his family (family dimensions), and (6) Individual's dimension on his physical appearance (physical dimension). He stated that these dimensions are interrelated.

Regarding this statement, the dual account use is deemed to be a mean for individuals in showing himself under his self-concept. According to Aronson (Leary & Allen, 2011), an individual will show himself like how he sees himself. Generally, the public account contains everything the users want to show to the public; the rest of it is posted in the private account. This is in line with the study conducted by Kang, Brown, and Kiesler (2013) in which one of the respondents managed two social media

accounts. Although the same person managed the accounts, these accounts exhibit different characteristic and identity so that they look like being managed by two different people.

Aronson (in Leary & Allen, 2011) stated that someone would avoid showing his self-image that is different from how he sees himself since it may make him uncomfortable. This is in line with the study conducted by Lupinetti (2015) who found how self-concept is used as a guide in using social media. That study found that Instagram users purposefully set their photos by their perception before uploading them. Therefore, an individual hopes that other people may give responses that meet the self-concept he wants to exhibit so that he can strengthen his self-concept (Thagard & Wood, 2015).

The present study was aimed at exploring self-concept dimensions of the Instagram users with a dual account to reveal their self-concept dynamics in their public and private Instagram accounts. The result of the present study can be used as a reference for understanding the self-concept of social media users with a dual account.

METHODS

The present study employed a narrative qualitative approach aiming at viewing the self-concept dynamics of the dual account user. There were three participants in the study. They were selected by using homogeneous sampling. They were 21-22 years old females, they managed two Instagram accounts, public account (they provide their real identity) and private account (they do not provide their real identity). The data were collected by using an in-depth interview. The present study employed moderately schedules interview and voice recorder. The data analysis technique of the study was coding on the verbatim transcript. The researcher also performs triangulation to the participants' friends or family who knows participants' daily activity in real life or public or private Instagram accounts. Besides triangulation, communicative validation was also done by

informing the data and analysis result to the participants of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

During the interview, the researchers asked participants about their daily life activity and their activity in their Instagram public and private account. These three participants created their first Instagram account by showing their real identity so that other users can easily identify their identity. Their account was set as a public account so that anyone can see the content of the account. When they get a notification of new followers, they follow back that account. However, when they receive notification of new followers from other users that they do not know or even from fake accounts in their public account, they tend to ignore them. Accordingly, the number of followers and account they follow are approximately the same.

Then, they created another account so that they have two Instagram accounts. The participants make this second account as a media where they can express themselves without worrying about other users' comments.

As it is stated before, in their first account (public account), anyone can see its content. This makes the participants did not feel free and should maintain their self-image through photos or videos they uploaded due to the followers who were not close or were not directly close could see the content of their account. Each participant understood that people who did not know them in daily life would build impression or self-image through their content in public account. Accordingly, their second account is created without showing their real identity so that other users cannot identify them.

They also make their account as private so that only certain people with their approval can view the content of their private account. The people they follow and their followers in private account are their close friend. They believe that their close friends can accept them. For the account they follow, they select accounts by their interest. Therefore, the

number of followers in their private account is fewer than in their public account.

Self-Concept Dynamics in Public Account

In public account, the participants attempted to build a positive self-image. They want to be seen as good people. To this end, they avoided uploading contents that trigger adverse reaction such as sexy clothes, using bad languages, being racists, a. For instance, Naya would not upload a photo showing she consumes alcohol. She thought that such behavior could result in a negative self-image. Naya also thought that it is negative behavior. This is possibly in line with Naya's religious teaching, Islam. In its teaching, Islam forbids its follower to consume alcohol. By not uploading and showing that behavior, it can help her to build a positive self-image that she wants, a good, pious, and calm individual. So as when they respond to the content of other accounts. She would mind her language so that her responses do not offend other people.

"In the first account, I clearly maintain my image(...)nd I want other people to view me as a calm and do nothing stupid (...) I won't upload images of I am drinking (alcohol), it is silly(...) When responding to the comments in my first account, I will carefully mind my language(...) (Naya, 21 years old).

Maintaining self-image by uploading positive contents is an attempt made by the participants so that they can be accepted as an Instagram user. They did this because they learned from their own experience or from other accounts who uploaded contents and get its feedback. For instance, Lani receives negative comments regarding her physical appearance. Although she was offended, she said that she keeps trying to behave to that person properly. Based on her experience, Lani learned that giving negative comments in any way can hurt other people. As long as she did not do it, Lani believed that users in her public account would accept her.

"(...) So, when there is someone offensive, I just keep calm, and Indeed, I am not interested in a debate (...) Although I am actually offended (...)." (Lani, 22 years old)

Photos and videos uploaded to the public account are usually related only to important moments such as hang out with friends, family, friend's birthday party, or close friend's wedding reception. In addition to photos and videos related to important moments, the photos and videos are uploaded to show that they are happy. They would not upload contents showing that they were sad or were in a difficult situation.

Although they uploaded content to show that they are happy, they still minded the way they show it to avoid being show off and to look calm. They also avoided uploading their selfies. The participants preferred to upload photos that show togetherness. They did it because they want to maintain a good relationship with other people; they did not want to be seen as an arrogant person. This shows that the contents they uploaded to their public account had been gone through some considerations. Naya said that what she did is an attempt to be accepted and be seen as a good social media user. She understands that anyone can see her public account. She believes that society can throw any comments without knowing the reasons behind her behavior. To avoid negative comments that contradict the image she wanted to build, Naya preferred to play safely in her public account.

"(...) There is always an important moment to upload (...) For example, my friend's birthday party or wedding party (...) I want my parents know what I am doing, but not excessive(...) because it seems that public sees my first account. For those who do not know me, they can say anything about me, they don't know the reason why i am doing something (...)" (Naya, 21 years old)

Although the participants had attempted to build and create a good relationship with

users in her public account, they felt that the relationship is not intimate. In other words, they did not know those users personally. It occurs because the participants make their first account as a public account. Accordingly, anyone can freely see and follow their public account such as their friends, parents, organization partner, and so forth. It makes them felt that they should carefully mind their behavior in public account. Lani said that those who did not close with her could find different impression since they did not know her personally. In line with Naya, this makes Lani difficult to express her feeling in the public account, especially regarding her negative feeling. Lani was worried that her uploaded content might lead to a negative image. That concern makes her prefer to keep her problems alone and not to upload it to public account.

"(...)We have a good relationship, but it is not close (...)." (Lani, 22 years old)

Previously, it is stated that the participants preferred to upload photos or videos related only to important moments. This shows that the participants would like to consider their appearance before the photos or videos were uploaded in the public account. In addition to building positive self-image, the participants also wanted to keep attracting. This goal can be achieved at once when they uploaded a photo in certain moments so that it such event, they will surely wear formal dress and certain hairstyle so that they are physically attracting. Caca said that she is a person who considers this as important, such as hairstyle, makeup, dresses, and accessories she wore. She always wanted to be up-to-date. She often found unexpected comments. Accordingly, Caca preferred not to upload contents too often in her public account. She said that although she has arranged to be appropriate, she still found unexpected comments.

"(...) I care about it because.. I see my friends are well-groomed (...) I am a person who aware of that matters like hair, makeup,

dresses, and accessories (...)" (Caca,22 years old).

The participants were seen as a good, diligent, priceless, and reliable family member. Naya said that in her family, her mother listens to her opinion very much. Her mother discusses with Naya more often than with her brothers. This makes Naya feel closer to her mother rather than to other family members. Accordingly, when she uploaded photos regarding her family, she uploaded only photos with her mother or with her big family, including her mother. Different from Naya, Caca uses Instagram as a mean of communication with her parents. She did it because she did not live with her parents, who worked in Padang. Caca said that she communicates with her parents every day through telephone, short messages, or video call. Besides, her parents also watch her activity through her public account. Caca said that her family would always spend the time together when they meet. When her parents come to Jakarta, she will prioritize her time for her family. They usually spend the times by hang out together and go to movies. Such activities are the activity Caca would like to upload in her public account. Caca said that she wanted to upload the moments because she is happy to be together with her family.

"My mother judge me as a good person and almost never say a bad language (...) My father views me as a good and tenacious girl (...)" (Naya, 21 years old).

"(...) (on duty) Video call, telephone, or chat. They are a type of parents who must always know wherever I go (...) My mother usually view my account (...)" (Caca, 22 years old)

The participants were confident with their academic and non-academic ability. Although they are confident with it, they never uploaded photos or videos showing their achievement in that field to avoid being seen as arrogant.

Self-Concept Dynamics in Private Account

In their private accounts, the participants were no longer maintain their self-image. In this account, they feel more freedom to express and to do anything they want without worrying comments. Different from public account, in private account, they did not need to build a positive image. The participants believed that the followers of their private accounts would accept them. It possibly occurs because they have locked their account, they also avoid to use their real identity. Accordingly, only certain people can see the content of their account. Therefore, they only accept a friend request from their close friends' account.

"(...)In my second account, it is like I don't care about anything anymore. I do whatever I want"(Naya, 21 years old)

"(...)In my second account, my followers only my close friends. And I know they will have any problem even if I am so bad." (Lani, 22 years old)

"(...)I use my second account more daily basis(...)" (Caca, 22 years old)

Then, they did not need to mind their language when giving comments or when uploading contents in this account. For instance, Naya told her experience of giving negative comments using her private account. Naya said that she did not like racist comments, videos, or photos. When she found such contents, Naya was emotionally triggered. Naya would reply that contents using private account. She often went through debate by using her private account. Naya was satisfied when she could do it in her private account since she did not need to make any consideration as she did for her public account.

"(...)I am annoyed when there is people give racist comment. I reply to them with my second account. It is impossible to do it in my first account(...).I am satisfied when I did it with my second account" (Naya, 21 years old)

In line with Naya, Lani also did the same in her private account. When giving comments or uploading something, Lani did not think her language anymore in this account. Lani uploaded her negative feeling in private account. For instance, when other people talked about her physical appearance, she would upload her hard feeling in private account. Lani preferred to do it in her private account because she feels that public does not need to know about it, besides she would not get any negative response, even almost get no response from her follower. Lani loved such a condition.

"(...)When I cannot hold it anymore, I update it in my second account... Expressing my emotion (...) You cannot tell every problem to the public. Only those who are selected... Who are close to you (...) It is better when there is no one responds to it (...)" (Lani, 22 years old)

From that explanation, it can be concluded that the participants find themselves more confident in their private account. This makes them feel confident with their physical appearance when uploading a photo in their private account. The did not care about their face, body shape, or clothes they wore anymore. For instance, in private account, Caca could upload the photos when she is with her family when she wore pajamas and with natural eyebrows.

"Family gathering, we gather in the bedroom (second account)(...)" (Caca, 22 years old).

The difference of participants' self-concept dynamics in public account and the private account is provided in figure 2.

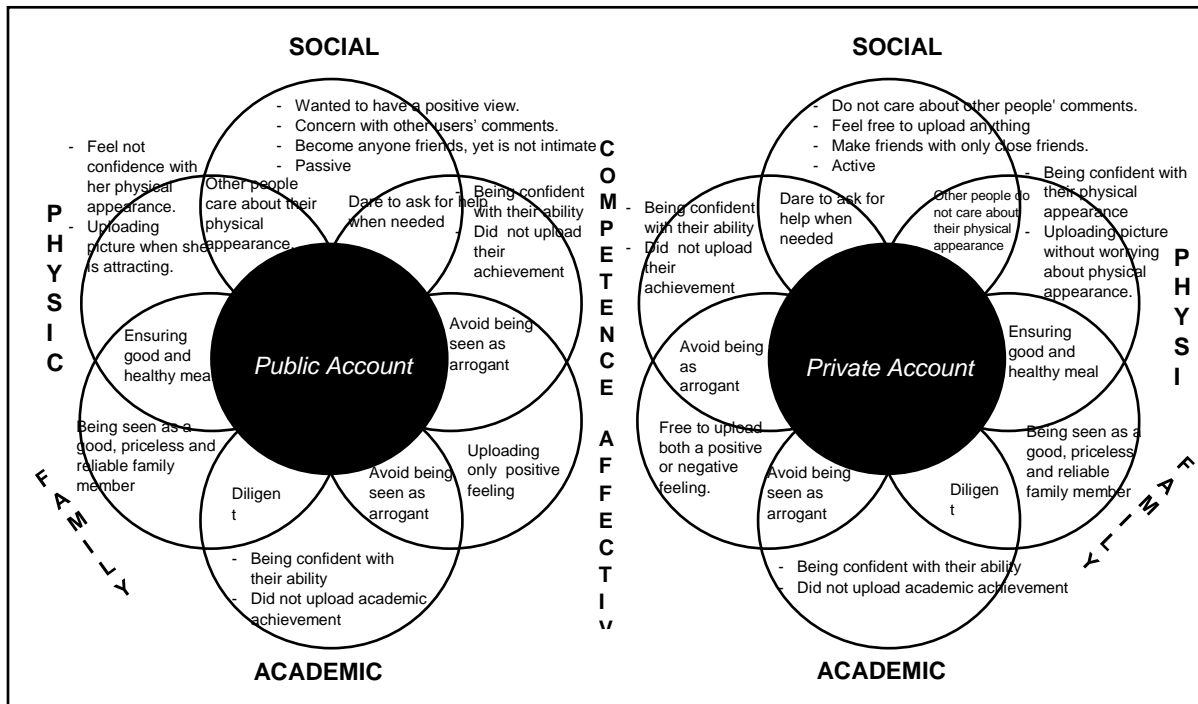


Figure 2.
The participants' self-concept dynamic in Public Account and Private Account

In private account, the participants' view on family, competency, and academic are the same as those in public account. They consider their performance good when they finish an assignment. When they do not understand, they were willing to ask for help from other people. The participants did not upload photos showing their achievement in their private account. They also have a positive view of their family in their private account. They said sometimes they upload their family moments in private account.

Based on the result of the study, the participants would behave in accordance with self-image they wanted to build in the public account. In this study, the participants want to build a positive image in their public account. They believe that in order to be accepted by other people, ideally, they need to be a good person. For this purpose, the participants did many things. According to Rogers (in Feist, Feist & Robberts, 2013), The participants' desire to be viewed as a positive user in public account is called as ideal self. In their private account, they did not need to make any attempt to be accepted by other users. The participants view themselves as capable of being honest and

be themselves in their private account. In this case, the participants realized that they also hold negative points within themselves. According to Rogers (as cited in Feist, Feist, & Robberts, 2013), An individual's awareness on overall aspects within themselves is called as *self-concept*. Although there are differences, the participants attempted to maintain harmony between self-concept and ideal self by creating two accounts.

Dominick (1995) states that social media users with public account will tend to exhibit a behavior that leads to positive image and to minimize behavior that leads to a negative image. Kang, Brown, and Kiesler (2013) also state that when an individual is in an identified state, in this case by their public account, they will tend to be more careful in establishing their image through the contents they uploaded. This is consistent with the finding of study that shows that the participants attempted to exhibit positive behavior and avoid behaviors that potentially lead to a negative image in their public account. They did this because they realize that there is social responsibility in their public account (Gustave Le Bon in Li, 2010).

Accordingly, they will avoid to exhibit negative behavior in their public account and create a private account to accommodate such behavior.

Then, the participants tend to behave in accordance with other people' expectation in their public account. They realize that their image will determine how they will be treated. An example from the public account is the participants understand that if they upload photos with impolite words, they will receive negative comments or image, and by showing photos in important events with attracting appearance, they will obtain positive responses from other users. While in their private account, the participants behave according to their belief. Goffman (in Nezlek & Leary, 2002) state that how individual exhibit their behavior in front of public determine the other people respond. This makes the participants follow the behavioral pattern that is expected by other people in each account (Gustave Le Bon, in Li, 2010).

Leary and Allen (2011) stated that in addition to self-concept, someone's manner in showing themselves also relies on their self-monitoring. More often, individual monitors themselves, the more he will pay attention to other people' expectation. This explains how the participants behave in their public and private account. In their public account, they prioritize other people' hope. They adjust themselves to other users' hope. Accordingly, individuals who concern more about their self-image will adjust themselves to the public hope rather than behave according to their self-concept they believe.

Leary and Allen (2011) also state that individuals will show themselves based on their own judgment. In other words, when an individual sees themselves as beautiful and attracting, they will show themselves in a beautiful and attracting condition so that other people see the same. This should also be supported by the individual's self-concept that views themselves as possessing a beauty that can be shown to the public.

The same point possibly applied to the competency and academic aspects. Their behavioral pattern in public account and

private account are the same. They prefer not to show their score or achievement, although they believe that their academic and non-academic performance can be categorized as good. They are also confident about the outcome. However, they prefer not to upload such behavior since other users expect that the behavior is not needed to be shown. They believe that showing their academic and non-academic achievement will only trigger envy leading to negative comments or image.

Sinnott (in Santrock 2013) state that the individual's mindset in the emerging adult period is affected by the affective aspect. This is shown by the contents the participants upload on Instagram. In their public account, they will only upload contents showing that they are happy. They did it to obtain a positive image. This positive image makes them maintain the behavior. They would also avoid exhibiting behavior that potentially leads to negative comments since it will make them offended and uncomfortable.

In this case, there is an indirect learning process. Skinner (in Feist, Feist, & Robberts, 2013) state that the reinforced behavior will improve the possibility of the emergence of the desired behavior, while punishment will decrease the possibility of the emergence of the undesired behavior. In the context of the current study, the reinforcement was given in the form of positive response. This strengthens the emergence of positive behavior in the public account. Then, the possible punishment that occurs is negative responses or images. This could weaken or reduce the possibility of showing negative behavior in the public account.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the study, it could be concluded that the participants attempt to build positive self-image so that they can be viewed as a good social media in their public account. In their private account, the participants did not attempt to build a positive self-image. They prefer to show their original version because they believe that the

followers of private account can accept anything they do. The result of the present study can be used as a reference for understanding the self-concept of social media users with a dual account.

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