EXPOSURE TO CELEBRITIES' INSTAGRAM IMAGES AND ITS

RELATIONSHIP WITH FOLLOWERS' PERCEIVED SELF-CONCEPT AND

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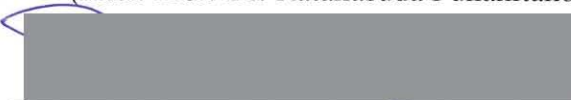
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research aims to explore the relationship between exposure to celebrities' Instagram images with followers' perceived self-concept and visual self-presentation on their personal Instagram accounts. Twelve Thai students between the ages of 18-20 living in Bangkok, Thailand were selected by using non-probability sampling to participate in this research. The data, comprised of 260 personal Instagram images and in-depth interview transcriptions, were analyzed by using textual analysis and Constant Comparative Method. The findings are revealed as follow: (1) Instagram followers idealized the following photo categories depicted by celebrities' Instagram images, namely Personal, Social Relations, Activity, Luxury Items, and Others. There are new subcategory expansions and explanation to add to the photo categories, namely "Fans", "Plants", and "Lyrics". (2) There are three relationships on how Instagram followers perceive themselves in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images, namely followers' actual selves are not discrepant from their ideal selves, followers' actual selves are discrepant from ideal selves, and followers' actual selves are discrepant yet concurrently non-discrepant from ideal selves. (3) There are two relationships on how Instagram followers visually self-

present themselves on their personal Instagram accounts in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images, namely followers' visual self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' images, and followers' visual self-presentation is absent yet concurrently present from imitating celebrities' images. The results show that Instagram followers are generally capable to navigate their sense of self and postings on their personal Instagram accounts, in correspondence with exposure of celebrities' Instagram images. This navigation is conceivable due to the similarities of followers' selves with their ideal celebrities, the established and growing sense of self-empowerment as an individual, the followers' interest to keep their selves authentic, and their conscious self-knowledge and first-hand experience about celebrities and pictures posted on social media. The technology affordance feature of creating a secondary Instagram account, dubbed as private account, provides followers an intimate outlet to express their truest actual selves without hesitation and judgment from the public. The aforementioned significant explanations carryback the possibilities for concurrencies between discrepancy and non-discrepancies of actual and ideal selves, as well as imitation and non-imitation of celebrities' Instagram images, to exist.

*Keywords: Instagram images, Perceived self-concept, Visual self-presentation*

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Signature of Advisors

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

# LIST OF TABLES

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF FIGURES (Continued)

LIST OF FIGURES (Continued)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This research aims to examine the exposure of celebrities' images on the Instagram platform and its relationship with perceived self-concept and visual self-presentation of celebrities' followers. Thus, this chapter includes rationale and problem statement, research questions, objectives of study, scope of study, significance of the study, and definition of terms.

1.1 Rationale and Problem Statement

Who am I? In answering this question, we have a high hope that we will find answers to our truest identity that will thoroughly explain who we are. However, a solo identity-answer is not sufficient to respond to this question, as each of us has multiple identities (Martin & Nakayama, 2013; Michener & Delamater, 1999; Baym, 2010, as cited in Marwick, 2013; James, 1890, as cited in Rosenfeld, Giacalone & Riordan, 1995). These multiple identities are under the umbrella term namely known as self-schema or self-concept (Michener & Delamater, 1999). According to Michener and Delamater, self-concept is defined as "the organized structure of cognitions or thoughts we have about ourselves" (1999, p. 74). This statement shows that our perception plays a vital role in determining our sense of self. Martin and Nakayama further supports the important role of perception by stating "We are who we think we are…" (2013, p. 205). Thus, what we think about ourselves shape us. As an umbrella term, the self-concept incorporates our view on who we are in terms of

our social circles, roles, character, and experience (Michener & Delamater, 1999).

Therefore, our self-concept reflects who we are as a holistic person.

Although our perception comes from us, perception does not occur within just

ourselves or in a vacuum, but rather in relation with people, things and environment

around us (Martin & Nakayama, 2013; West & Turner, 2010). In this digital era,

perceptions can also be shaped through mass media, particularly visual

communications. Learn.org describes visual communications as "any image that is

used to communicate an idea, whether it's a sign, poster, drawing, photograph, or

television advertisement…" (*What Is Visual Communications*, n.d.). This type of

communication is certainly powerful to shape perceptions as it is ubiquitous, powerful

and has lasting sensory impressions (Marcus, 2015). Moreover, Marwick (2015)

stated that the Internet is progressively becoming a "…*visual* [sic] medium…" (p.

138). Therefore, visual communications can make a great social impact to online and

offline publics.

While visual communications is still displayed through traditional media such

as print magazines, newspapers and televisions, the precedence and proliferation of

social media via digital platform, for example Facebook, YouTube and Instagram, has

made visual communications more apparent than before, and the sign-up-for-free

social media accounts give way for visual communications to be accessible to all

walks of life (Marcus, 2015), starting as young as 13 years old to over 65 years old

(Bennett, 2014; Graber, 2014; Pew Research Center, n.d.). The affordability features

of these social media and networking sites, such as rapid self-updates with mere

clicks of a button, real-time news feed, easy sharing to friends or fans on various

platforms as well as user-friendly photo filters are examples on how publishing and

sharing images on the digital highway are made effortlessly and instantaneously (Marcus, 2015).

The aforementioned affordances are also aided by a high mobile penetration connected to the Internet. In We Are Social & Interactive Advertising Bureau Singapore's 2015 digital usage global report, the collaborated study reported an astounding 1.753 billion active mobile social phone users out of 3.038 billion active Internet users (Kemp, 2015a). This study shows that more than 50% of the Internet users are accessing their social media accounts using mobile phones. As for Thailand, the country also shares a similar trend of having more mobile Internet users over Internet users. The Digital Advertising Association (DAAT) reported that there are 44.6 million mobile Internet users compared to 35 million Internet users in Thailand (Vichienwanitchkul, 2015).

In addition, Statista reported that 52% of the Thai population owns an active account with any of the social networks (*Penetration of leading social networks*, 2015). It is noteworthy to mention that since 2001, Thailand has seen the number of mobile phones adoption grown to 140% (Ho, 2015). These phenomena unassumingly reveal that in Thailand, mobile phones are the main vehicle for the Internet users to access the World Wide Web (Sakawee, 2013), and not only that, social media activity is a popular Internet activity (Adler, 2014). Undoubtedly, with the increasing number of mobile phone users and social media owners on the global and local scales, visual communications can spread its influence widely, channeled easily and as a result, these images can shape our perceptions and become integrated in our daily lives.

Celebrities are well-known personalities or models that we commonly see in visual communications, whether in print or online. Marwick & Boyd noted "famous

people represent an increasingly significant part of mass media" (2011, p. 141). With the proliferation of visuals and media in today's era, this affirmation supports that images of celebrities are everywhere, from endorsing a product in an advertisement time-slot to instagramming a selfie. With the abundance of celebrities' images published through various media platforms, the public can be easily influenced to think, desire things as well as act out the values that celebrities advocate for, such as a socialite status, Starbucks and a suggestive selfie to name a few (Marwick, 2015; Garsbo & Wittberger, 2014; Marwick, 2013). This cultural phenomenon is especially applicable and pertinent to social media (Marcus, 2015; Marwick, 2015).

Since the advent of social media, the gap between celebrities and the general public, as well as fans or followers alike are brought closer because of the aforementioned social media affordances and the high usage of mobile phones. Thus, these factors make the influence and impact more direct and accessible from celebrities to followers (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). Moreover, the most popular social media personnel are generally comprised of celebrities (Marwick, 2015). Consider Instagram, a popular social media platform and mobile application that is exclusively dedicated to visuals, namely photo as well as video sharing, compared to other social media programs. On Instagram, the top 10 most popular people on a global scale, sorted by the highest number of followers, comprised of A-list celebrities such as Beyonce, Kim Kardashian and Ariana Grande with over 20 million followers to date (Statista, *Instagram accounts,* 2015; Gebhardt, 2015). On a local scale in Thailand, the top 10 most famous people on Instagram, also sorted by the highest number of followers, are unsurprisingly celebrities such as Patcharapa Chaichua known as Aum, Araya Alberta Hargate and Pakorn Chatborirak known as Boy with over 3.5 million

followers (ZocialRank, 2015). The information from Instagram shows that celebrities indeed occupy and dominate the social media scene, and their images have the power to influence and shape perceptions of common people. In addition, this information also reveals that fans, known and labeled as followers on social media, play a significant role on social media platforms as without followers, there can be no celebrities (Marwick & Boyd, 2011).

Among the rationale behind this proposed study is to deepen our understanding on how celebrities' images, afforded by Instagram, shape and influence followers' perceptions on who they think they are and how do they communicate their selves by presenting themselves visually on Instagram. It is undisputable that celebrities' images have an impact on consumers, which explains the popular and profitable millions of dollars celebrity-advertisement and endorsement industry (Euromonitor Research, 2014). But what does the impact means to the general public, or followers in the interest of this study, themselves on a more personal level, especially we are living in a visually-saturated age where there is more emphasis on the self-interest (Schwarz, 2010, as cited in Marwick, 2015), afforded by social media, technology and pop culture phenomenon? As Martin and Nakayama (2013) mentioned that our perception dictates who we are, the proponents also noted that "contextual and external forces" (p. 205) could affect how we view life. In this case, celebrities' images in Instagram are the "contextual and external forces" (Martin & Nakayama, 2013, p. 205) that can influence followers' perceptions on themselves or how they think and feel about themselves, particularly their self-concept. In other words, celebrities' images have the capability of influencing followers' sense of self and as mentioned before, celebrities' images are in abundance which subsequently

could mean their influence are massive. Therefore, studying the exposure of celebrities' images in correspondence with followers' self-concept on a deeper and emotional level is a timely and relevant affair in today's world, which supports the rationale behind conducting this thesis.

In addition to examining the perceptions that followers garner onto themselves from constant celebrities' images following, it is also equally important to observe the followers' behavioral outcomes from those perceptions, hence the visual self-presentation construct in this thesis. According to George Herbert Mead, father of Symbolic Interaction theory, human beings with a sense of self "…guide behavior and conduct" (West & Turner, 2010, p. 83). The visual self-presentation on Instagram is a behavioral expression and manifestation from the perceptions that followers formed about their self-concept. To make the self-presentation construct more relevant in the communication field, self-presentation is also evidence on how followers communicate about themselves through their posts on Instagram. We are living in an era whereby self-documentation is ever more embraced and produced, especially through social media. Gonzales and Hancock (2008) support this statement by acknowledging the Internet as a channel for people to build their identities. Therefore, observing followers' visual self-presentation through their Instagram posts will give us more solid support to see how their self-documentation about themselves is related to followers' self-concept, as "self-concepts provide an important motive for behavior" (LaRossa and Reitzes, 1993, as cited in West & Turner, 2010, p. 82). In addition, West & Turner mentioned "…beliefs, values, feelings, and assessments about the self affect behavior…" (2010, p. 83), and this is relevant to this research as this study is looking into the emotional and behavioral responses of followers on their

perceived self-concept and visual self-presentation posts on Instagram, respectively. Moreover, there is very few research on self-concept influencing self-presentation compared vice versa, thus a pertinent gap in the communication and social psychology literature. Therefore this study will allow us to examine to the extent on how followers' perceived self-concept and visual self-presentation on Instagram is negotiated in tandem with celebrities' images, thus supporting the rationale behind this study.

Although past research have delved into identity and self-presentation in computer-mediated communication (Garsbo & Wittberger, 2014; Gonzales & Hancock, 2010; Gonzales & Hancock, 2008; Hogan, 2010; Leonard, Withers & Sherblom, 2011; Lindahl & Öhlund, 2013; Marwick, 2005; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Mendelson & Papacharissi, 2010; Schwammlein & Wodzicki, 2012; Vries & Peter, 2013), nonetheless there is lack of communication research done for the aforementioned constructs on the Instagram platform. Instagram is a top dedicated visual-sharing application, which depicts photos and videos, and this social media site is continuously utilized in this mobile era. In fact in the US, Instagram is the third most popular social media, accessible 98% of the time by mobile phones after Snapchat and Vine (Statista, 2014). Recently, Instagram announced on their official blog that the company has reached over 400 million users, which is a significant milestone in social media (Instagram, 2015; Sherr, 2015; Chaykowski, 2015; Siluk, 2015). On a global scale, Instagram is the fourth social network site that has active users, followed after Facebook, Qzone and Twitter (Kemp, 2015b).

Thailand also follows a similar pattern whereby Instagram is ranked the fourth most active social media platforms after Facebook, Google+ and Twitter (We Are

Social, 2015, as cited in Fairfield, 2015). Bangkok Post also reported that Thais publish over 470,000 pictures on Instagram (*Focus in the selfie age*, 2016). This shows that Instagram is a current and ongoing communication trend on the global and local scales, made accessible by the massive mobile phone growing usage happening worldwide, thus valuable to be studied. Not to mention, studying and understanding how the channel works, which is Instagram in this case, is vitally important as the medium has the power to influence people to construct their identity (Baym, 2000, as cited in Marwick, 2005). Therefore, conducting this thesis with the focus on Instagram platform will fill the missing gap in the communication literature.

Moreover, one of the uses of Instagram is for followers to check out the people they find interesting on their up-to-date daily activities. Statista reports "many users follow celebrities on Instagram to gain a glimpse into their glamorous lives, following a similar usage pattern to microblogging service Twitter" (n.d.). Regardless the freedom that Instagram offers to users to freely publish their posts according to their liking, nonetheless research has shown that Instagram users do make conscious choices and decisions on publishing their images on Instagram (Lee, 2010, as cited in Marwick, 2015**;** Lindahl & Öhlund, 2013; Mendelson & Papacharissi, 2010**)**. In addition, Marwick goes further by stating that it is not a surprise to find "regular' selfies often emulate celebrity-related media" (Marwick, 2015, p. 142), which solidifies the fact that there is a relationship between "contextual and external forces" (Martin & Nakayama, 2013, p. 205) and one's visual self-presentation on Instagram. Therefore, it is beneficial to investigate to which extent the possibilities that Instagram users who are followers in this study, are influenced to conform to certain social norms dictated by celebrities to publish Instagram-worthy visual self-posts.

Last but not least, there is also a gap in the communication research in investigating celebrities' images, followers' perceived self-concept and their visual self-presentation on Instagram in Thailand. The celebrities industry is in abundance in Thailand as the country is deemed "celebrity-centric" (Vijaroti, 2015). Not only that, the people living in Thailand do heavily utilize social media with more than 50% of Thai population has an active account with a social media network (Statista, *Penetration of leading social networks*, 2015). Although there are existing literature on celebrities' images related to social media in Thailand, however the focus of these studies are oriented more on business, consumerism and general identity. We need a study like this to be introduced in the communication literature. Hence, this study posits the following problem statements:

1. The mentality of our youth today is getting stronger to promote and empower their sense of selves. This empowerment is made accessible by the growing social media application programs, such Instagram, Snapchat, and Vine, as well as technology like mobile phones with front-facing LED flash cameras. Hence, the image "I" has gained precedence over individuals' lives.

2. Social media is one of the popular avenues that the youth, particularly between 18 to 25 years old (Statista, *Instagram accounts*, 2015), are constantly using to express and communicate their selves, day-to-day activities and opinions. As the communication trend is heading towards more pictorial (Marwick, 2015, p. 138), social media applications such as Instagram are heavily used. The fact that Instagram user base has grown over 400 million (Instagram, 2015; Sherr, 2015; Chaykowski, 2015; Siluk, 2015) is a testament to the greatness and popularity of this social media platform. One needs to recognize that the freedom Instagram

affords through its features, such as choice of filters, crop and edit buttons, makes it easier and convenient for individuals to visually communicate themselves according to their liking. In other words, Instagrammers can make a choice on how they want to present themselves on their personal accounts.

3. However, Instagram is not just a social media platform that users are actively presenting themselves, but it is also a place for users to receive other people's content about their selves as well. This act of receiving is beyond the passivity game as simply looking and being exposed at other people's images can have power to influence viewers' attitude, perception and behavior, which explains the rapidly growing number of big and small-medium enterprises have also taken their Instagram official accounts seriously as they reach out, attract new and potential customers and maintain brand loyalty and communication with existing patrons (Siluk, 2015). Hence, this means that a person's self-concept can be influenced by images that the individual sees floating on Instagram.

4. Celebrities' images have always taken front page of the media and this has transcended to the social media scene as well. On Instagram in particular, it is no secret that celebrities occupy the top popular accounts, with followers as large as 69.5 million for the number one most popular Instagram account (The Telegraph, 2016). With the bombardings of celebrities' images tailored according to the users' interests on the Instagram news feed and top searches that are affordably easy to look and search, it is imperative to study the extent on how Instagrammers react when they see constant pictures of celebrities they follow and admire, the response of those reactions onto the followers' perceived self-concept and the

consequent presentations that followers publish of themselves visually on Instagram.

1.2 Research Questions

Research Question # 1: Which types of photo categories, portrayed by celebrities' Instagram images, do followers idealize?

Research Question # 2: How do followers respond to their exposure to celebrities' Instagram images?

Research Question # 2.1: How do Instagram followers perceive themselves in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images?

Research Question # 2.2: How do Instagram followers visually self-present themselves on their personal Instagram accounts in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images?

1.3 Objectives of Study

1.3.1 To examine photo types of celebrities' Instagram images that followers idealize.

1.3.2 To examine followers' responses to their exposure to celebrities' Instagram images in terms of perceived self-concept.

1.3.3 To examine followers' responses to their exposure to celebrities' Instagram images in terms of visual self-presentation.

1.4 Scope of Study

The nature of this research is interpretive and qualitative. Informants will be drawn from 12 Thai students aged 18 to 22 enrolled in international programs in educational institutions in Bangkok, Thailand. The time period allocated for this research, in terms of data collection, is one month. The theoretical framework of this study derives from three theories – the Self-discrepancy Theory, the Symbolic Interaction Theory, and Self-Presentation framework.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 The findings of this study aims to inform and serve as a guideline for society and community leaders in the government and private sectors on how the youth identify themselves on the Instagram platform. This research can help facilitate understanding among leaders on the role and impact of Instagram in shaping youth's identities as well as how youth conduct themselves virtually and in real life. Whether celebrities' images, afforded by Instagram, is positively or negatively influencing the youth's perceptions on their self-concept and self-presentation, the society and community leaders can intervene and take necessary actions to ensure that when it comes to using social media, particularly Instagram in any campaigns, activities and efforts focusing on youth welfare and spirit, these leaders will utilize the information from this thesis as a leverage to promote positive youth identity and behavior. The society and community leaders are in a great position to take care of the wellbeing of the youth, as they have more governance to spread positive influence and make favorable impact to all youth in local, district, and nation-wide scales. Happier young people will make better citizens, which ultimately makes a prosperous country.

1.5.2 The findings of this research also aims to inform celebrities' agencies and celebrities themselves on the role and impact of celebrities' images in shaping their followers' identity and behavior on the Instagram platform. Using the information from this study, the aforementioned stakeholders can use celebrities' images as a platform to advocate and promote good influences and values to their followers, provided the celebrities are of sound mind and have their followers' best interests at heart. Moreover, if these famous personalities can aid social campaigns that need to be paid attention such as bullying, teen pregnancies, environmental issues and so forth, they can publish images on their personal and official Instagram accounts to raise awareness on such social issues and promote positive values among their followers, in hope the followers will believe in the worthy causes, absorb the intended values into their sense of selves and conduct themselves according to the desirable values. As mentioned before, celebrities occupy the social media scene, particularly Instagram, thus their influence are massive and can spread widely.

1.5.3 Social media gurus as well as communication proponents are also relevant stakeholders who can gain benefit from the findings of this study. The information from this research will add a social psychology dimension into the communications and social media field, thus the aforementioned stakeholders can have more enlightenment on how celebrities' images, afforded by Instagram, correspond with followers on a deeper, emotional and personal level, which pertains to the followers' self-concept, as well as the behavioral response through their pictures on their personal Instagram accounts. Social media gurus and communications proponents are in a relevant position as trailblazers to use the findings from this research and explore deeper on utilizing Instagram via celebrities'

images as a vehicle to generate possible positive impacts on users' identity and behavior, as well as spread the information to their necessary counterparts in the industry.

1.5.4 The findings of this study also aims to inform and serve as a guideline for parents and educators in regards of the negotiation and formation of their children or students' identities and their behavior by following celebrities on Instagram. The information from this research can help parents and educators understand the role and impact of famous personalities' images onto their children or students through Instagram, and the intensity of that influence. Perhaps for parents, they can be alert and aware of the personalities that their children are following on Instagram, and intervene when necessary. As for educators, they can promote famous sound educators or life personalities to their students to follow on Instagram, so that their students will receive positive influences that can shape their identities and behavior. Not only that, educators can also encourage popular educators from their institutions to have Instagram accounts so students can follow them. Parents and educators play an important role in the youth life, thus having their involvement and say in the life personalities that their children or students are following on Instagram can have a great impact.

1.5.5 There is a lack of communication research that investigates between celebrities' images, followers' self-concept and self-presentation on the Instagram platform in Thailand. Thus, this research serves as a reference for aspiring researchers who would like to investigate deeper onto these constructs and expand this research in the future.

1.6 Definition of Terms

    1.6.1 Instagram

    This term is a free social media and mobile application that is dedicated to sharing photos and videos instantaneously (Instagram, n.d.).

    1.6.2 Celebrities

    This term means well-known people in their respective industries, such as entertainment, business and sports (Turner, 2004, as cited in Marwick & Boyd, 2011). In other words, celebrities in this thesis include people beyond the entertainment stars, which is contrary to the popular notion that celebrities are only famous people in the entertainment industry.

    1.6.3 Images

    It refers to photographs or pictures in Instagram depicting celebrities and published by celebrities' accounts. The general and specific photo categories based on Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati's research (2014) will serve as a guide for the operational definition of celebrities' images. The construct of celebrities' images reveals five categories – 1) personal, 2) social relations, 3) activity, 4) luxury items and 5) other. Each general category is then specified by classification of images. The category of personal is constructed by the selfie and in the interest of the researcher, self-portraits too as celebrities can also have other people take their full body photos. The category of social relations is constructed through friends and pets. The category of activity is constructed by both indoor and outdoor activities as well as places of where the activities take place. The category of luxury items is constructed by food, gadget and fashion. Finally, the category of other is constructed by captioned photo.

The captioned photo may reflect attitudes, values, and belief and can serve as entertainment purposes.

1.6.4 Exposure to celebrities' images

It refers to the act of seeing celebrities' photographs or pictures via the Instagram platform.

1.6.5 Followers

The term refers to individuals who actively follow and/or react to celebrities' posts on their Instagram account.

1.6.6 Perceived self-concept

This term refers to "the organized structure of cognitions or thoughts we have about ourselves" (Michener & Delamater, 1999, p. 74). In other words, perceived self-concept refers to our perceptions of our selves. Perceived self-concept can be divided into the following two categories.

1.6.6.1 Actual self

This term refers to a person perceiving the attributes he or she actually has, and is also known as actual self (Higgins, 1987).

1.6.6.2 Ideal self

This term refers to a person perceiving the attributes he or she idealize or wishes to be and to have, and is also known as one of the "self-directive standards" (Higgins, 1987, p. 321). The ideal self is also seen based off followers' ideal celebrities.

1.6.7 Visual self-presentation

It is referring to the Instagram followers' behaviors portrayed through their pictures posted on their personal Instagram accounts. The constructs of followers'

pictures imitating celebrities' images and followers' pictures absent from imitating celebrities' images, based on the Self-Discrepancy theory, are used as an operational definition guide for the researcher to study whether the constructs truly reflect the corresponding actual self and ideal self. The researcher ascertains that the information will be revealed the researcher's textual analysis on the followers' Instagram pictures, as well as the followers' responses during the in-depth interview sessions.

1.6.8 Responses to exposure to celebrities' Instagram images

This term refers to two types of responses that followers have towards their exposure to celebrities' Instagram images. The first type is 'emotional' response, which can be defined as the affected followers' feelings due to met or unmet match between their self-concept and "self-directive standards" (Higgins, 1987, p. 321) namely ideal self upon being exposed to celebrities' images. The presence of discrepancies or not between the actual self and ideal self will be revealed through the types of emotions experienced by followers. The emotions listed in the Self-Discrepancy Theory will serve as the operational definition guide for the author to study followers' emotional responses. The researcher will measure the type of emotional response that followers experience, through the presence of positive outcomes or positive emotions and the presence of negative outcomes or negative emotions. The researcher assumes this information will be revealed during the in-depth interview sessions.

1.6.8.1 Positive outcomes

This term refers to the optimistic feelings that a follower experience in relation to exposure to celebrities' images. The positive outcomes are also known as positive

emotions. The operational definition of this term is determined by the following two emotions: happiness and satisfaction.

    1.6.8.2 Negative outcomes

    This term refers to the pessimistic feelings that a follower experience in relation to exposure to celebrities' images. The pessimistic outcomes are also known as negative emotions. The operational definition of this term is determined by the following three emotions: dissatisfaction, disappointment, and sadness.

    The second type is 'behavioral' response that the followers have towards their exposure to the celebrities' Instagram images. In this case, it refers to their visual self-presentation on their personal Instagram accounts. This construct has been explained in 1.6.7 Visual Self-presentation in detail.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter describes the literature review of this study. It includes

celebrities' images, self-concept, visual self-presentation, Instagram, related theories

namely Self-discrepancy Theory and Symbolic Interaction Theory, and Self-

presentation framework, as well as the theoretical framework of this thesis.

2.1 Celebrities' Images

According to Turner (2004, as cited in Marwick & Boyd, 2011), there are

three main academic descriptions on the word celebrity. The first definition looks at

celebrity as human beings who are iconic and spoken about (ibid). The second

definition sees celebrity as a person changed into a product (ibid). The third definition

defines celebrity as a part of culture that is constantly and dynamically changing

(ibid). In this thesis, the conceptual definition of a celebrity from Turner's first

description is adopted, whereby celebrity, or celebrities, are defined as iconic human

beings regardless of their industries.

Celebrities in societies have been present and are recorded as far as the

eighteenth century (Marcus, 2015). Up to this day, research has shown that globally,

celebrities have been actively given a variety of platforms, other than their

professional trades, to perform such as brand endorsers (Euromonitor Research, 2014;

Intage, 2014; Miller & Allen, 2012 and Fraser & Brown, 2002, as cited in Meisser,

2015), spokespersons at social campaigns (Glum, 2015; Miller & Allen, 2012 and

Fraser & Brown, 2002, as cited in Meisser, 2015), models (Intage, 2014) and more.

The conscious choice of industries using celebrities in the aforementioned various platforms is due to the fact that celebrities are significantly powerful to influence and affect the intended targets to think, believe and adopt a certain set of thoughts and attitudes, to desire and consequently purchase particular products, brands or lifestyle habits, and to behave specific ways (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Boonpradub and Thechatakerng, 2015; Busetta & Coladonato, 2015; Marcus, 2015;  Marwick, 2015; Meisser, 2015;  Thanissaranonth, 2007).

For example, the popular singer and entertainer Beyoncé was actively involved in the US First Lady Michelle Obama's health initiative, "Let's Move" campaign to combat adolescence obesity (Obama, 2010). Beyoncé's song "Let's Move Your Body" represented as the campaign go-to song. Among Beyoncé's involvement in the campaign was her dancing with her dance crew in her flash workout music video, which served as a campaign guideline for adolescents to exercise. Published in Youtube, the music video garnered over 32 million views and over 104,000 likes (National Association of Broadcasters Education Foundation, 2011). Although this only reports the audience engagement in Youtube, let us not forget that the music video has also been disseminated through other mass media channels such as television, billboard advertisements, social media, as well as news portals of both traditional and digital media reporting about the music video, which means there are more and wider audience engagements as well. In the International Business Times article, Helmcamp reports "celebrity involvement in public initiatives can motivate youth to get involved" (Glum, 2015). She adds that involving Beyoncé, a popular personality, is "…'great because she is a very visible influence on older children and teens'" (ibid). Presently, a huge portion of our way of life involves the

digital technology that affords content to travel faster, more direct and invasive (Marcus, 2015), thus the effect of celebrities is greater felt than ever as ever as "celebrities are arguably some of the most influential voices of mass media" (Meisser, 2015, p. 6).

In the traditional media, most of the coverage on celebrities is related to their professional activities. However, since the introduction of social media in the last decade, celebrities are able to share more than their standard professional trades, which are intimate, personal content and updates related to the personalities' lives (Geurin-Eagleman, 2016; Marwick & Boyd, 2011; Marwick, 2015). Celebrities are the top users of social media (Marwick, 2015), and with its effective, efficient and immediate technology affordances, the influence of these iconic human beings can be further disseminated powerfully as "celebrities on social media can reach millions of people all over the world" (Meisser, 2015, p. 3). When it comes to the content of social media, a huge portion of it is represented by visuals. Marwick mentioned "…the Internet is increasingly a *visual* [sic] medium, and more and more individuals are using images rather than written self-descriptions to express themselves (Marwick, 2015, p. 138). Not only that, images, regardless still or moving, are so valuable that "photos and videos have become key social currencies online" (Rainie, Brenner & Purcell, 2012, p.1). These statements affirm that visuals are significantly prominent. This also goes by saying that undoubtedly, celebrities' images published through social media are also influential to those who come across it to the point these iconic images "…become part of our day-to-day lives" (Turner, 2004, p.17, as cited in Marwick & Boyd, 2011, p. 141).

Among the top social media platforms that celebrities use is Instagram, which is a popular mobile application that focuses solely on publishing and sharing visuals. Unsurprisingly, celebrities occupy the top rank of users in Instagram (Marwick, 2015; Intage, 2014) and they are the most followed personalities on Instagram (Intage, 2014; Gebhardt, 2015; Statista, 2015; Zocialrank, 2015). This is also the same pattern in Thailand whereby the result from Intage Thailand's quantitative study reveals 94% of the most followed Instagram accounts are celebrities (Intage, 2014). It is also helpful to mention that in the same research, the top activity in Instagram is following "stars/celeb news" (Intage, 2014, p. 3) as users "…can share and view photos easily and conveniently" (ibid, p. 2). Thus, following celebrities on Instagram, regardless in Thailand and outside of Thailand, reflects that not only the social media activity is a popular practice, but an ongoing worldwide phenomenon. What needs to be pointed out is that Instagrammers are not just passively following the news of celebrities through their images, but fans are also learning the current and acceptable social trends (Gorin & Dubied, 2011, as cited in Meisser, 2015) to the point of imitating those behaviors (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Gorin & Dubied, 2011, as cited in Meisser, 2015) and owning these behaviors as part of their identities and ultimately, their selves (Feasey, 2008 & Gamson, 1994, as cited in Marwick & Boyd, 2011). In Garsbo and Wittberger's Instagram research, they found out that in their research, participants "…are very influential and adapt their behavior to who they were following" (2014, p. 72).

As previously mentioned, celebrities for the last decade are sharing more intimate and personal images of their lives, and followers having a direct accessibility to that visual content increases the likelihood of being influenced. The prospect of

followers or fans being influenced is unsurprising as celebrities "…possess qualities or traits admirers would like to develop—or refine—[sic] in themselves" (Caughey, 1978, 1984, 1985, 1994, as cited in Boon & Lomore, 2001, p. 435). This shows that celebrities are deemed as role models or "…idealized self-images…" (ibid). With that being stated, celebrities are indeed influencing figures in followers' lives and are seen as life benchmarks to achieve, and images of celebrities are an existing construct to channel that influence seamlessly over various platforms.

To ascertain the ways celebrities' images are portrayed on Instagram, it is vital to research deeper into the types of celebrities' images on Instagram, as images plays a part of being the influencing construct of this thesis. Moreover, finding out the general types of images floating in Instagram helps the author to understand the self-presentation behaviors that Instagrammers are attempting to mimic. With the photo categories based on the research of Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati (2014) as a guideline, the researcher attempts to answer the first research question:

RQ # 1: Which types of photo categories, portrayed by celebrities' Instagram images, do followers idealize?

To answer the aforementioned sub research question, the researcher will use the photo categories on Instagram based on a study conducted by Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati (2014) as a framework, portrayed as Figure 2.1 Theoretical Framework, for the first construct, which is the celebrities' images. Research proponents Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati (2014) piloted the first study on the types of images on Instagram. The results show that there are eight categories, namely friends, food, gadget, captioned photo, pet, activity, selfie and fashion (ibid). In this thesis, these categories are first framed into general categories, which are personal,

social relations, activity, luxury items and other. Each general category is then made specific by the classification of images, which are represented by Hu and colleagues' photo categories on Instagram (2014). The category of personal is constructed by the selfie and in the interest of the researcher, self-portraits too as celebrities can also have other people take their full body photos. The category of social relations is constructed through friends and pets. The category of activity is constructed by both indoor and outdoor activities as well as places of where the activities take place. The category of luxury items is constructed by food, gadget and fashion. Finally, the category of other is constructed by captioned photo. The captioned photo may reflect attitudes, values, and belief and can serve as entertainment purposes.

## 2.2 Self-Concept

Although the construct of self started its roots in offline contexts (Goffman, 1956; West & Turner, 2010), there are increasing interests to study the self in online contexts, such as virtual communities (Suh, 2012), and especially social media (Ganda, 2014; Garsbo & Wittberger, 2014; Gentile, Twenge, Gonzales & Hancock, 2008; Freeman and Campbell, 2012; Lindahl & Öhlund, 2013; Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012; Marwick, 2013; Paramboukis, Skues & Wise, 2016; Sponcil & Gitimu, 2013), since more people are communicating and expressing themselves on online platforms. Regardless of the different contexts, the underlying theme of the self-concept stays true, whereby both contexts acknowledge that self-concept is "the organized structure of cognitions or thoughts we have about ourselves" (Michener & Delamater, 1999, p. 74). These "…cognitions or thoughts…" (ibid) refer to our perceptions, or specifically, how we see ourselves. Knowing and understanding

one's self is often a popular topic as identity makes one's life more sensible, meaningful and fulfilling (West & Turner, 2010). As identity is fluid and ever changing (Goffman, 1956; West & Turner, 2010), the need to understand one's self is significantly needed to navigate well through life.

Since the introduction of social media and social networking sites, the research on online self-concept has been steadily growing, resulting in online identities studies (Marwick, 2013; Sponcil & Gitimu, 2013; Suh, 2012). In relation to online platforms, most self-concept research has investigated the self in relation with social media and social networking sites usage (Ganda, 2014; Gentile et al., 2012; Paramboukis, Skues & Wise, 2016; Sponcil & Gitimu, 2013), self-presentations (Gonzales & Hancock, 2010;  Lindahl & Öhlund, 2013; Vries & Peter, 2013), technology affordances (Gonzales & Hancock, 2010; Leonard, Withers & Sherblom, 2011), computer-mediated communication (Leonard, Withers & Sherblom, 2011), and feedback and validation (Sponcil & Gitimu, 2013).

The aforementioned constructs show that a person's self-concept can be influenced by numerous factors, and how an individual sees him or herself shaped beyond their own thoughts can be safely assumed as "contextual and external forces" (Martin & Nakayama, 2013, p. 205). Since the top activity on the Internet is going on social media (Adler, 2014), and the top activities on social media is looking for entertainment and following celebrities' news (Intage, 2014), it brings forth the question to investigate the relation of celebrities, specifically their pictures, with followers' self-concept as an exterior impression, due to the fact that as a society, we are "…becoming more visually focused and graphically fixated" (Allan, Woodward & Lamp, 2012, as cited in Garsbo & Wittberger, 2014, p. 5). As it has been

established before, celebrities' images are indeed "…culturally pervasive" (Turner, 2004, p. 17, as cited in Marwick & Boyd, 2011, p. 141) in our societies today, thus making the investigation of celebrities' images as an important and relevant construct and would contribute towards the self-concept literature.

Generally, the impressions on the self, indicated by previous and current research, circles around identity, such as gender (Herring & Kapidzic, 2015), mental health, such as self-esteem (Gonzales & Hancock, 2010), as well as physical health, such as body image (French, Fajardo & Lepre, 2015; Harper & Tiggemann, 2008; Tanner, 2015), though a huge percentage of the research focuses more on the physical appearance factor. A majority of this impact affects women (Britt, 2015; French, Fajardo & Lepre, 2015; Harper & Tiggemann, 2008; Tanner, 2015; Vries & Peter, 2013). Interestingly, these impressions indicate that the participants are either happy or not happy with how they view themselves. Being happy with themselves mean that the participants does not experience intrinsic contentions within themselves and are peace, but not being happy with themselves could subsequently mean there is a gap between who they are and who they want to be, hence a discrepancy. Thus, this acknowledges that there are two selves derive from a person's self-concept, namely actual self and ideal self. The Self-discrepancy Theory serves as a guide to understand the actual self and the ideal self. According to the theory, the actual self is whom the person himself or herself perceives the attributes he or she actually has, and the ideal self is whom the person him or herself perceives the attributes he or she idealizes or wishes to be. In addition, the theory posits that the actual self is the person's *self-concept* [sic] (Higgins, 1987). The person's ideal self represents the person's *self-guide* [sic] (ibid) or "self directive standards" (ibid, p. 321), which means the ideal

self serves as a standard or goal that the person wants to achieve their full self-concept.

Literature has indicated that celebrities are deemed as ideal figures that followers aspire to be (Caughey, 1978, 1984, 1985, 1994, as cited in Boon & Lomore, 2001; Garsbo & Wittberger, 2014). Therefore, followers' ideal selves could be based on celebrities, especially ideal celebrities. Thus, how do followers react in response to celebrities' images pervading all over Instagram, and how does this reaction relate to themselves? These queries introduces a second overarching research question of this thesis:

RQ # 2: How do Instagram followers respond to their exposure to celebrities' Instagram images?

To answer the second research question above, there is a need to first delve deeper into the type of responses that followers may experience in relation to exposure to celebrities' images on Instagram. Returning to the discussion on the gap between actual and ideal selves, research revealed that emotions serve as a noteworthy clue to gauge whether there is a presence of self-discrepancy impact or not experienced among individuals (Britt, 2015; French, Fajardo & Lepre, 2015; Harper & Tiggemann, 2008; Tanner, 2015; Vries & Peter, 2013). To illustrate this idea, let us employ Sarah, a fiction character but armed with a realistic scenario that many women face globally over decades. One of Sarah's life goals is to lose 10 kg. This is her ideal goal, and achieving the weight goal will result Sarah's ideal self. If Sarah is able to lose 10 kg, she will feel very happy because her weight goal has been achieved. This accomplishment also means that Sarah's actual self and her ideal self matches, and her happy emotions reveal that sought-after alignment. But if Sarah is

not able to reach her weight goal, she will not feel so happy. The absence of happiness reveals her actual self is not aligned with her ideal self, thus a presence of discrepancy between the selves.

The aforementioned close-to-home illustration is also explicable by the Self-discrepancy Theory in relation to fans and their aspiring celebrities, whereby any individual who feels that he or she does not match with his or her aspiring celebrities will experience emotional discomfort (Higgins, 1987). On the other side of the coin, any individual who feels that he or she shares compatibility with his or her ideal celebrities will experience emotional comfort (ibid). Thus, emotions are important as it is part of being a human (Boal, 1998). Charon supports the importance of emotions by stating "…to understand the meaning of self as an object…one should consider emotions" (2009, as cited in Lindahl & Öhlund, 2013, p. 15).

From the discussions above, investigating the followers' perceived self-concept will help the researcher to determine its relationship with followers' exposure to celebrities' Instagram images. This introduces the first sub research question to satisfy the RQ # 2. The sub research question follows:

RQ # 2.1: How do Instagram followers perceive themselves in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images?

To answer this sub research question, the author will employ the Self-discrepancy Theory as a guideline to analyze followers' responses to celebrities' Instagram images in terms of their perceived self-concept in this study. The researcher has listed down two types of emotions, namely the presence of positive outcomes or as the researcher prefers to mention, positive emotions, as well as the presence of negative outcomes or negative emotions. The presence of either emotions

will guide the researcher to discover the presence or absence of discrepancies between actual self and ideal self. The specific positive and negative emotions will help identify the type of emotional responses. The constructs for the positive emotions are happiness and satisfaction, whereas the constructs for the negative emotions are dissatisfaction, disappointment and sadness.

2.3 Visual Self-presentation

Most of the research that studies self-concept is often accompanied with self-presentation (Ganda, 2014; Gentile et al., 2012; Goffman, 1956, Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012; Marwick, 2013; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Paramboukis, Skues & Wise, 2016, Suh, 2012). Self-presentation is significantly attributed to Erving Goffman, and it is referred in The Presentation of Self, the proponent's book, as impression management. In this study, the terms self-presentation and impression management are used interchangeably. According to Goffman, impression management indicates any individual manages his or her behavior and appearance to "…convey an impression to others which it is in his [sic] interests to convey (Goffman, 1956, p. 3). This indicates that a person's personal interests play a huge role in determining his or her choices to behave or appear. The researcher believes that the personal interests are linked with self-concept as it is "…the 'self' people presented to others" (Wong, 2012, p. 185).

Since the advent of the Internet, individuals have more control on their self-presentations (Ganda, 2014; Kramer & Winter, 2008, as cited in Huang, 2014; Mehdizadeh, 2010) because of technology affordances (Britt, 2015; Mehdizadeh, 2010) and types of social media (Mehdizadeh, 2010). For example, technology

affordances such as edit button, filter effects, privacy features, and so forth help users

to edit mistakes on real-time, improve the quality of their photos with user-friendly

Instagram filters, and allow selective access to certain audience of their private and

public photos. As for types of social media, it gives more options for individuals to

present different parts of their selves to different audiences (Marwick, 2005;

Mendelson and Papacharissi, 2010). For example, Facebook is a platform to present

one's general self, LinkedIn is another platform to present one's professional self, and

Instagram is a platform to present one's personal self. Each person may use the

variety of social media platforms differently, nonetheless it all comes down to social

media providing individuals opportunities of communicating their selves in various

ways. Proponents Mendelson and Papacharissi mentioned that the new media

provides gateway for individuals to present multiple facets of themselves (2010),

specifically, "social media provide an ideal place for self-presentation" (Huang, 2014,

p. 417).

Communication research focusing on online communication discusses the

aspects of self-presentation that people use online to communicate to others, such as

intentional, selective, favorable and performance-like (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006;

Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2015; Gonzales & Hancock, 2008; Hogan, 2010; Lindahl

& Öhlund, 2013; Mendelson & Papacharissi, 2010; Wong, 2012). This shows that the

user exercises his or her choice rights to present however they want online, and that

the presentations are not at random. Along with the aspects of self-presentation, the

same pool of research interestingly also indicates that a person tends to present him or

herself according to their ideal selves. Mendelson and Papacharissi mention, "people

are able to post only that information [their selves] which presents a desired image"

(2010, p. 252). This indicates that an ideal self is someone's wish or aspiration to be other than their selves. Leary and Kowalski goes further by stating people presenting their ideal selves are leaning "…away from their undesired selves" (1990, as cited in Wong, 2012, p. 186), which shows individuals' declination to project unfavorable characteristics. Hogan also discusses that Goffman believes an individual "…presents an 'idealized' rather than authentic version of herself [sic]" (2010, p. 378), which potentially introduces the idea of fakery in a person's self-presentation. This idea of unauthentic self-presentation is not new as there are numerous discussions portrayed through research (Herring & Kapidzic, 2015; Lindahl & Öhlund, 2013; Michikyan et. al., 2014, as cited in Uhlir, 2016), therefore bear merits.  However, Wong brings an interesting point of view whereby a person's self-presentation, although idealized, may not necessarily be false as these attributes "…reflected their own values" (2012, p. 186), thus "while people are purportedly presenting themselves, they are presenting a highly selective version of themselves" (Mendelson and Papacharissi, 2010, p. 252). For further support, Uhlir mentions, "…people tend to post the most socially desirable parts of their lives on their profiles in order to create an ideal representation of themselves" (2016, p. 11). In other words, these individuals are possibly showcasing the best parts of themselves, and yet remaining true.

Despite the debatable self-presentations, the running theme underneath self-presentation is that people will present themselves accordingly to their self-interests, or as Wong calls it, "corresponding image" (Wong, 2012, p. 186). Speaking of image, Birnbaum further stated that the relationship between self-presentation and image is close in proximity, to the point individuals "…would tend to project certain behaviors in order to convey their desired image online" (Wong, 2012, p. 188). Desired images

does not come in vacuum, and there needs to be at least one life personality that a person adores in order for an individual to desire an image other than their self.

Even before the digital media came about, celebrity influence has a powerful role in fostering ideal images for their fans. Celebrities as role models "…serve as idealized self-images for their admirers because they possess qualities or traits admirers would like to develop—or refine—[sic] in themselves" (Caughey, 1978, 1984, 1985, 1994, as cited in Boon & Lomore, 2001, p. 435). This statement shows that individuals do look at celebrities as standards for achieving aspiring attributes (Garsbo & Wittberger, 2014). The manifestation from this celebrity idealization prompts fans to mimic celebrities' behaviors, such as "…attitudes and poses…" (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Marcus, 2015), looks (Boon & Lomore, 2001), selfie (Busetta & Coladonato, 2015; Marwick, 2015), adopt celebrities' activities or hobbies (Boon & Lomore, 2001), as well as brands and lifestyles (Marwick, 2015; Meisser, 2015). Interestingly, these behaviors are represented as visual images across the eight photo categories in Instagram (Hu et al., 2014), which will be further discussed in detail.

Marwick mentions that individuals are progressively using more visual images compared to texts to communicate their selves (2015). In fact, "photos play a large role in how identity is presented" (Dominick, 1999, as cited in Mendelson & Papacharissi, 2010, p. 253). To support, Marwick mentions "photographs are especially good for impression management" (2015, p. 143), which addresses self-presentation. On Instagram, anything other than images are "de-emphasized" (ibid, p. 139), thus pictures on Instagram "…intensifies the importance of visual self-presentation" (ibid, p. 143). Therefore, based on prior discussions, the prominence of

photographs conceptually defines visual self-presentation in this thesis as followers' behaviors through their pictures posted on their personal Instagram accounts.

From the discussions above, it begs the question on the value of studying the followers' visual self-presentation in this study. In other words, what will followers' visual self-presentation answer in this thesis. As mentioned previously, there is a distinct link between personal interests and how a person self-presents (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006; Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2015; Goffman, 1956; Gonzales & Hancock, 2008; Hogan, 2010; Lindahl & Öhlund, 2013; Mendelson & Papacharissi, 2010; Wong, 2012). Part of an individual's personal interests can be in the form of presenting one's ideal self, which is the majority of self-projection on online platforms as indicated by research (Hogan, 2010; Mendelson & Papacharissi, 2010; Uhlir, 2016). The researcher assumes that that self projection of ideal self must be associated with at least one celebrity that an individual admires, as followers "…adapt behaviors to who they were following" (Garsbo & Wittberger, 2014, p. 72).

Research also reveals that the followers' visual self-presentation is portrayed in the form of mimicking or imitating celebrities' behaviors (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Busetta & Coladonato, 2015; Marcus, 2015; Marwick, 2015; Gorin & Dubied, 2011, as cited in Meisser, 2015). Interestingly, the imitation of celebrities' behaviors, which is matching an individual's self-concept as close as possible to his or her desired celebrities, is a phenomenon that the Self-discrepancy Theory sees as minimizing the discrepancies that the individual is experiencing between his or her actual selves and ideal self (Higgins, 1987). With the presence of incompatibility between the selves, "…these discrepancies can also motivate the individual to engage in behaviors that will reduce the discrepancy" (Vartanian, 2012, p. 711), and mimicking is certainly a

way to minimize that incompatibility that the individual experiences. With the presence of the imitation portrayed through visual self-presentation, the researcher also assumes that there can also be an absence of imitation, presumably judging on an individual's personal interests. Nonetheless, regardless whether there is a presence of imitation or not, what is more important to point out is that these behaviors are forms of followers' responses, portrayed through their visual self-presentation, in light with exposure of celebrities' images on the Instagram platform. Therefore, studying the followers' visual self-presentation, which is their Instagram pictures, will hopefully shed light on followers' personal interests and their perception of their selves as well as the possible and intensity of impact of exposure to celebrities' images on Instagram. Thus, this helps us to establish the second sub research question to satisfy the RQ # 2, as previously shared in 2.2 Self-Concept of this chapter. The sub research question reads:

RQ # 2.2: How do Instagram followers visually self-present themselves on their personal Instagram accounts in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images?

To answer the sub research question, the researcher will investigate the followers' visual self-presentation through their Instagram pictures on their personal Instagram accounts. The researcher will look out for the presence of imitating celebrities' images and the absence from imitating celebrities' images in the followers' Instagram pictures. These constructs, based on the Self-discrepancy Theory, are used as a guide for the researcher to study whether the constructs truly reflect the corresponding actual self and ideal self.

2.4 Instagram

Instagram is a free mobile application that is dedicated to sharing photos and videos instantaneously (Instagram, n.d.). Dubbed as the "number one photo social platform" (Desreumaux, 2014), the Instagram application was launched in October 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger (Desreumaux, 2014; Garsbo & Wittberger, 2014) and after 18 months, Facebook purchased the application for $1 billion in cash and stock (Shontell, 2015), which shows the prominence and value of Instagram in social media. Since then, Instagram usage and consumers has grown steadily with over 400 million accounts to date (Instagram, 2015; Sherr, 2015; Chaykowski, 2015; Siluk, 2015). Instagram has user-friendly filters that make photos "professional-looking snapshots" (ibid) and on its platform, users can easily share the published photos on other social media accounts in an instant (ibid).

2.5 Related Theories

2.5.1 Self-discrepancy Theory

When it comes to investigating self-concept and emotions, Psychologist Edward Tory Higgins' Self-discrepancy theory comes at hand. According to the Self-discrepancy Theory, a person has three domains of selves, namely the "actual self", the "ideal self" and the "ought self" (Higgins, 1987). The "actual self" is whom the person himself or herself perceives the attributes he or she actually has, and this is symbolized with the following self-state representation actual/own (ibid); the "ideal self" is whom the person himself or herself perceives the attributes he or she idealize or wishes to be and to have, and this is symbolized with the following self-state representation ideal/own (ibid), and lastly, the "ought self" is whom the person

perceives the attributes he or she should be and ought to have, and this is symbolized with the following self-state representation ought/own (ibid).

In the theory, the "actual self" represents the person's *self-concept* [sic] (ibid), whereas the person's "ideal self" and "ought self" ought/own represent the person's *self-guides* [sic] (ibid). These self-guides mean they are standards or goals that the person wants to reach to achieve their full self-concept. The theory posits that any incompatibility between the person's self-concept and its self-guides will result the person experiencing emotional discomfort (ibid). These emotional discomforts are dissatisfaction, disappointment, sadness, fear, threat and edginess, and these emotions are activated according to which self-guide is distinctively offended (ibid). If we look at the other side of the coin, this theory also implies that any compatibility between the person's self-concept and its self-guides will result the person experiencing emotional comfort. These emotional comforts are happiness, satisfaction, calmness and security, and these emotions are activated according to which self-guide is distinctively achieved (ibid).

The theory does not stop at impact in the emotional level, but also proposes that there are consequent behaviors (Higgins, 1987; Vartanian, 2012). Depending on "…the emotional responses elicited by self-discrepancies", these discrepancies can also motivate the individual to engage in behaviors that will reduce the discrepancy" (Vartanian, 2012, p. 711). Thus, to minimize the discrepancy between our self-concept and self-guides, "we are motivated to reach a condition where our self-concept matches our personally relevant self-guides" (Higgins, 1987, p. 321).

For the interest of this study, the researcher will concentrate on "actual self" and "ideal self". This choice is driven behind previous and current research showing

that people typically desire to be like the celebrities they admire (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Marcus, 2015; Marwick, 2015; Meisser, 2015). These desires can be in the form of physical appearance, behavior, activity, attitude, values, lifestyle and more (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Marcus, 2015; Marwick, 2015; Meisser, 2015). This aspiration indicates the "ideal self," which is to attain attributes that he or she wishes to have. To strengthen this statement, "celebrity idols frequently served as idealized self-images for their admirers because they possess qualities or traits admirers would like to develop—or refine—[sic] in themselves" (Caughey, 1978, 1984, 1985, 1994, as cited in Boon & Lomore, 2001, p. 435).

The Self-discrepancy theory is apt to serve as a guideline for this thesis for a number of reasons. First, this theory will help the researcher to ascertain existing or non-existing discrepancies between the followers' actual selves and their ideal selves. Second, this theory will guide the researcher in understanding the emotional responses followers experience in relation to existing or non-existing discrepancies between actual selves and ideal selves. Third, this theory will assist the researcher in identifying and understanding the visual self-presentation that followers choose to portray in their Instagram, in response to their exposure to celebrities' Instagram images.

2.5.2 Symbolic Interaction Theory

George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interaction theory also investigates on the self-concept as well as behavior. As mentioned in Chapter 1 and 2.2 Self-concept, self-concept is conceptually defined as "the organized structure of cognitions or thoughts we have about ourselves" (Michener & Delamater, 1999, p. 74), and these "…cognitions or thoughts…" (ibid) refer to our perceptions, or specifically, how we

see ourselves. Researchers West and Turner also support the conceptual definition of self-concept by stating self-concept is "…relatively stable set of perceptions that people hold of themselves" (2010, p. 82).

From these definitions, we can generalize that the perceptions we have ourselves are meaningful and not at random, and that these perceptions are fairly established. With these qualities of perception in mind, self-concept can provide a powerful and motivating force for behavior, a main assumption of Symbolic Interaction theory. The theory also outlines specifically on the parts of self-concept whereby "…beliefs, values, feelings, and assessments about the self…" (West & Turner, 2010, p. 83) can influence behavior. Therefore, the perceptions on how we see ourselves is encompassing in totality as it considers our attitudes, values, beliefs, emotions and evaluations, and that these features are influential.

The Symbolic Interactions theory is useful for this thesis for a number of reasons. First, the theory will help the researcher to explore the followers' perceptions on how they see themselves. On top of emotional response, the author believes that followers' beliefs, attitudes, values and evaluations of themselves contribute to further understanding on the followers' perceived self-concept. Second, the theory will assist the researcher to understand the relationship between followers' perceived self-concept revealed through their emotional response, and behavioral response portrayed by followers' visual self-presentation on Instagram. The theory believes that humans with a self are "choice makers" (West & Turner, 2010, p. 84) and that "having a self forces people to construct their actions and responses (ibid, p. 83). Therefore, the result of this study will hopefully reveal the significance and the interplay of

follower's emotional and behavioral responses in correspondence with exposure to celebrities' Instagram images.

2.5.3 Self-presentation/Impression Management

To investigate on self-presentations, one must highly consider and include Erving Goffman's self-presentation. A communicative act of presenting our favorable selves to others, self-presentation is referred in Goffman's the Presentation of Self as impression management. In this study, the terms self-presentation and impression management are used interchangeably. According to Goffman, impression management indicates any individual manages his or her behavior and appearance to "…convey an impression to others which it is in his [sic] interests to convey (Goffman, 1956, p. 3). This shows that our personal interests guide our presentations of ourselves. This assumption is additionally supported by the Symbolic Interaction theory whereby the theory believes that each individual "…are provided with a mechanism for self-interaction…to guide behavior and conduct" (Mead, 1934, as cited in West & Turner, 2010, p. 83). This proves that we have the ability to express and communicate about ourselves through our actions.

The self-presentation or impression management framework is apt for this thesis for two reasons. First, this theoretical framework will assist the author to study and unravel the self-presentation themes and patterns indicated through the followers' images on Instagram. Not only this framework will help the author as a guideline to discover the types of followers' impressions through themes and patterns revealed in their pictures, but it will satisfy the research questions on the reasons behind the manifestation of themes and patterns, and how it is connected to the followers' self-concept. Second, this framework will help the researcher to comprehend the

followers' personal interests, implied or not, through their pictures on Instagram. As this framework assumes that personal interests are a motivating force to guide self-presentation, the researcher assumed that the followers' personal interests are also intertwined with their self-concept. Herring and Kapidzic further supports by stating "self-presentations is generally considered to be motivated by a desire to make a favorable impression on others, or an impression that corresponds to one's ideals" (2015, p. 1). "Ideal self" is an important self-guide that is part of the self-concept whereby this thesis is investigating, thus making this framework valid. Therefore, the self-presentation or impression management framework will help the researcher to bridge a connection between personal self-interest or self-concept and visual self-presentation.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis consists of three constructs relevant to Instagram followers: exposure to celebrities' images, perceived self-concept, and visual self-presentation.

The exposure to celebrities' images can convey its influence through five categories namely 1) personal, 2) social relations, 3) activity, 4) luxury items, and 5) other. These categories describe the overall theme of the popular photo categories in Instagram (Hu et al., 2014). "Personal" is a photograph in a selfie and self-portrait format. "Social relations" are photographs related to friends and pet. "Activity" are indoor and outdoor activities, as well as places of where the activities occur. "Luxury items" include food, gadget and fashion. "Others" is captioned photo.  The researcher is aware and open to the idea that through data collection in this thesis, there is

potential of discovering new photo categories on Instagram, be it general or specific, other than categories indicated in the study of Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati (2014).

The framework believes the exposure of celebrities' images has the potential to garner correspondence with followers' self-concept, namely the actual self and ideal self, in the form of responses. The first response is emotions. There are two types of the emotional responses, namely the presence of positive outcomes or positive emotions, and the presence of negative outcomes or negative emotions. Happiness and satisfaction represent positive emotions, whereas dissatisfaction, disappointment and sadness represent negative emotions. The framework believes that the type of emotional responses is associated with the presence and absence of self discrepancies. The researcher is mindful that the data collection may show different associations of discrepancies and emotions, and might reveal other kinds of emotions, such as neutrality. Thus, the researcher aims to keep an open mind and not to be constrained by the Figure 2.1 Theoretical Framework, as the framework serves as a general research guide when conducting the study.

Besides emotions, the second response that followers may experience in correspondence to exposure to celebrities' images is behavior, which is in the form of followers' visual self-presentation through their Instagram pictures. There are two types of behavioral responses that the researcher will try to identify in the followers' pictures on Instagram, namely followers' pictures are absent from imitating celebrities' images, and followers' pictures imitating celebrities' images. The framework believes that the type of behavioral response is associated with followers' distinct self-concepts, namely actual self and ideal self. The researcher will keep an

open mind that the data collected may show different interpretations, in terms of the

association between the imitation and non-imitation behaviors in correspondence with

selves.

| EXPOSURE TO CELEBRITIES' INSTAGRAM IMAGES | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Personal** | **Social Relations** | **Activity** | **Luxury Items** | **Other** |
| Selfie Self-portrait | Friends Pets | Indoor Outdoor Place | Food Gadget Fashion | Captioned Photo (attitudes, values, belief, entertainment) |

| EMOTIONAL RESPONSES | | BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **FOLLOWERS' PERCEIVED SELF-CONCEPT** | | **FOLLOWERS' VISUAL SELF-PRESENTATION ON INSTAGRAM** | |
| **No discrepancy between actual self and ideal self** | **Discrepancy between actual self and ideal self** | **Actual Self** | **Ideal Self** |
| **Presence of positive outcomes / emotions** Happiness, Satisfaction | **Presence of negative outcomes / emotions** Dissatisfaction, Disappointment, Sadness | Absence from imitating celebrities' images | Imitating celebrities' images |

Figure 2.1: Theoretical Framework

In summary, reviewing the above literature and theoretical framework provides a foundation for developing the following research questions:

RQ # 1: Which types of photo categories, portrayed by celebrities' Instagram images, do followers idealize?

RQ # 2: How do Instagram followers respond to their exposure to celebrities' Instagram images?

RQ # 2.1: How do Instagram followers perceive themselves in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images?

RQ # 2.2: How do Instagram followers visually self-present themselves on their personal Instagram accounts in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the overall research methodology that is used in this study. Thus, chapter 3 includes research design, informants and selection method, research instrument, instrument pretest, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study establishes that the research design are of interpretive and qualitative in nature, as the thesis pertains to seek and understand followers' emotions in terms of their perceived self-concepts in correspondence with exposure to celebrities' Instagram images, as well as the followers' behaviors revealed through their visual self-presentations on Instagram. Textual analysis and depth interviews are the selected research methods, as this study believes these methods can examine the aforementioned communication phenomenon.

3.2 Informants and Selection Method

The informants of this study are 12 Thai students aged 18 and 20 who are enrolled in the international programs of educational institutions in Bangkok, Thailand. The ages pertaining to the informants is significant as people between the ages of 18-25 range are known and classified by Dr Jeffrey Jensen Arnett as "emerging adulthood" (2000, p. 469), and that they are actively exploring their identities and living a life that is "culturally constructed" (ibid). Moreover, Boon and Lomore also supports by stating, "…it may be only as a young adult–and not as an

adolescent--that an individual can adequately assess the extent to which celebrities have shaped who he or she is" (2001, p. 433). Thus, these informants are highly relevant for this thesis.

Table 3.1: Brief Profiles of Informants

| Nicknames | Gender | Age | Nicknames | Gender | Age |
|-----------|--------|-----|-----------|--------|-----|
| Honey | F | 18 | Larry | M | 20 |
| Onie | F | 18 | Henry | M | 18 |
| Apple | F | 18 | Aaron | M | 18 |
| Rose | F | 18 | Tim | M | 19 |
| Tammie | F | 18 | Ian | M | 18 |
| Ingrid | F | 18 | William | M | 18 |

The selection method to choose informants in this study is the non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. The objective of purposive sampling is to "focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable you to answer your research questions" (Lund Research, 2012). Therefore, the characteristics of the informants in this study will help to satisfy the research questions of this thesis.

Among the important criteria that the informants must have in order to participate in this research is that the informants must be using Instagram at the present, have joined Instagram for at least a year, have published a minimum of 30 posts on their Instagram accounts, converse fluently in English, and presently follows at least one celebrity on Instagram. The first and second criteria are based on the

researcher's discretion, as there is lack of literature reporting the nature of Instagram users' active membership. The researcher believes it is common sense that the informants must be currently using Instagram in order to satisfy research questions of this thesis, and that the researcher also posits a minimum of one year is adequate for Instagrammers to have a good amount of exposure of celebrities' images, as well as possible significant impression onto themselves. The third criterion is based on the Instagram studies conducted by Araújo, Corrêa, Silva, Prates and Jr. (2014). According to Araújo et al. (2014), this research reported that most of the active Instagram users "…shared up to 30 posts…" (p. 20) and the minority of the active Instagram users shared beyond that number. Thus, the researcher ascertains that it is adequate to set 30 as the minimum number for published Instagram posts in order for informants to qualify as active Instagrammers, which is the research interest of this study. The fourth criterion, pertaining to the informants' language fluency, addresses the researcher's language ability directly to conduct the interviews effectively, which is in the English language. As for the fifth and final criterion, it is based on the topic of this study whereby one of the main research constructs concerns the exposure of celebrities' images on Instagram. It is vital for the informants to at least follow one celebrity on Instagram respectively, in order to study deeper on the informants' exposure of celebrities' Instagram images.

In terms of selection method of informants for this study, the recruitment of informants was drawn from the researcher's acquaintances and advisor's connections who either personally knew the students closely and/or had resources to ascertain that the students fulfill the aforementioned criteria to qualify as research informants in this thesis.

In terms of informants' size, 12 individuals were recruited for this study. There are a number of valid reasons behind the minute number of sample, and these reasons are time-bound. First, the nature of analysis, which is qualitative, requires ample time to conduct in-depth interviews and analyze content in order to satisfy the research questions of this thesis. It is qualitatively better to interview and analyze data from 12 informants in depth, rather than a big number of informants but shallow examination. Second, the number of constructs presented in this thesis that needs to be investigated, namely the followers' perceived self-concept and their visual self-presentation on Instagram, require a generous amount of time to conduct the interviews and analyze rich data. Third, the researcher's completion study date by the end of the academic school year also plays a huge role in the sample size in order to make this research doable yet a meaningful one.

3.3 Research Instrument

The research instruments that were employed in this study are textual analysis and semi-structured interview questions.

Textual analysis is an appropriate research instrument that was used in this study. This is because textual analysis is suitable to dissect, code and interpret the information gathered to reveal richer themes or patterns that yield understandings behind the relationship of exposure to celebrities' Instagram images with followers' emotional and behavioral responses. In terms of informants' Instagram pictures, conducting a textual analysis on followers' Instagram pictures prior interviews gave opportunities for the researcher to observe and analyze the visual self-presentations that informants post on their personal Instagram accounts. This is also applicable to

conducting textual analysis on informants' interview transcriptions, whereby in addition, the researcher was able to detect and gain other insights on followers' visual self-presentations while revisiting the transcriptions in detail, which could have been missed during the face-to-face interview process.

By textually analyzing informants' Instagram pictures and interview transcriptions, this research instrument ensures validity for the visual self-presentation construct. The validity is affirmed because of the use of different instruments to measure the same construct. This type of validity is called convergent validity. Using multiple instruments to measure the same constructs also increases internal reliability as the textual analysis attempts to further check whether there is internal consistency between informants' Instagram pictures and informants' depth interviews. To further ensure the validity and reliability of textual analysis instrument, the author used literature review, related theories, and theoretical framework to ensure the research questions of this thesis are satisfied.

Besides textual analysis, semi-structured interview questions are another apt instrument that was used in this research. This particular research instrument is appropriate as it allowed the researcher to find out and solicit specific and delicate details from the followers about their perceived self-concept, as well as their responses in the form of emotions and visual self-presentations on Instagram. Not only that, semi-structured questions gave room for flexibility and freedom to the researcher to further ask relevant questions based on real-time input shared and expressed by informants. To ensure the validity of the semi-structured interview questions, the researcher made sure each question addresses the respective constructs of this thesis. This is called face validity. The researcher also ran a pre-test with these

questions to further check the validity strength of this instrument. To ensure the reliability of the semi-structured interview questions, the researcher tested the same set of questions to different informants of the targeted age group. This pre-test was conducted to check whether the questions would yield responses that will repeatedly satisfy the constructs in the research questions. The researcher also referred and used the support of related theories, literature review, theoretical framework and research questions to guarantee the validity and reliability of this instrument.

## 3.4 Instrument Pretest

The researcher prepared a set of semi-structured questions that solicited responses to satisfy the research questions. A pre-test was conducted using the depth interview questions to individuals of targeted age group. This step was to test the validity and reliability of the interview questions. Prior to the pre-test, the interview questions were sent to the researcher's respective advisors to be examined and validated accordingly.

## 3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Firstly, the researcher sought assistance from her acquaintance to recruit students who fulfill specific characteristics outlined under the section of 3.2 of this chapter on page 48. After the consent forms have been signed, the researcher proceeded to analyze informants' Instagram images while concurrently making arrangements for conducting pre-test, as well as scheduling interview sessions. The aforementioned processes took about four weeks.

Prior to analyzing the informants' Instagram images, the researcher collected the first and last Instagram picture from each informant's Instagram account for each month, starting December 2015 to December 2016. There were cases whereby informants did not publish regularly on the first or the last week of each month. Therefore in cases such as this, the researcher obtained the next best Instagram images of either the subsequent week, the same month or the month after. In cases whereby the informants publish only very few Instagram posts during the research period of December 2015 to December 2016, the researcher collected all Instagram pictures from the informants' accounts so that the researcher had adequate pictures to analyze the informants' visual self-presentations. The collection on Instagram pictures was achieved by executing screenshots on each informant's Instagram account, which was later individually labeled and organized by digital folders on the researcher's personal computer.

After the process of textual analyzing informants' Instagram pictures, conducting pre-test and adjusting interview questions, as well as scheduling interview sessions with informants, the next data collection procedure step that the researcher took was conducting in-depth interview sessions with 12 informants. Except for two informants who wanted to be interviewed together, the rest of the informants underwent a one-to-one interview. During the interviews, the researcher asked semi-structured questions on informants' background/demographic data, Instagram usage, celebrities' Instagram images, visual self-presentation on Instagram as well as their personal Instagram pictures. These questions are listed in the Appendix section on page 209. The researcher also brought along informants' Instagram pictures, printed on PowerPoint slides, to ask follow-up questions to the informants. After the

completion of each interview session, the researcher thanked the informant and presented a Starbucks card valued at 250 Baht as appreciation for participating in the study. An average interview session took about 30 minutes, and the sessions were conducted in a closed classroom and a private study room in a library. During the interviews, the researcher recorded the sessions using the audio record application program in her phone, which was later transferred, labeled and organized into individual folders on the researcher's personal computer. The interviews took three weeks.

After the interview sessions were completed, the researcher proceeded to transcribe all interviews. The transcription took about two and a half weeks to complete. After the transcriptions were done, they were organized into individual folders on the researcher's personal computer. The transcriptions were also printed out, so that the researcher could begin the process of textual analysis on the interview transcriptions. The analysis on the interview transcriptions took another two and a half weeks.

After the data analysis came the writing period for the Findings and Discussion chapters, which are Chapter Four and Chapter Five, respectively. The writing period for both chapters took about six and a half weeks.

3.6 Data Analysis

In this study, there are two main data that were analyzed, namely informants' Instagram pictures and the interview transcriptions. The researcher utilized the Constant Comparative Method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to aid in the analysis of the aforementioned data.

3.6.1 Informants' Instagram pictures

Prior to the researcher's analysis of informants' interview transcriptions, the researcher investigated informants' Instagram pictures first. As part of the thesis constructs is looking into followers' emotions and behavioral responses, analyzing informants' pictures on Instagram is vital as the analysis gave the researcher a start-up platform to subjectively analyze the followers' emotions and their visual self-presentations portrayed through their Instagram pictures.

To gain access to the informants' Instagram pictures after the signing of consent forms, the researcher asked permission from each informant to be added as a friend on Instagram, regardless whether the informants have their accounts set to private or public mode. After being added, the researcher then proceeded to go through each informant's Instagram account. The collection of informants' Instagram pictures has been explicated and can be referred to section 3.5 Data Collection Procedure. The author also asked permission from each informant to be added on Line, to aid further effective and efficient communication.

In analyzing the informants' Instagram pictures, the researcher used textual analysis. Textual analysis does not necessarily mean text alone, but it also includes images as well. It is the action of analysis and the result of that action that matters, which are interpreting and meaning-making (McKee, 2003). McKee mentions, "…whenever we produce an *interpretation* [sic] of something's *meaning* [sic] – a book, television programme, film, magazine, T-shirt or kilt, piece of furniture or ornament – we treat it as a text. A text is something that we make meaning from" (2002, p. 4). Therefore, textual analysis is apt because the thesis believes analyzing

informants' Instagram pictures will help the author to understand the meanings behind the visual self-presentations that informants choose to portray in their pictures.

Before this research goes deeper into the textual analysis section, the author wants to address the methodology section first. Although the analysis of pictures began in a linear fashion, whereby the pictures were first analyzed before conducting interview sessions, however the pattern of analysis later changed to examining the pictures concurrently while conducting interviews and analyzing interview transcriptions. In other words, the analysis of informants' Instagram pictures was dynamic. This analysis process really depended on real-time situations whereby at times, it required the author to refer both image and interview data simultaneously to conduct better valid and reliable data analysis.

To assist in the interpretation analysis of the Instagram pictures, the author used Figure 2.1 Theoretical Framework as a guideline. The author identified whether there was a presence of imitation behavior or not between the informants' Instagram pictures and the ideal celebrities' images that they follow on Instagram. The researcher then used the photo categories outlined by Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati (2014) to check whether the images between informants and celebrities followed are mimicked or not. Among the constructs that the researcher paid attention in analyzing the pictures are the informants' posing behavior, presence of friends and pets, types and location of activities, luxury items such as food, gadget and fashion, as well as captioned photos (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014). The researcher also employed the use of coding to label the behaviors and themes.

The researcher also compared the Instagram pictures across the informants to see if there is a relationship between celebrities' images, followers' actual self and

ideal self, and their visual self-presentations. Not only that, the researcher also compared informants' data from their interviews to their pictures to determine whether what they have said during the interview and what they have portrayed on Instagram matches or not. Finally, after the textual analysis, the author described her understandings regarding the theoretical framework and communication phenomenon that this research is studying as part of the Findings write-up of Chapter Four.

3.6.2 Interview Transcriptions

After all 12 interviews have been carefully transcribed, the researcher studied the transcription data meticulously. Textual analysis was used to interpret data, but before the data could be explained for its meanings, the researcher first identified the major themes or patterns from the transcriptions, such as demographics, interests, Instagram usage, celebrities' Instagram images, visual self-presentation on Instagram, and personal Instagram pictures, and utilized coding in assistance of identifying and labeling the aforementioned experiences. In doing so, the researcher used the Constant Comparative Method as this method aids to compare the experiences of informants to one another, together with the developing theory (Babbie, 2012). What the researcher hoped to learn is the types of celebrities' photos that followers idealize and the reasons behind them, and the informants' emotional and behavioral responses towards exposure to celebrities' images that they are following on Instagram. Thus, analyzing the experiences of informants on how they idealize celebrities' images, and how they emotionally feel about themselves and visually self-present on their personal Instagram accounts as a response informs the researcher whether the experiences are similar, dissimilar or others. This describes "comparing incidents

applicable to each category" (Babbie, 2012, p. 392), which is the first step in employing constant comparative method.

The next step is "integrating categories and their properties" (Babbie, 2012, p. 392). In this step, the researcher paid close attention to the relationships between all the constructs listed in this thesis, namely the exposure of celebrities' Instagram images, the followers' perceived self-concept, and the followers' visual self-presentation on Instagram. This step involves studying on how the aforementioned constructs interplay with one another or not, and its specific constituencies. The researcher also utilized coding to assist in identifying and labeling the relationships through themes and patterns.

Next, from the revelation of pertinent relationships, themes and patterns in the data, the author observed if any parts of the constructs does not fit or is irrelevant with the guided theories and theoretical framework proposed in this thesis. This step is called "delimiting the theory" (Babbie, 2012, p. 392). Finally, the last step called "writing theory" (Babbie, 2012, p. 392) involves the researcher to write her interpretations and understandings that results in a theory or framework that fits and explains the communication phenomenon experienced by the informants. There are significant discoveries between the aforementioned constructs, which have been deliberated in 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 sections of the Findings chapter.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS


This chapter presents the findings of this research that studies the exposure of celebrities' Instagram images and its relationship with followers' perceived self-concept and visual self-presentation. The data comprised of 260 personal Instagram pictures spanned between December 2015 and December 2016, as well as 339 hours and 68 minutes long interviews. The aforementioned data were textually analyzed using the Constant Comparative Method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The following topics outlined the details of this chapter:


4.1 Types of photo categories that followers idealize from celebrities' Instagram pictures

    4.1.1 Activity Category

        4.1.1.1 Report of Findings

        4.1.1.2 Discussion of Findings

    4.1.2 Personal Category

        4.1.2.1 Report of Findings

        4.1.2.2 Discussion of Findings

    4.1.3 Luxury Items Category

        4.1.3.1 Report of Findings

        4.1.3.2 Discussion of Findings

    4.1.4 Social Relations Category

        4.1.4.1 Report of Findings

4.1.4.2 Discussion of Findings

4.1.5 Other Category

    4.1.5.1 Report of Findings

    4.1.5.2 Discussion of Findings

4.2 Instagram followers' responses toward exposure of celebrities' pictures on Instagram

    4.2.1 The ways Instagram followers perceive themselves in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images

        4.2.1.1 Followers' actual self is not discrepant from ideal self

        4.2.1.2 Followers' actual self is discrepant from ideal self

        4.2.1.3 Followers' actual self is discrepant and concurrently, non-discrepant from ideal self

    4.2.2 The ways Instagram followers visually self-present themselves on their personal Instagram accounts in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images

        4.2.2.1 Followers' visual self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' images

        4.2.2.2 Followers' visual self-presentation is absent and concurrently, present from imitating celebrities' images

4.3 Main Instagram accounts versus private Instagram accounts

4.1 Types of photo categories that followers idealize from celebrities' Instagram pictures

In this thesis, the first research question addresses the type of photo categories that followers idealize from celebrities' Instagram images. The following research question reads: RQ # 1: Which types of photo categories, portrayed by celebrities' Instagram images, do followers idealize?

To answer the RQ #1 above, the researcher discovered that the Instagram followers idealizing celebrities' Instagram images are portrayed across all photo categories tabled in Table 4.1. Even though Instagram followers idealize all photo categories, however, their self-reports from interviews showed whereby there are photo categories that are idealized more than the other categories. What needs to be noted is that some idealized pictures may overlap more than one photo category. As a summary, the Instagram followers idealized the *Activity* photo category the most, which is then followed by the *Personal* photo category. After the Personal photo category comes the *Luxury Items* photo category, followed by the *Social Relations* photo category, and lastly, the *Other* photo category. Each photo category will be explained in detail below.

Table 4.1: Results of Types of Photo Categories Idealized by Informants

| EXPOSURE TO CELEBRITIES' INSTAGRAM IMAGES | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personal | Social Relations | Activity | Luxury Items | Other |

(Continued)

Table 4.1 (Continued): Results of Types of Photo Categories Idealized by Informants

| Selfie | 2 (1F) (1M) | Friends | 2 (2F) | Indoor/ Outdoor | 7 (3F) (4M) | Food | 0 | Captioned Photo (attitudes, values, belief, entertain- ment, *lyrics) | 1 (1F) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-portrait | 7 (5F) (2M) | Pets | 1 (1M) | Place | 2 (1F) (1M) | Gadget | 0 | | |
| | | *Fans | 1 (1F) | | | Fashion | 4 (4F) | | |
| | | | | | | *Plants | 1 (1F) | | |
| **TOTAL** 9 IG pictures idealized by 9 informants. | | **TOTAL** 4 IG pictures idealized by 4 informants. | | **TOTAL** 10 IG pictures idealized by 9 informants. | | **TOTAL** 5 IG pictures idealized by 5 informants. | | **TOTAL** 1 IG picture idealized by 1 informant. | |

Note: (*) indicates new sub photo categories and explanation.

    IG refers to Instagram.

    F refers to *Female* gender, M refers to *Male* gender.

4.1.1 Activity Category

    4.1.1.1 Report of Findings

    According to the informants' interviews, the *Activity* photo category is reported to be the most idealized category, in correspondence to celebrities' Instagram images. There are 10 idealized celebrities' Instagram pictures that were reported by

nine informants. When comparing across the 10 pictures, the researcher found out that pictures depicting *Indoor/Outdoor* subcategories are more idealized compared to the *Place* sub photo category, with eight idealized pictures in tow. Four male informants and three female informants reported these pictures.

In the *Indoor/Outdoor* sub photo categories, what the researcher discovered is that male informants idealized pictures depicting their ideal celebrities in action, whether it is achieving success or practicing the celebrities' crafts. For example, two informants (Ian and William) mentioned that they idealized pictures of their ideal celebrities winning awards and championships, respectively. When asked the meaning behind his ideal celebrity, Bun Baek-hyun winning awards, Ian responded, "About being successful" (Personal communication, January 31, 2017).

The researcher also found out from the male informants that seeing their ideal celebrities in action gives them inspiration and motivation, such as the case of Aaron. He shared that he admires seeing pictures of his ideal celebrity, Jarinporn Joonkiat who is also known as Toey, doing community services. Aaron was very adamant when talking about Toey and her philanthropic passion, as shown below.

> "I think she is like, a community service person. She likes to help other poor [sic], yeah, people. And also, she has a foundation for raising Thai elephants. So, she also post that kind of pictures, and it admire [sic] and inspire other people like me" (Aaron, Personal communication, January 18, 2017).

As for Henry, he idealizes pictures that depict his ideal businessman giving talks. "I feel good, I feel like I get power from them" (Henry, personal communication, January 24, 2017).

As for the female Instagram followers, an analysis of the photos reveals that in the same sub photo category, they idealized pictures that depict their ideal celebrities mingling in a social scene and improving their physical appearance. The female informants pointed out that seeing their ideal celebrities in a social scene shows the ideal celebrities' personality and authenticity. When asked the type of pictures she idealized from her ideal celebrity, Urassaya Sperbund and the reason why, Honey answered below.

> "When she stays with her fan club. When she has time with her fan club, spending her time with them. I think she's like, caring for her fan club too. So it is like a gift to her fan club" (Honey, Personal communication, January 24, 2017).

She added that the aforementioned pictures are usually group pictures. "Like, in her birthday or something like that. She will have an activity with her fans" (Honey, personal communication, January 24, 2017). For Ingrid, she shared that seeing her ideal celebrity, Kamolned Ruengsri singing with her friends shows her true self. She shared, "And when she poses some videos, singing videos. With her friends. It is very [sic] herself" (Ingrid, personal communication, January 18, 2017).

Besides social scenes, seeing ideal celebrity improving their physical appearance is also another idealized picture under the *Indoor/Outdoor* sub photo category, such as the case of Rose. For her, Rose idealized the physical attributes of her ideal celebrity, Gigi Hadid. "Her body shape is so model [sic]…Has six packs as well" (Rose, personal communication, January 19, 2017). When asked the types of pictures she idealized of her ideal celebrity, Rose responded, "Think when she goes fitness…" (Personal communication, January 19, 2017).

Besides *Indoor/Outdoor* sub photo categories, two Instagram followers, a female and male informant respectively, also reported they idealized pictures of their ideal celebrities depicting the *Place* sub category. In this sub category, there are two types of pictures reported as idealized. The researcher learned that for the female informant, she and her ideal celebrity, Taylor Swift, share similar interests to travel and relates to the celebrity well when her favorite type of location, nature, is instagrammed, as shared by Tammie below.

> "I like to travel, so compare to her, I really like her. Because sometimes when she went to [sic] camping and she took some, like some landscape of forest that I really like. I love nature though" (Tammie, Personal communication, January 17, 2017).

For the male informant, the researcher found out that the informant idealizes the fact that his ideal celebrity, Dan Bilzerian, gets to travel luxuriously, as shown below.

> "It is not travelling with tuk tuk or something, but to travel with good cars, good jet, and everything. Yes, the perfect life for me is like having money, having fame, travelling around the world with your girlfriend" (Larry, personal communication, January 31, 2017).

His ideal celebrity's Instagram images also inspire him to want to travel as well. Larry truly expressed his desire to travel. "…I'd like to discover everything, every country…I'd like to do that if I have the time and the money" (ibid). When the researcher asked a follow-up question if the informant idealize pictures of traveling, Larry responded, "Yes, yes, yes…" (Personal communication, January 31, 2017), without hesitation.

4.1.1.2 Discussion of Findings

As mentioned in the report of findings section of 4.1.1.1, the *Activity* photo category is the most idealized category with 10 reported pictures. Among the reasons

on why the *Activity* photo category is the most idealized category is related to the motivations of Instagram followers' using Instagram, and the followers' motivations of using Instagram includes getting information and being updated on the celebrities and their activities. The subject matter on followers' motivation for using Instagram points another communication theory namely the uses and gratifications, whereby the users' needs motivates them to use specific media (West & Turner, 2010), which is Instagram in this study.

For example in Honey's case, she affirmed that Instagram is the sole place to get information about celebrities, as shown below.

> "…it's the only way to connect to them [celebrities]. Only source of media…because I don't follow them on their events, so I will just look at their pictures when they post" (Honey, personal communication, January 24, 2017).

It is by no surprise that Instagram followers like Honey feels strongly whereby Instagram is an important gateway to celebrities' news, as the Intage's quantitative research in Thailand reveals that as high as 94% of the most followed Instagram accounts are celebrities (Intage, 2014).

To strengthen Honey's case, she reported her idealized photo as seeing her ideal celebrity, Urassaya Sperbund doing activities with her fans (ibid). From the testimonies of Honey, the fact that she is convicted whereby Instagram is the ultimate source for celebrity news for her, such as Urassaya's activities with her fans, is an example of getting information and being updated on her ideal celebrity's activities. The act of getting information and being updated can be such a strong motivating drive that there are informants who admitted that they follow people's lives secretively on Instagram, such as Onie. She shared, "My main account for Instagram

is really for me to stalk other people. Not to post pictures" (Onie, personal communication, January 19, 2017).

Along with the Instagram followers' motivation, the researcher observed that another reason on why the *Activity* photo category is the most idealized category is related to the top activity that followers do on their Instagram accounts, which is checking Instagram news feed. Followers generally shared that among the things that they check on the news feed through the Instagram platform are the persons of their interests, and celebrities comprised of that group. Not only followers are checking on celebrities, but they are also interested to find out more of celebrities' activities, which is conveniently accessible through the Instagram news feed. For Ian, he mentioned that he keeps himself updated with celebrities' lives, in which Instagram is a resourceful platform to check celebrities' activities through pictures. Ian shared, "Yeah celebrity. Just follow about their daily lives, and we can know with any, any social media in Instagram, all of these pictures" (Ian, personal communication, January 31, 2017). This is supported with Intage Thailand's quantitative study whereby the top activity in Instagram is following "stars/celeb news" (Intage, 2014, p. 3)

Thus, the existence of a similar pattern shared between the news feed activity that followers check on their Instagram accounts do align with their motivation of using Instagram, thus, explain the reasons on the finding that the *Activity* photo category is indeed the most idealized category, hence confirms credibility. Therefore, it is not a surprise for the researcher that the *Activity* photo category is the highest idealized photo category in this research, as it is the actions and whereabouts that

informants are checking on their ideal celebrities, channeled and driven by the motivation of getting information and being updated.

The findings of the types of photo categories also revealed that the *Indoor/Outdoor* sub photo category is more idealized compared to the *Place* sub photo category. On top of that, the majority of Instagram followers who idealize the *Activity* photo category as well as the *Indoor/Outdoor* sub category, are male informants. The main reason on why *Indoor/Outdoor* sub photo category is more idealized than *Place* sub photo category is due to gender and their personal preferences for activities over location. The researcher is convinced that gender plays a vital role behind these specific findings.

When comparing the types of Indoor/Outdoor activities idealized between the male informants and female informants, there seems to be a specific activity theme pertaining to the respective genders. The research reveals that for the male informants, the activity theme depicts celebrities in action, particularly in achieving success, such as winning awards and championships, as well as practicing celebrities' crafts, such as practicing basketball, giving speeches and talks, and being involved in community services. As for the female informants, their activity theme depicts celebrities mingling in a social scene, such as celebrities doing activities with their fans and singing with their friends, as well as improving physical appearance, like celebrity doing fitness.

Interestingly, the researcher observed that the specific activities themes are reflected in respective of the followers' personal interests. For example, when it comes to sports, which is an activity that prompts people to be active in action, the majority of informants who expressed their personal interests in sports are males. As

for the female informants, although the majority of their personal interests are expressed in self-contained hobbies such as reading novels, watching television series and movies, listening to music, cooking and baking, they did express that they play Instagram on a daily basis as well as eating, which are forms of social activities happening on the online and offline platforms. When it comes to fashion, which is a type of activity of improving one's physical appearance, the majority of the informants who expressed their personal interests in fashion are females. Not only that, research has indicated that the majority of physical appearance emphasis affects women (Britt, 2015; French, Fajardo & Lepre, 2015; Harper & Tiggemann, 2008; Tanner, 2015; Vries & Peter, 2013), which supports that the physical appearance interest is indeed female-related. Indeed, the discussions reveal that male followers are more inclined to idealize activities that requires actions due to their corresponding personal interests, and female followers are more prone to idealize activities that are socially and physical appearance-related due to their corresponding personal interests as well, which shows a meaningful coherence.

With the evident contrasts between the specific activities themes according to gender, it is not a surprise that the male followers make up the majority of the *Indoor/Outdoor* sub photo category, as four male informants are more interested in activities that require them to be active in action, in comparison to three female followers who are more interested in activities that focuses on social and physical appearance. In addition, the fact that there are only two Instagram followers, a male informant and female informant respectively, who idealized two pictures depicting the *Place* sub photo category, subsequently indicates that the *Indoor/Outdoor* photo

category is idealized superior than the *Place* sub category as there are eight idealized pictures in tow.

4.1.2 Personal Category

4.1.2.1 Report of Findings

After the *Activity* photo category, the second photo category that Instagram followers idealize is the *Personal* photo category. In this photo category, there are nine idealized celebrities' Instagram pictures reported by seven people. When comparing across the nine pictures, it was found that pictures depicting the *Self-portrait* sub category are more idealized compared to the *Selfie* sub photo category, with seven pictures in tow. Five female informants and two male informants reported these pictures. These pictures, belonging under the *Self-portrait* sub category, will be explicated in detail in the following paragraph.

All female informants in the *Self-portrait* sub category reported that they idealized the self-portrait pictures of celebrities a lot. From the informants' interviews, the researcher discovered that these self-portrait Instagram pictures comprise of portraying the whole body of celebrities, their outfits, as well as their postures. Consider the case of Onie, who mentioned she likes to see the whole body of her ideal celebrity, Pallida Emwattana, and seeing the celebrity's self-portrait picture also gives her information on what Pallida is wearing, as shared by Onie as follow.

> "I like when she posts the picture that can see her whole body. Like her tutus. Like, we can see what she wears, what shoes, what kind of pants, something like that" (Onie, Personal communication, January 19, 2017).

Rose is another Instagram follower who reaps from getting retail information on celebrity's fashion through self-portrait Instagram images. She shared, "Like, these clothes must be famous. I must go check it out…" (Rose, personal communication, January 19, 2017). Aside from fashion, the female Instagram followers also idealize celebrities' posture through their self-portrait Instagram images. When Tammie was asked the type of pictures she idealize of her ideal celebrities, who are Taylor Swift and Victoria Beckham, Tammie responded that she admires their pose (Personal communication, January 17, 2017). Apple also responded similarly when asked the type of pictures she idealizes of her ideal celebrity, Lee Sung Kyung. She answered, "She's a model right – the picture when she poses…" (Apple, personal communication, January 17, 2017).

As for the male Instagram followers, the researcher found out that both informants reported they idealize pictures of their ideal celebrities when they are winning championships or awards. These types of pictures are self-portraits, as the pictures display the celebrities in full body. For William, there was a specific Instagram picture that he could recall of his ideal celebrity, Michael Jordan when he won a championship (Personal communication, January 20, 2017). According to the informant, Michael winning this particular championship was not ordinary feat as his father passed away a few days before the competition (ibid). William added that Michael dedicated his championship to his late father, and this picture touched the informant's heart (ibid). When asked to describe the image, William shared, "It's a picture of him [Michael] laying down, hugging the cup" (ibid). As for Ian, when asked the Instagram pictures he idealized of his ideal celebrity, Bun, the informant

mentioned, "…the pictures when he got awards" (Personal communication, January 31, 2017).

Besides the *Self-portrait* sub photo category, two Instagram followers, a male and female informant respectively, also reported they idealized pictures of their ideal celebrities depicting the *Selfie* sub category. In this sub category, there are two types of pictures reported as idealized. These pictures are pictures taken by celebrities of their selves, and pictures taken with emphasis of their face. The researcher learned that for the male Instagram follower, Ian specified it is indeed the selfie of his ideal celebrity, Bun, and how Bun arranges himself in his selfies, that Ian idealizes. When asked the kind of picture he idealizes, Ian responded, "I think, he takes selfies…his composition" (Personal communication, January 31, 2017). As for the female Instagram follower, the researcher found out that Onie adores her celebrity's face. When asked the type of picture she idealizes of Pallida, Onie responded, "The picture that I can see her face" (Personal communication, January 19, 2017). The same informant also affirms her admiration. "She likes to post the pictures of scenery, or something like that. Sports, but I don't like them, I just like her face" (Onie, personal communication, January 19, 2017).

4.1.2.2 Discussion of Findings

The aforementioned findings of this research reveal that the *Self-portrait* sub photo category is more idealized compared the *Selfie* sub photo category, and that the female Instagram followers make up the majority of this sub photo category. The reason behind this idealization is due to the fact that female informants focuses more on physical appearance compared to male informants, which is highly portrayed

through the celebrities' Instagram self-portraits. This result subsequently indicates that gender again plays a significant role.

Indeed, the findings revealed that through the celebrities' self-portraits, five female informants could see the whole body of celebrities, their dressings, as well as their postures, as explained in detail earlier on. Interestingly, the *Self-portrait* sub photo category is also directly linked with the *Fashion* sub photo category under *Luxury Items* photo category, whereby female informants are personally more interested in fashion compared to male informants, which strengthens the reason on why female followers' presence are more prominent compared to male followers in the *Self-portrait* sub category. Moreover, research has indicated that the majority of physical appearance emphasis affects women (Britt, 2015; French, Fajardo & Lepre, 2015; Harper & Tiggemann, 2008; Tanner, 2015; Vries & Peter, 2013), which affirms validity. When compared to the two respective male informants in this sub category, their ideal celebrities' self-portraits are related to the celebrities winning championships and awards. In this thesis, the researcher observed that the theme of success kept recurring in conjunction with the male informants, and is convinced that success is indeed very important to male followers. Therefore, the aforementioned discussions justify the reasons on why female followers make up the majority of informants compared to male informants in the *Self-portrait* sub photo category.

As for the discussion between the *Self-portrait* and *Selfie* sub photo categories, the researcher believes the reason why the *Self-portrait* sub photo category is idealized more than the *Selfie* sub photo category, is due to the varying amount of information that the informants can get. With the *Self-portrait* sub photo category, the informants receive more information about the celebrities, such as the entire look of

the full body, their dressings and postures, as well as the type of events, awards and background information in the events that the celebrities win. However for the *Selfie* sub photo category, the information is minimum in comparison to the *Self-portrait* sub photo category, as all the information that the two followers can receive in this sub category is just the celebrities' face and how they compose their selfies. Thus, the *Self-portrait* sub photo category is more idealized compared to the *Selfie* sub photo category, due to the varying amount of information the informants can get from the different sub categories.

4.1.3 Luxury Items Category

4.1.3.1 Report of Findings

The *Luxury Items* photo category is the next photo category that Instagram followers idealize right after the Personal photo category. In the *Luxury Items* photo category, there are five idealized celebrities' Instagram pictures reported by five people. All of the five people who idealize this photo category are females. When comparing across the five pictures, the researcher learned that pictures depicting the *Fashion* sub category are more idealized compared to other sub categories, with four pictures in tow. Four female informants reported these pictures.

In the *Fashion* sub category, the researcher discovered that informants who idealized this type of picture expressed their interest to see the clothes their ideal celebrities wear, and also how they wear it. Onie shared that the full picture of her ideal celebrity, Pallida, allows her to see the whole fashion ensemble.

> "I like when she post [sic] the picture that can see her whole body.
> Like her tutus. Like, we can see what she wears, what shoes. What
> kind of pants, something like that" (Onie, Personal

communication, January 19, 2017).

Rose also shares that she enjoys seeing the clothes that her ideal celebrity, Gigi, wears on a daily basis, and it gives her retail motivation to find out more about the clothes as shown in the quote below.

> "I just like when she posts picture showing her dress, her clothes for what today…Like, these clothes must be famous. I must go check it out. Something like that" (Rose, Personal communication, January 19, 2017).

For Honey, she adores her ideal celebrity, Urassaya's sense of fashion and she idealizes the way Urassaya put herself together in terms of her outfits. When asked the type of picture that the informant idealizes of Urassaya, the informant responded, "The way she dress [sic] beautifully" (Honey, personal communication, January 24, 2017). For Apple, she idealized pictures that portray the clothing of her ideal celebrity, Lee Sun Kyung and acknowledges there is a desire to dress like celebrities, as shown below.

> "She's a model, right? The picture when she poses, the dress that she wear – sometimes we want to dress up like the people in Instagram…" (Apple, personal communication, January 17, 2017).

Within the *Luxury Items* photo category, the researcher discovered that followers do not idealize any pictures of celebrities that portray *Food and Gadget* subcategories.  However, it was learned that there is a new sub category that one female informant idealizes, which is *Plants*. When asked the types of pictures she idealizes from her ideal celebrity, Kamolned, Ingrid responded that she idealizes seeing pictures of Kamolned with plants (Personal communication, January 18, 2017). The researcher found out later that this celebrity nurtures plants in her home, and the informant took after the houseplant interest because of this celebrity. "She

grows plants in her condo. And I like the plants because of her. Like, very

motivating" (ibid). Therefore, in the *Luxury Items* photo category, the category can be

expanded to include *Plants* as a sub category.

4.1.3.2 Discussion of Findings

Among all the five photo categories, the *Luxury Items* is the only category

whereby the Instagram followers who reported idealizing this category are all

females. The researcher is convinced that the reason behind the all-females makeup is

because of gender and their preferences. When both genders are compared, women

undoubtedly are more invested in fashion compared to men. Therefore, it is not a

surprise that all four informants who idealize the Fashion sub category are made up

by all females.

Aside from the *Fashion* sub photo category, there are two other sub

categories, namely *Food* and *Gadget* sub photo categories. However in this thesis,

there are no reports of idealized pictures portrayed through the aforementioned sub

categories. The researcher assumes that the reason behind this finding is because there

is no intersection between followers' personal interests or idealization, with

celebrities. In other words, if followers do not have personal interests or idealization

of celebrities' Instagram images that portray food or gadget, then there is no

idealization in these aforementioned sub categories. The stark contrast can be shown

with the *Fashion* sub photo category, whereby female followers idealized this sub

category because of the type of celebrities and their specific trades. These ideal

celebrities are Gigi Hadid, Lee Sung Kyung, Pallida Emwattana, and Urassaya

Sperbund. The trades of these celebrities are modeling, acting, as well as hosting,

which portrays and are more related to fashion, in comparison to food and gadget luxury items.

Not only that, the researcher also discovered that the female informants expressed they idealized their ideal celebrities' sense of fashion and style, such as Rose.

> "I just like when she posts picture showing her dress, her clothes for what today…Like, these clothes must be famous. I must go check it out. Something like that" (Rose, Personal communication, January 19, 2017).

For Honey, she adores her ideal celebrity, Urassaya's sense of fashion and she idealizes the way Urassaya put herself together in terms of her dressing. When asked the type of picture that the informant idealizes of Urassaya, the informant responded, "The way she dress [sic] beautifully" (Honey, personal communication, January 24, 2017). These testaments indicate that the reason on why there is a strong presence of idealization on *Fashion* sub photo category, is because of informants' personal interests, hence a credible finding.

The findings of the *Luxury Items* photo category also reveal that there is a new sub category that followers idealize, which is *Plants*. One female informant revealed that she idealized pictures of her ideal celebrity, Kamolned Ruengsri with her plants. The reason behind this additional sub photo category is due to the fact the informant finds Kamolned "…different from other actress…" (Ingrid, personal communication, January 18, 2017), and for Ingrid, what set apart Kamolned from other celebrities is the actress' love for her plants. The researcher did analyze Kamolned's Instagram account, and indeed found Instagram pictures of the celebrity's plants. Ingrid shared, "She grows plants in her condo. And I like the plants because of her. Like, very

motivating" (ibid). The researcher finds this idealization quite interesting, as not only this is a unique idealization on plants, but it also displays how celebrities can facilitate direct impact to followers to adopt celebrities' interests through their pictures. Researchers Boon and Lomore mentioned that the manifestation from celebrity idealization could prompt fans to mimic celebrities' behaviors, like adopting celebrities' activities or hobbies (Boon & Lomore, 2001), which are plants in Ingrid's case. This finding is a significant contribution that celebrities' Instagram images do influence followers, and that in this specific case, *Plants* is a valid sub category to be added under the *Luxury Items* photo category, thus the category is expanded.

### 4.1.4 Social Relations Category

#### 4.1.4.1 Report of Findings

After the *Luxury Items* photo category, the next photo category that Instagram followers idealize are the *Social Relations* category. In this photo category, there are four idealized celebrities' Instagram pictures that were reported by four people. When the four pictures are compared, the researcher discovered that the *Friends* sub photo category is idealized more compared to the *Pets* sub category, with two pictures in tow. Two female informants reported these pictures.

Under the *Friends* sub photo category, two female Instagram followers expressed they idealized images of their ideal celebrities pictured with the celebrities' friends. For Ingrid, she idealized Instagram posts depicting her ideal celebrity, Kamolned Ruengsri singing with her friends. "And when she posts some videos, singing videos. With her friends. It is very [sic] herself" (Ingrid, personal communication, January 18, 2017). Similarly, Rose shared that she idealizes the

Instagram pictures of her ideal celebrity, Gigi with her friends. She shared, "…It's like hot, hot group. Hot girls. Girl group..." (Rose, personal communication, January 19, 2017).

Human beings are not the only social relationships that followers idealize from celebrities' Instagram images. For the male informant, he idealizes pictures of his ideal celebrity, Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg who is famously known as Pewdiepie, with his pet dog. Tim shared, "That's why I like him too, because he, like, he loves his dog so much, like he will die for his dog" (Tim, personal communication, February 2, 2017).

From the interviews, the researcher also discovered that there is another group of people that celebrities are idealized pictured with them, and this group of people is called *Fans*. This phenomenon is particularly pertinent in the case of Honey. When asked the types of pictures that the informant idealize of the celebrity, Honey replied below.

> "When she stays with her fan club. When she have [sic] time with her fan club, spending her time with them. I think she's, like caring for her fan club too. So it's like a gift to her fan club" (Honey, Personal communication, January 24, 2017).

She also added that she particularly like the group pictures of Urassaya with her fans (ibid). Thus, the Social Relations photo category could expand to include *Fans* as a sub category.

4.1.4.2 Discussion of Findings

Among the findings of this thesis is that the female informants' idealized pictures in the *Social Relations* photo category are the exact idealized pictures in *Indoor/Outdoor* sub photo category. The reason behind the exact idealized pictures is

because not only the pictures depicted the Indoor/Outdoorx activities of celebrities with friends and fans, but the pictures also depicted the social relationships of the ideal celebrities with friends and fans. This finding strengthens the credibility between *Social Relations* category and the *Indoor/Outdoor* sub photo category. Besides that, the thesis also discloses that the *Friends* sub photo category is more idealized compared to the *Pets* sub photo category, with two pictures in tow. The reason on why *Friends* sub photo category is more idealized compared to the *Pets* sub photo category is due to the Instagram followers' personal interests, whereby there are more informants who idealize celebrities with their friends and fans, compared to pets. Regardless the differences in idealization, the researcher discerns that for both sub categories, the reasons on why Instagram followers idealize the respective sub categories is because of the informants' personal idealization and admiration on celebrities' personality, physical attributes and values. This shows that followers' personal interests truly have a role in impacting followers' idealization on celebrities' Instagram images, portrayed through photo categories.

For the *Friends* sub photo category, two female followers expressed their idealization for this specific sub photo category. For Ingrid, she idealizes her ideal celebrity, Kamolned singing with her friends as the activity with her friends portrays the celebrity's true self (Ingrid, personal communication, January 18, 2017). She explained, "And when she pose some video, singing videos. With her friends. It is very [sic] herself" (ibid). The researcher assumes that the reason behind this idealization is connected with the respective informant's personal idealization on the celebrity's authenticity. For Ingrid, she admires her ideal celebrity for the person that she is, portrayed through the way she thinks right through her character (ibid). The

bottom line for the informant is that the celebrity is authentic. She shared, "She is – I like her personality. She spent her life on her own. She is herself…" (ibid). Thus, Ingrid's personal idealization on Kamolned's authenticity underlies her idealization for the celebrity when instagrammed singing with her friends.

As for Rose, she idealizes the Instagram pictures of her ideal celebrity, Gigi with her friends, and she pointed out their attractiveness as a group. She shared, "…It's like hot, hot group. Hot girls. Girl group..." (Rose, personal communication, January 19, 2017). The researcher is convinced that the reason behind this idealization is connected with the respective informant's personal idealization on the celebrity's physique. She shared with pure admiration, "Her body shape is so model [sic]…Has six packs as well" (Rose, personal communication, January 19, 2017). Thus, Rose's personal idealization on Gigi's body underlies her idealization for the celebrity when pictured with her friends.

For the *Pets* sub photo category, one male follower expressed his idealization for this sub category. For Tim, he idealizes Instagram pictures of his ideal celebrity, Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg who is famously known as Pewdiepie, with his pet dog. He pointed out the celebrity's picture with his dog show the celebrity's unconditional love for his dog. Tim shared, "That's why I like him too, because he, like, he loves his dog so much, like he will die for his dog" (Tim, personal communication, February 2, 2017). The researcher strongly believes that the reason behind this idealization is connected with the respective informant's personal idealization on the celebrity's values, which the informant also shares the same values as well. He shared, "Yeah, he would do something for someone he loves or some animals he loves…he dedicated him for others too" (ibid). The respective informant also responded agreeably when

asked if the value for others is important for him (ibid). Thus, Tim's personal idealization on Pewdiepie's values underlies his idealization for the celebrity when pictured with his dog.

The findings of the *Social Relations* photo category also reveal that there is a new sub category that followers idealize, which is *Fans*, which is the case of Honey. When asked the types of pictures that the informant idealize of the celebrity, Honey answered, "When she stays with her fan club. When she have [sic] time with her fan club, spending her time with them. I think she's, like caring for her fan club too. So it's like a gift to her fan club" (Personal communication, January 24, 2017). She also added that she particularly like the group pictures of Urassaya with her fans (ibid). "Fans" is a valid sub category to be added under the *Social Relations* photo category, as the reason behind this sub category is attributed to the status of the fans whereby the status indicated their social relationship with ideal celebrity. Thus, the category is expanded and the additional sub category gives signification contribution to the *Social Relations* photo category.

4.1.5 Other Category

4.1.5.1 Report of Findings

Finally, the *Other* photo category is the fifth photo category that Instagram followers idealize right after the *Social Relations* photo category. In the *Other* photo category, there is only one idealized picture reported by one person, who is a female informant. The researcher learnt that it is the lyrics, portrayed through *Captioned Photo* sub photo category that the female Instagram follower idealizes.

For Tammie, she expressed that one particular Instagram picture displayed lyrics that encourages not paying attention to people who dislike and push one down, and this picture made an emotional impact on this informant. "I feel the same. I don't want the haters to push me down. I want to use it as a food to drive me to some of my goals" (Tammie, personal communication, January 17, 2017). This lyric is not at random, as the song belongs to the informant's ideal celebrity, Taylor, who is a singer. Although the researcher was not able to locate the exact aforementioned Instagram picture, however, based on Taylor's Instagram posts, the researcher notices there is a distinct pattern when the singer posts lyrics on her Instagram account. In this type of picture, it is an Instagram post of parts of the lyrics written on the picture itself. Along with parts of the lyrics, there are other elements related to the lyrics also pictured, such as water, elevator buttons, jewelry, and more. This description depicts the *Captioned Photo* sub photo category whereby *Captioned Photo* are pictures with text inscription describing attitudes, values, belief and entertainment. However, from the researcher's recent discovery, there is a present need to include "lyrics" as part of the explanation of this category.

Based on the data analyses, the researcher also learned that there are two other photo categories that informants idealize, which are not indicated in the Table 4.1 The Types of Photo Categories. Firstly, Instagram pictures that showcase favorite celebrities in official movie posters and model releases are another type of idealized photo category. One female informant, Apple, reported this idealization. She described these types of photos as *performance*.

> "She's a model, right? The picture when she poses, the dress that she
> wears – sometimes we want to dress up like the people in Instagram.
> Her performance!... I like these kinds of pictures. The movie that she

plays – the performance that I said…" (Apple, Personal communication, January 17, 2017).

Interestingly, on the opposite side of the coin, there is another informant who shared that she idealizes Instagram pictures of celebrities that are not taken by professional photographers. This type of pictures makes up another photo category that followers idealize. These intimate pictures are taken by celebrities themselves.

> "I think their lifestyle, that no one can take their pictures of. Maybe a selfie or something like that, her staff or part of their family taking a photo. So it's kinda [sic] private. But you cannot get from other photographers. So, that's what I like" (Tammie, Personal communication, January 17, 2017)

Tammie really emphasized the importance of the initiative and perspective that must come from the celebrities themselves. She shared, "Because Taylor or Victoria like, they took it themselves, not anyone else. It's not like selfie, but they take it by themselves. But not like [posed]" (Tammie, Personal communication, January 17, 2017). In other words, the informant would like to see the real pictures of celebrities as authentic as possible.

4.1.5.2 Discussion of Findings

The fifth photo category that is idealized in this thesis is the *Other* photo category. As mentioned in the summary section of 5.1.1, one female Instagram followers idealize song lyrics belonging to her ideal celebrity, which are portrayed as a captioned photo. The researcher is strongly convinced that the reason on why the informant idealizes pictures of lyrics, is due to her personal interests and personality. First of all, the lyrics that the female informant idealizes come from her ideal singer, Taylor Swift. Not only Taylor Swift is her ideal singer, but also her "…favorite singer…" (Tammie, personal communication, January 17, 2017). The fact that Taylor

Swift is her favorite singer means that she found resonance with Taylor's songs and lyrics, which she does in reality, and thus, the relation intersects with the informant's interests. As explained earlier on in the aforementioned report of findings, the informant could relate with Taylor's Shake It Off lyrics, and agrees the idea behind the song. She mentioned, "I feel the same. I don't want the haters to push me down. I want to use it as a food to drive me to some of my goals" (ibid).

The researcher believes another reason on why the informant's idealize this particular set of lyrics and the underlying ideas behind this set of lyrics are because of the informant's personality. During the interview, the researcher noticed that the informant is very adamant when expressing her ideas on being judged on online posts and its repercussions, on using technology affordances wisely to avoid being judged, and the importance for the informant to authentically post as her self. Tammie shared, "So for me, if I post something, I will think about it too many times if I will post it, because somebody's gonna [sic] judge me. Always" (Personal communication, January 17, 2017). When asked the reason behind the informant's desire to lock her Instagram likes, she responded, "Because I don't want someone to judge me and make me feel bad, like depression" (ibid). Also, the informant shared that she does not desire to be anybody else but herself when posting on her Instagram (ibid). Tammie added, "Because I don't wanna [sic] be somebody else. That's not who I am. I am who I am…" (ibid). Therefore, Tammie's testaments show part of her personality whereby she greatly dislikes being judged and does not want be put down, just like the ideas underlining the Shake It Off lyrics. Thus, the connection between informant's personality and the resonance she has for the lyrics strengthens the significance of this finding.

Other informants in the research did share that they also found song lyrics by favorite artists and quotes very meaningful. Even though these informants did not idealize the song lyrics such as Tammie, nonetheless they are prompted to copy lyrics and quotes, and post them as captions to accompany their Instagram pictures. The reason behind this action is because the followers like the lyrics and resonate with the messages delivered through the lyrics. This shows that lyrics, whether it is idealized or not, are important to followers. The discussion confirms sincerity in this finding whereby lyrics portrayed through celebrities' Instagram images do give impact to followers. In this specific case, "Lyrics" is a significant contribution element to be added into the *Captioned Photo* explanation, as it is certainly lyrics in the form of *Captioned Photo* that the female informant idealize from her ideal celebrity.

Aside from all the aforementioned five photo categories, this research also reveal that there are two other photo categories that Instagram followers idealize from celebrities' Instagram images. These categories, namely official movie posters and model releases, as well as pictures taken from celebrities' themselves respectively, are absent from the theoretical framework and Table 4.1. When comparing the aforementioned categories with Table 4.1, in which the theoretical framework was inspired by the work of researchers Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati in 2014, the revelation of two aforementioned photo categories discloses that Instagram users at the present may experience an expansion of interest compared to the Instagram users in 2014. This discussion is a significant contribution to this thesis.

As mentioned previously, two female Instagram followers reported they idealize official movie posters and model releases, as well as pictures taken from celebrities' themselves, respectively. The researcher believes that the reason on why

informants are driven to idealize the aforementioned photo categories is because of the informants' personal interests.

In terms of the official movie posters and model releases category, the researcher discovered that Apple's interest is to see celebrities on and off the entertainment industry. Apple shared, "…for me, it's like amazed [sic] when you see another character of them, a true person in reality and another person when they act out in the movie" (Personal communication, January 17, 2017). She added that it is her enjoyment when she gets to see Instagram pictures of her ideal celebrity in real life as well as on set, as shown below.

> "So I just like looking how she is in real life…I like these kind of pictures. The movie that she plays – the performance that I said. She is like a different person. I like watching like this, like that" (Apple, ibid).

Apple also expressed her personal admiration on versatility, which is evident in her ideal celebrity, Lee Sung Kyung. According to Apple, Lee could hold varying roles, such as acting like tomboy in the movie, but also very ladylike as the celebrity is a model in real life, as she shared below.

> "So she has a lot of skills. She can sing, she can act…so I kinda [sic] like her. And she has different styles, like cute style, sexy style. I like people with a lot of skills" (ibid).

Therefore, it is evident that the reason behind the follower's admiration of the official work pictures of her ideal celebrities is due to the informant's personal interests.

In terms of pictures taken by celebrities themselves category, the researcher believes that the reason on why the Instagram follower idealize and places importance on celebrities' initiative and perspective of posting their lifestyle pictures is drawn

upon Tammie's personal conviction on authenticity. Being authentic is also a value that Tammie intrinsically believes and try to live by, as she also strives to posts on her actual self. "Because I don't wanna [sic] be somebody else. That's not who I am. I am who I am…" (Tammie, personal communication, January 17, 2017). Therefore, Tammie's personal interest and conviction on authenticity led the follower to idealize pictures taken by celebrities themselves.

The two aforementioned photo categories inevitably indicate that that there are two types of celebrities' pictures, namely official and personal photos. When comparing official and personal photos of celebrities, informants generally idealize the personal photos of celebrities more than the official photos. Most likely the reason behind this preference is going back to the discussion on authenticity as previously explicated. On top of that, another reason behind the preference of personal photos over official photos is due to the negative connotation when it comes to official photos of celebrities published through Instagram. For Aaron, it upsets him to the point he does not want to see the aforementioned type of pictures, as shown below.

> "…She also has modeling pictures, when she took the photo shoot and she post it [on Instagram]. But sometimes, it's very disturbing to see that people also make her posing the, the [sic] advertisement for their products. And then it's like, yeah I don't want to see that kind of thing…" (Aaron, personal communication, January 18, 2017).

In addition, another reason behind the preference of personal photos over official photos is due to the fact that there is a general common sense among the informants that when it comes to official photos, the celebrities are just doing their job, which may not bear much authenticity.

> "It is like looking at a magazine…when the celebrity pose, they pose professional. It's like a routine of their work…sometimes they pose

about their work to promote their work" (Honey, personal communication, January 24, 2017).

Thus, on the topic of official versus personal photos of celebrities, the findings of this research clearly revealed that idealization is up to the informants' personal interests, as it is their interests that gear them to idealize or lead them in the opposite direction.

4.2 Followers' responses towards exposure of celebrities' pictures on Instagram

After delving into the types of photo categories, which followers idealize from celebrities' Instagram pictures, it is vitally important to study the followers' responses from their exposure to these pictures, thus the second research question proposed in this thesis reads: RQ # 2: How do Instagram followers respond to their exposure to celebrities' Instagram images?

There are two types of followers' responses in correspondence to the exposure of celebrities' Instagram images. The first response addresses followers' perceived self-concept in terms of emotional response, and it reads: RQ # 2.1: How do Instagram followers perceive themselves in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images?

To answer RQ #2.1 above, data analyses yield that there are three ways on how Instagram followers perceive themselves, in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images. Firstly, Instagram followers perceive their actual selves as not discrepant from their ideal selves through their reports of being conscious on celebrities' images as potentially false, followers' personal motivation of using Instagram, and finding similarities as well as resonating between their selves with

ideal celebrities. The followers also reported experiencing positive emotions, namely normalcy, happiness and satisfaction of themselves. This summary is reflected in Figure 4.1 on page 94.

Secondly, followers perceive their actual selves as discrepant from their ideal selves through their reports of being different from their ideal celebrities in terms of physical appearance and success, facilitated by the act of comparison. The followers also reported experiencing negative emotions, namely dissatisfaction, disappointment, jealousy, and not being proud of their selves. The female informants also reported that they experience acceptance to cope with the self-discrepancies. This summary is reflected in Figure 4.2 on page 98.

There are also followers who also experience positive emotions about their selves, while perceiving their actual selves discrepantly from their ideal selves. This manner presents a new relationship in the theoretical framework of this thesis. These respective followers perceive their actual selves discrepantly from their ideal selves through their reports of desiring specific attributes of ideal celebrities, such as the passion of playing basketball and executing Instagram filter, as well as their level of attributes are not at par with the ideal celebrities, such as not being beautiful and tall as celebrity. Nonetheless, the followers reported experiencing emotions, which are happiness, satisfaction, inspiration and motivation of their selves. The two latter emotions are the specific experiences of the male informants, in the presence of self-discrepancies. As for the female informant, she reported that she is not obsessed with the ideal celebrity or celebrities in general, and that she accepts the reality between herself and her ideal celebrity as well as her circumstance. This summary is reflected in Figure 4.3 on page 104.

Thirdly, Instagram followers perceive their actual selves as discrepant and concurrently, non-discrepant from their ideal selves. This manner also presents a new relationship in the theoretical framework of this thesis. The corresponding followers perceive their actual selves discrepantly from their ideal selves through their reports of desiring specific attributes of their ideal celebrities, which are lifestyle, wealth and success. In spite of the presence of self-discrepancies, these respective followers also reported experiencing positive emotions, such as motivation and inspiration of their selves. The corresponding followers also perceive their actual selves not discrepantly from their ideal selves through their reports of being proud of one's self, finding similarities with ideal celebrities, and their personal convictions on information presented through social media. They also reported experiencing positive emotions, such as being proud of themselves, happiness, contentment and satisfaction, and normalcy about their selves. This summary is reflected in Figure 4.4 on page 113. Sections 4.2.1.1, 4.2.1.2, and 4.2.1.3 will explain each relationship in detail on how Instagram followers perceive themselves.

4.2.1 The ways Instagram followers perceive themselves in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images

4.2.1.1 Followers' actual self is not discrepant from ideal self

The analyses of collected data reveal that firstly, there are two Instagram followers, a female and male informant, who did not find their actual selves discrepantly from their ideal selves. To recap, in this thesis, the actual self reflects informants' perception of the attributes they have, whereas the ideal self reveals informants' perception of the attributes they wish to have, which is based off

their ideal celebrities. What this phenomenon means is that the informants did not detect any difference between themselves and their ideal celebrities, hence an absence of self-discrepancy. The same informants also reported that they experience being happy and satisfied with their selves, in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images. This positive emotional response relationship is revealed in Figure 4.1.

| EMOTIONAL RESPONSES | |
|---|---|
| FOLLOWERS' PERCEIVED SELF-CONCEPT | |
| No discrepancy between actual self and ideal self | Discrepancy between actual self and ideal self |
| Presence of positive outcomes / emotions<br>Normalcy, Happiness, Satisfaction | Presence of negative outcomes / emotions<br>Dissatisfaction, Disappointment, Sadness |
| TOTAL: 2<br>1M, 1F | |

Figure 4.1: The Relationship Between No Discrepancy and Positive

Outcomes/Emotions

From the female informant's interview, the researcher learned that there are two reasons behind the follower not detecting any difference between herself and her ideal celebrity. The first reason is the follower's conscious knowledge on potential fakery in celebrities' images in general. Honey expressed that the celebrities' Instagram images can be "…real and fake" (Honey, personal communication January 24, 2017). Being aware that there could be potential fakery in celebrities' Instagram images may attribute to Honey feeling no different from herself to her ideal celebrity, Urassaya, as the celebrity's pictures may communicate a distorted reality. Because Honey does not feel any different from her ideal celebrity, the researcher assumes that this absence of discrepancy contributes to the informant's feelings of herself as normal (ibid). This lend to her experiencing "I feel normal" (ibid) about herself. Indeed, as a society, we are living in a digital age whereby the social media users are more educated compared previous generations that everything can be filtered and photoshopped. This means that people are not easily duped to believing information, or celebrities' Instagram pictures in this case, at first glance. Therefore, it is not a surprise that Instagram users such as Honey are aware that celebrities' images could be fake, and thus, the informant is not affected by the celebrities' Instagram images.

The second reason is attributed to the follower's personal motivation of using Instagram, which is to find out information on her ideal celebrity's lifestyle and fashion details, unlike the general assumption of comparing the celebrity with herself, which was not the case of Honey, and not to compete herself with her ideal celebrity. This personal interest also lends her to experience satisfactory feelings about herself, as shown below.

> "I felt satisfied about myself because I look at her picture not to
> compare it with myself, but to know what's her lifestyle and
> what she's wearing" (Honey, personal communication, March
> 3, 2017).

As Honey had self-reportedly have no personal interest to compare herself with Urassaya, but instead, to find out information on the celebrity's way of life and dressing, there is clearly no need for the informant to feel bad about herself, which explains why she feels satisfied about herself. Indeed, the absence of comparing one's self to another, such as the case of Honey, really show that an individual can avoid feeling experiencing self-discrepancies because there is no other entity for the individual to compare with.

> As for the male informant, the researcher discovered that the Instagram follower does not find his actual self any different from his ideal celebrity, Pewdiepie, due to finding similarities between both of them.

> "…I'm like 50% of him…He is nice, he has a sense of humor,
> he is funny, he has a dedication [sic] for his family, I mean like
> he is almost similar to me…It's like I'm not him, but I am
> similar to him" (Tim, Personal communication,
> February 2, 2017).

The fact that the male follower found similarities between his actual self and his ideal celebrity, Pewdiepie means that his actual self and his ideal self, based off his ideal celebrity, match. The presence of match or compatibility also implies that the informant does not feel his actual self is different from his ideal celebrity. The match also corresponds with the Self-discrepancy theory, whereby any individual who feels that he or she shares compatibility with his or her ideal celebrities will experience emotional comfort (Higgins, 1987), which is indeed the

experience of Tim. Tim revealed, "I feel happy and satisfied because he makes me feel like myself" (Personal communication, March 6, 2017).

On top of that, being able to resonate with the ideal celebrity makes Tim feel positive about himself, and subsequently, feels like his actual self. Clearly, the fact that Tim can find resonance in his ideal celebrity strengthens his actual self, which explains the informant experiencing positive emotions about himself. Finding or sharing similarities also points to another communication theory, namely similarity/attraction theory whereby "…people like and are attracted to others who are similar, rather than dissimilar, to themselves…" (*Similarity/Attraction Theory*, n.d), which gives meaningful coherence to this research.

The fact that Honey and Tim reported they experience positive emotions about their selves, namely happiness and satisfaction, meant that they do not experience their actual selves discrepantly from their ideal selves. Thus, the testimonies of the aforementioned informants revealed that the absence of self-discrepancies between actual self and ideal self, do coincide with positive emotions, namely happiness and satisfaction.

4.2.1.2 Followers' actual self is discrepant from ideal self

Second of all, the researcher learned that in correspondence with exposure of celebrities' Instagram images, Instagram followers do experience their actual selves as different from their ideal selves, based off their ideal celebrities. What this relationship means is that informants indicate there is a difference between their actual selves and their ideal celebrities, hence a presence of self-discrepancy, and the informants feel negative about themselves. This finding coincides with the self research, whereby not being happy with their selves could subsequently mean there is

a gap between who they are and who they want to be. Two female informants and one

male informant experience this type of negative emotional response. This relationship

is revealed through Figure 4.2.

| EMOTIONAL RESPONSES | |
| --- | --- |
| FOLLOWERS' PERCEIVED SELF-CONCEPT | |
| No discrepancy between actual self and ideal self | Discrepancy between actual self and ideal self |
| Presence of positive outcomes / emotions<br>Happiness, Satisfaction | Presence of negative outcomes / emotions<br>Acceptance, Dissatisfaction, Disappointment, Jealousy, Not Proud of Selves |
| | TOTAL: 3<br>1M, 2F |

Figure 4.2: The Relationship Between Discrepancy and Negative Outcomes/Emotions

The researcher discovered that one of the distinct discrepancies that

informants experiencing between their actual selves and their ideal celebrities, is in

terms of physical and appearance attributes. Both female informants experience this

type of discrepancy by the act of comparison. For Rose, she mentioned she is not

attractive as her ideal celebrity, Gigi, and it makes her experience dissatisfaction of

herself, as shown below.

> "When I look at her picture, there will be just a few moment
> [sic] that I'm dissatisfy [sic] about myself thinking that I am too
> fat and not as beautiful as her…" (Rose, personal
> communication, March 3, 2017).

As for Onie, her image of herself is not at par as her ideal celebrity,

Pallida, and similarly with Rose, it makes Onie experience dissatisfaction of herself,

as indicated below.

> "When I look at her photos, I feel dissatisfied with myself
> because I think I can do better to improve my image but I
> didn't do my best to make it better" (Onie, personal
> communication, March 3, 2017).

The fact that the two respective female informants experience discrepancies

on physical and appearance attributes correspond with the self research, whereby a

majority of the self research impacts women (Britt, 2015; French, Fajardo & Lepre,

2015; Harper & Tiggemann, 2008; Tanner, 2015; Vries & Peter, 2013).

As for the male informant, the researcher found out that the male

informant also experience discrepancies between himself and his ideal celebrity, Dan

by the act of comparison, similar like the previously mentioned two female

informants. Unlike the female Instagram followers however, the discrepancies lie in

the achievement of success of his ideal celebrity and compatriots. For Larry, he is not

successful like his ideal celebrity and associates. The act of comparing resulted the

male informant feeling negatively about himself, such as disappointment and not

proud, as presented below.

> "I feel that I can do much more than that. I think like much

more, I'm like, for example those guys are like 20 years [old],
they are already millionaires, why them, why not me. I'm just
too lazy. But I can do something, but maybe not as big as
them, but everybody can do something, everybody has a special
talent, the way of thinking, the ability to create something. I am
like, I am just too lazy, so I need to wake up and do something.
That's how I feel myself like, how you just stay home the whole
day, and you could do this if you work hard enough. Yeah, that's
how I feel about myself. Disappointed like, you could do that
but you don't…Yeah, how do I feel about myself? Not proud.
Yeah, I know that I can better [sic] than what I am right
now, but the problem is like, there is something that stopping
[sic] me, something that does not let me to crawl up in order,
there is something that I want to be like a child, that I want be
at home, don't do anything. So yeah, that's why it is disappointing
a bit, but there is really something that I would like to grow,
seriously, but there is something that stopping [sic] me every day.
You know you are only 20 years [old], why you need to worry,
not yet. Then I stay at home" (Larry, Personal
communication, January 31, 2017).

The act of comparison, experienced by both genders, is noteworthy as
it is one of the reasons on why the presence of self-discrepancies exists, due to
followers' act of comparing their actual selves with their ideal celebrities. As
mentioned earlier on, the fact that Rose pointed out she is not slim and attractive as
Gigi means that her actual self is indeed different from her ideal celebrity, which are
ideal attributes that she wishes she could have. It also means that the female
informant's actual self also does not match with her ideal self, based off Gigi. Rose's
aforementioned testament also showed that she is emotionally dissatisfied with her
actual self. The negative emotion confirms the assumption of the Self-discrepancy
theory whereby any individual who feels that he or she does not match with his or her
aspiring celebrities would experience emotional discomfort (Higgins, 1987), which is
indeed the experience of Rose.

The above case is also a similar situation with the male follower. Larry too compared his self with his ideal celebrity, Dan Bilzerian and compatriots, in terms of achievement of success. The aforementioned comparison revealed that he is not financially successful like Dan and friends. The fact that the informant pointed out he is not a millionaire like Dan and compatriots means that his actual self is very much different and additionally, does not match with his ideal self, based off Dan and compatriots. In Larry's interview, he also expressed that he feels disappointed and does not feel proud of his actual self. Indeed, the negative emotions that Larry experience confirms the assumption of the Self-discrepancy theory whereby any individual who feels that he or she does not match with his or her aspiring celebrities would experience emotional discomfort (Higgins, 1987).

Besides the act of comparison, another reason on why the presence of self-discrepancies and negative emotions exist is because of the followers' lack of effort to match their actual selves to their ideal selves, based off the respective ideal celebrities. This lack of effort, a significant contribution to this study, is applicable to both genders in this study. For Larry, his testament evealed that he further attributed his inability to attain the idealized success due to his lack of effort, which is idleness in Larry's case. He admitted, "…I am like, I am just too lazy…" (Larry, personal communication, January 31, 2017).

For Onie, not only she compares herself with her ideal celebrity, Pallida, but she too acknowledged that her lack of improving her image makes her dissatisfied with herself. "When I look at her photos, I feel dissatisfied with myself because I think I can do better to improve my image but I didn't do my best to make it better" (Onie, personal communication, March 3, 2017). From Onie's testament, it

clearly shows that there is an ideal standard or attribute that she wants to reach, which is based off Pallida, but her actual self did not reach the ideal image. This shows that her actual self is different from her ideal celebrity, which also means that her actual self does not match with her ideal self. Because of the presence of discrepancy, it is not a surprise that the informant feels dissatisfied of herself. The presence of negative emotion again affirms the assumption of the Self-discrepancy theory whereby any individual who feels that he or she does not match with his or her aspiring celebrities would experience emotional discomfort (Higgins, 1987), which is indeed the experience of Onie.

Interestingly in this research, the researcher found out that there is another emotion that accompanies the dissatisfaction and disappointment emotions, and that is jealousy. Jealousy is also another emotion that the informants experience when exposed to the celebrities' Instagram images as shared by Rose below.

> "I feel jealous…I feel like it's impossible for me to be like her …I feel like, I will never be like her, but I look [sic] at her as a model, as an idol to follow." (Rose, Personal communication, January 19, 2017).

Jealousy does not spare any gender, as the male informant also felt the same way. He shared, "…when I see their pictures, I am jealous" (Larry, personal communication, January 31, 2017). Thus, it is not surprising that followers are jealous of their ideal celebrities, as they do not have the idealized physical appearance and success. The feeling of envy also expands the types of negative emotions listed in Figure 4.2.

However, the researcher discovered that the female informants experience acceptance to cope with the presence of discrepancies between the

informants and their ideal celebrities. This finding is fascinating, because it introduces

a new way for individuals to negotiate discrepancies. "Just accept the truth and [be]

jealous" (Onie and Rose, personal communications, January 19, 2017). The

researcher believes acceptance of their selves is a way for the followers to cope with

the presence of discrepancies between the informants and their ideal celebrities.

Indeed, this finding coincides with the Self-discrepancy theory whereby "…these

discrepancies can also motivate the individual to engage in behaviors that will reduce

the discrepancy" (Vartanian, 2012, p. 711), and that behavior is the accepting attitude.

This finding is fascinating, because it introduces a new way for individuals to

negotiate discrepancies, thus a significant contribution to this thesis. Thus, the

testimonies of the aforementioned informants revealed that the presence of self-

discrepancies between actual self and ideal self, do go hand in hand with negative

emotions, particularly dissatisfaction, disappointment, not proud, and jealousy.

Fascinatingly, it was found that it is possible for Instagram followers to

experience positive emotions, despite of feeling their actual selves discrepantly from

their ideal selves, based off respective ideal celebrities. What this phenomenon means

is that although followers perceive their actual selves as discrepantly different from

their ideal selves, nonetheless the followers could feel positive about their selves. This

relationship contradicts the Self-discrepancy Theory, which initially theorized any

individual who feels that he or she does not match with his or her aspiring celebrities

would experience emotional discomfort (Higgins, 1987). It is the complete opposite

of direction on how the presence of self-discrepancies works in the Self-discrepancy

theory. This finding also contradicts with the self research whereby the presence of

gap between their actual and ideal selves goes along with not being happy with their

selves. However in this case, the results show that Instagram followers could experience emotional pleasantness despite the presence of self-discrepancy. Thus a new type of relationship, reflected in Figure 4.3, is born in the theoretical framework of this thesis, as this manner is not reported in the Self-discrepancy theory, therefore providing a meaningful contribution to this study. Two male informants and one female informant reported to experience this relationship in perceiving their selves.

| EMOTIONAL RESPONSES | |
|---|---|
| FOLLOWERS' PERCEIVED SELF-CONCEPT | |
| No discrepancy between actual self and ideal self | Discrepancy between actual self and ideal self |
| Presence of positive outcomes / emotions Inspiration, Motivation, Happiness, Satisfaction | Presence of negative outcomes / emotions Dissatisfaction, Disappointment, Sadness |
| TOTAL: 3 2M, 1F | |

Figure 4.3: The Relationship Between Discrepancy and Positive

Outcomes/Emotions

For the three informants, the researcher deduces that the Instagram followers' discrepancies lies in their desires of wanting to be like their ideal celebrities. This finding coincides with the literature in this thesis, whereby celebrities are indeed deemed as ideal figures whom followers aspire to be (Caughey, 1978, 1984, 1985, 1994, as cited in Boon & Lomore, 2001; Garsbo & Wittberger, 2014). The researcher assumes the existence of informants' desires could subsequently mean that they either do not have those desired attributes, or their attributes is not at par as their ideal celebrities, thus aspire to match it. For the male informants, they are already involved in the crafts that their ideal celebrities are in. However, the male informants desire to emulate the specific desirable attributes that their ideal celebrities are involved in.

For instance, William expressed that that he wants to be like his ideal basketball player, Michael so that he will continuously have the passion to play basketball. He shared, "So, he's my idol. So, I wanted [sic] to be like him. I will have feeling of playing, wanted [sic] to play basketball" (William, personal communication, January 20, 2017). As for Aaron, he aspires to execute the desired Instagram filter that Toey uses on her Instagram. "…I want to have the same filter, like that. That kind of filter that she uses" (Aaron, personal communication, January 18, 2017).

Despite the discrepancies, the researcher learned that the male informants nonetheless experienced and expressed positive emotions about their selves, namely motivation and inspiration. For example, William expressed that that he wants to be like his ideal basketball player, Michael as this athlete is his role model, as shown below.

"I feel motivated and wanted to be like that Michael Jordan because he is the reason I started playing basketball" (Personal communication, January 20, 2017).

As for Aaron mentioned that his ideal celebrity, Toey, is his idol and he is blown away by her passion for community service. He shared, "Inspire me to do something like that [community service]" (Aaron, personal communication, January 18, 2017). These findings do support Caughey's research, whereby celebrities who are deemed as role models, such as the case of William and Aaron, do "…serve as idealized self-images for their admirers because they possess qualities or traits admirers would like to develop—or refine—[sic] in themselves" (Caughey, 1978, 1984, 1985, 1994, as cited in Boon & Lomore, 2001, p. 435).

As for the female informant, her discrepancy lies in her desire to resemble her ideal celebrity, Lee, in terms of beauty and appearance. "Yeah, she's so beautiful, I wanna [sic] be like her…" (Apple, personal communication, January 17, 2017). Apple also expressed that she wish she could be as tall as her ideal celebrity, and aspire to dress like the celebrity (ibid). These desirable attributes are absent in Apple's actual self, thus the presence of discrepancy. However, despite experiencing discrepancies between her actual self and her ideal self based off her ideal celebrity, the researcher learned that Apple is nonetheless happy about herself. She shared, "…I am happy about myself. But I just wish I am as tall as her" (Apple, personal communication, March 3, 2017).

Accompanying her statements, Apple also share four other things that the researcher believes are vital to understanding the positive emotions that Apple is experiencing about herself, in spite of the discrepancies. One of it is the female informant's perspective on beauty. Apple expressed that beauty can come in different

forms. She shared, "…We can be pretty in our own way" (Personal communication, March 3, 2017). Aside from that, the Apple is not obsessive about the ideal celebrity or celebrities in general. "Actually, I'm not into those celebrities. Just looking like, just like that ah [sic]" (Apple, personal communication, January 17, 2017). In addition, Apple also expressed acceptance of reality between her self and her ideal celebrity. She shared, "Sometimes I want to be like some person, but we can't, right?" (Personal communication, January 17, 2017). On top of that, the same informant also acknowledged that her beauty is not the same as celebrities, which is another way of accepting the reality of her circumstance. "…I'm not beautiful as them" (ibid). Thus, the aforementioned testimonies do show that it is possible for Instagram followers to experience positive emotions in spite of the self-discrepancies they go through between their actual selves and their ideal selves, based of their ideal celebrities.

From the aforementioned report of findings above, there are clearly five reasons on why the presence of self-discrepancies and the positive emotions that followers experience about their selves, exists. First of all, the presence of discrepancies that Instagram followers experience between their actual selves and ideal selves do not propel them to feel negatively about their selves. Instead, the discrepancies, in the form of desirability for ideal celebrities' attributes, are driven by specific positive emotions, such as motivation. William expressed that that he wants to be like his ideal basketball player, Michael as this athlete is his role model. "I feel motivated and wanted to be like that Michael Jordan because he is the reason I started playing basketball" (Personal communication, January 20, 2017). Besides motivation, inspiration is another positive emotion that encourages informants to achieve desired attributes. Aaron mentioned that his ideal celebrity, Toey, is his idol and he is blown

away by her passion for community service. He shared, "Inspire me to do something like that [community service]" (Aaron, personal communication, January 18, 2017). In addition, Aaron also aspires to execute the desired Instagram filter that Toey uses on her Instagram. "…I want to have the same filter, like that. That kind of filter that she use" (Aaron, personal communication, January 18, 2017). These findings disputes the Self-discrepancy theory, whereby any individual should experience emotional discomfort along with the presence of self-discrepancies, which is not in this study as the respective informants experience motivation and inspiration.

Second of all, another reason behind this unique relationship is because of the Instagram followers' active involvement in the activities that their respective ideal celebrities are doing. For example, William is playing basketball like his ideal basketball player, and Aaron is using Instagram like his ideal celebrity. Although the informants' levels of activities are perceivably not at par as their ideal celebrities, nonetheless being involved in the desired activities is a way of matching their actual selves to their ideal selves, hence these involvement positively fuels them. The act of emulating supports the Self-discrepancy theory whereby individuals attempt to pair their self-concept with their "…personally relevant self-guides…" (Higgins, 1987, p. 321). This finding also supports Garsbo and Wittberger's research whereby individuals do look at celebrities as standards for achieving aspiring attributes (Garsbo & Wittberger, 2014), such as the case of William and Aaron. Indeed, this finding coincides with the Self-discrepancy theory whereby "…these discrepancies can also motivate the individual to engage in behaviors that will reduce the discrepancy" (Vartanian, 2012, p. 711), in which informants' active involvement in

the desired activities is a way to reduce the gap between their selves and their ideal selves.

The aforementioned phenomenon could also explain the difference between Apple, Rose and Larry who experience the discrepant feelings concurrently with negative emotions. Onie, Rose and Larry did express that they feel motivated to achieve the desirable attributes based off their ideal celebrities, and their motivation circles around the respective attributes that they are lacking. For example, the female followers shared that they are motivated to be physically more attractive like their ideal celebrities. Rose shared, "It's like a motivation for me to prove [sic] to myself to go fitness, to go for exercise, so that I can have a better shape…" (Personal communication, January 19, 2017). As for Apple, she believes that she can be more attractive with motivation. Apple shared, "I feel that I can do better to make myself more beautiful or something like that…" (ibid). For the male follower, Larry, he desires the success of his ideal celebrity, Dan and friends, and expressed his motivation to work hard. "…if I work hard enough at the end, I will have like that, so maybe it is like a motivation, to motivate me…hey I want that life too" (Larry, personal communication, January 31, 2017). Even though the aforementioned informants expressed they felt motivated upon exposure to ideal celebrities' Instagram images, however the informants' lack of involvement and effort in the desired activities similar to their ideal celebrities made them feel dissatisfied and disappointed of their selves. This fascinating finding gives significant contribution to this research.

Thirdly, the individual's point of view on beauty is also another reason on why followers experience positive emotions in spite of self-discrepancies. For

example, Apple acknowledged that she desires to resemble her ideal celebrity, Lee, in terms of beauty and appearance. "Yeah, she's so beautiful, I wanna [sic] be like her…" (Apple, personal communication, January 17, 2017). Apple also expressed that she wish she could be as tall as her ideal celebrity, and aspire to dress like the celebrity (ibid). Despite experiencing discrepancies between her actual self and her ideal self based off her ideal celebrity, Apple is happy about herself nonetheless as she believes beauty can come in different forms. She shared, "…We can be pretty in our own way" (Apple, Personal communication, March 3, 2017). An individual's personal perspective or point of view sincerely helps individuals such as Apple to have an assertive and empowered self, and this finding enriches the understanding on the presence of positive emotions in spite of self-discrepancies.

Fourthly, the informant's non-obsessiveness towards ideal celebrity or celebrities in general, also contribute as a reason towards the positive emotions that the informant is feeling about herself. "Actually, I'm not into those celebrities. Just looking like, just like that ah [sic]" (Apple, personal communication, January 17, 2017). The testament of Apple may indicate that the informant is not fully invested in her idealization on the ideal celebrity. Because of the minimum idealization hence non-obsession, the informant does not feel she is inferior to her ideal celebrity. Thus, this finding provides a credible insight in this study.

Not forgetting, another reason on why the presence of self-discrepancies and positive emotions exist is because of the informant's acceptance of reality, which helped negotiate the relationship between self-discrepancies and her positive emotions. Being able to accept the reality of life makes the fifth reason. Apple shared, "Sometimes I want to be like some person, but we can't, right?"

(Personal communication, January 17, 2017). This statement shows that Apple is accepting the fact that it is unlikely for two persons to be the same. She also acknowledged that her beauty is not the same as celebrities, which is another way of accepting the reality of her circumstance. "…I'm not beautiful as them" (ibid). Similar to Onie and Rose, acceptance is a way of coping with self-discrepancies in this discrepancy/positive emotions relationship, which explains why Apple could still feel happy about herself. Thus, acceptance gives meaningful coherence in this thesis.

The aforementioned statements indeed show how the discrepancies can be reduced through the perspective of beauty, non-obsessiveness on ideal celebrity or celebrities in general, and acceptance, which provides significant contributions to this study. The aforementioned elements are beyond the mimicking behavior that the Self-discrepancy theory suggests to minimize the incompatibilities between selves.

4.2.1.3 Followers' actual self is discrepant and concurrently, non-discrepant from ideal self

Data analysis yields that in exposure to celebrities' Instagram images, informants can also experience having discrepant and concurrently, non-discrepant feelings between their actual and ideal selves, with positive emotions. In which the Self-discrepancy theory initially assumes that the presence of either positive or negative emotions will guide the researcher to discover the presence of discrepancy between actual and ideal self, the aforementioned finding in this thesis clearly introduces a new perspective for the theory to consider concurrencies of discrepancies as well as non-discrepancies between the selves. This is also a new type of relationship, reflected in Figure 4.4, which is a unique manner that is not reported in

the Self-discrepancy theory. One female informant and two male informants reported to experience this relationship in perceiving their selves.

| EMOTIONAL RESPONSES | |
|---|---|
| **FOLLOWERS' PERCEIVED SELF-CONCEPT** | |
| **No discrepancy between actual self and ideal self** | **Discrepancy between actual self and ideal self** |
| **Presence of positive outcomes / emotions** Inspiration, Motivation, Being Proud of Selves, Happiness, Contentment, Satisfaction, Normalcy | **Presence of negative outcomes / emotions** Dissatisfaction, Disappointment, Sadness |
| **TOTAL: 3** **2M, 1F** | |

Figure 4.4: The Relationship Between Discrepancy and Non-Discrepancy with

Positive Outcomes/Emotions

Similar to the previous relationship between discrepancy and positive outcomes/emotions in Figure 4.3, the informants in this current relationship also express their desirability to be like their ideal celebrities. This expression

acknowledges there is a presence of discrepancy between the informants and their respective ideal celebrities. For the female informant, her desire is expressed in the form of way of living. Tammie yearns the lifestyle of her ideal celebrity, Victoria Beckham. Tammie shared, "…She lies [sic] in a good life and I wish I could have that" (Personal communication, January 17, 2017). For the male informants, their desires are expressed in the form of wealth and success. For Henry, he responded that he would like to be as rich as his ideal celebrities (Personal communication, January 24, 2017). As for Ian, he admires the hard work that his ideal singer, Bun with his Exo group members, put over the years to win awards and be where they are (Personal communication, January 31, 2017). In short, Ian wants and is motivated to achieve success like his ideal celebrity. "…So I need to do my best to be like them" (ibid). Although the discrepancies through the desires are different among the informants, nonetheless wealth, success and form of living could be categorized under the umbrella term of lifestyle. The reason on why the aforementioned desires under the category of lifestyle exists is because values and lifestyles are among the desires that people wish to be like the celebrities they admire, which is also supported by credible research (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Marcus, 2015; Marwick, 2015; Meisser, 2015).

Along with the discrepancies, the researcher found out that all informants reported experiencing motivation and inspiration, which are a form of positive emotions. This is exactly the same phenomenon that the male followers, Aaron and William, go through in the relationship of discrepancy and positive outcomes/emotions. For example, Henry reported he feels empowered when he comes across the Instagram pictures of his ideal celebrities. He shared, "I feel good. I feel

like I get power from them" (Henry, personal communication, January 24, 2017). He

also added his ideal celebrities "…motivates and pushes me" (Henry, personal

communication, March 3, 2017). This is similar with Ian whereby his ideal celebrity

and crew members, although an idol to him, acts as an inspiration, as shown below.

> "He is just my idol. I don't need to be like them. But just my
> inspiration to do something good for my life. Something
> that is better for my life…" (Ian, Personal
> communication, January 31, 2017).

Similarly, the female Instagram follower also mentioned that she looks

at celebrities' Instagram pictures as inspiration while feeling positive about herself as

indicated in her responses below.

> "When I look at their pictures, I try to find something
> that can be an inspiration in my life. ……. I'm always
> satisfied and happy about myself. No one can let me down,
> unless I let them. I'm proud to be me"
> (Tammie, Personal communication, March 4, 2017).

The finding that followers experience motivation and inspiration, in

spite of discrepancies, contradicts the Self-discrepancy theory whereby individuals

will experience emotional discomfort for not matching with their aspiring celebrities,

which is clearly not the case. What is also noteworthy in this research is that in

comparison to previous relationship, only male informants were reported

experiencing motivation and inspiration, but in this concurrencies relationship, both

genders experience motivation and inspiration. The reason on why followers

experience the aforementioned emotions is because both genders experience a strong

sense of feeling proud of one's self. The researcher also believes that the culmination

of feeling proud of one's self that subsequently led to motivation and inspiration, is

the reason the concurrencies between the presence and absence of self-discrepancies

coupled with positive emotions work out.

This leads this research to the next angle of this unique relationship, whereby

Instagram followers, with their self-discrepant feelings, are also experiencing non-

discrepancy between their selves and their ideal selves together with positive

emotions.

As mentioned earlier, in this distinctive relationship, the researcher

learned that on top of experiencing discrepant feelings between their selves and their

ideal celebrities, the informants are also experiencing non-discrepant feelings, and

that they feel positive about their selves. For example, for the female Instagram

follower, the researcher discovered that she despise posting as other people, not even

her ideal celebrity, but herself. Tammie was very assertive and confident and also

expressed that she feels positive about herself as she is proud of being who she is.

> "I don't wanna [sic] be somebody else. That's not who I am.
> I am who I am …I'm always satisfied and happy about myself…
> I'm proud to be me" (Tammie, Personal communication,
> March 4, 2017).

Similarly, one of the male informants, Ian also expressed he is proud of

himself. He shared, "…I'm so proud that [sic] born to be Ian" (Ian, personal

communication, March 3, 2017). The researcher also found out that when it comes to

posting on Instagram, Ian has his own style via personal Instagram hashtag to publish

on his personal account (Personal communication, January 31, 2017). A person

having and developing his or her personal style is a way of living an authentic life.

Therefore, the researcher found it quite interesting to discover that with both

female and male informants, they also do not find their selves discrepantly from their

ideal celebrities as they have a strong sense to post as their actual selves, and this ties

with them feeling positively proud of themselves. These findings contradict with

Garsbo and Wittberger's 2014 Instagram research. The aforementioned research

suggested that their participants "…are very influential and adapt their behavior to

who they were following" (Garsbo & Wittberger, 2014, p. 72). Unlike Garsbo and

Wittberger's research, the aforementioned informants in this thesis are not inclined to

imitate posting according to the ideal celebrities that they're following, as this is due

to their strong sense of their actual and authentic selves. This attributes the idea of

authenticity, which is one of the reasons behind the existing relationship between

discrepancy and non-discrepancy with positive emotions.

The researcher also learned that Instagram followers finding their actual selves

similar with their ideal celebrities is a way of feeling non-discrepant from their ideal

celebrities. Finding similarities with ideal celebrities is another reason on why the

presence of non-discrepant feelings in informants, exists. In this research, the

informants' interests along with capabilities play a role in bridging similarities

between informants' selves and their ideal celebrities. For instance, Ian enjoys

traveling, and his ideal celebrity and crew members travel a lot. When asked whether

seeing pictures of his ideal celebrity makes him sad about himself, Ian disagrees and

asserts, "Because I can travel hahahaha…" (Ian, personal communication, January 31,

2017). This shows Ian does not feel different from his ideal celebrity because he is

capable to travel as well. This finding also proves again how it supports the Self-

discrepancy theory, whereby any individual who feels that he or she shares

compatibility with his or her ideal celebrities will experience emotional pleasantness.

In addition, Ian also acknowledged that he feels positive about himself because he is

happy with what he has. "I feel what I have and what I need is okay. I don't need something more" (ibid). The statement describes the feeling of contentment and satisfaction, which inevitably supports the reason behind the presence of positive emotions in Ian's life.

Another reason behind the existence of informants experiencing non-discrepancies between their selves and their ideal celebrities is their conscious knowledge about the information on social media may not be reliably true. The knowledge in this context refers to celebrities' Instagram images. Tammie declared her own knowledge keeps her grounded. She shared, "…sometimes, some celebrities pose something that is not that good, so it has no effect on me because I know what is good and what is bad…" (Tammie, personal communication, January 17, 2017). As mentioned in the relationship of no discrepancy/positive emotions, the generation that we are living at this day of age is more educated and versatile when it comes to social media information. Not only the generation has the knowledge, but they also are engaged in the practices of improving one's visual self-presentation images on social media through filters and so forth. These aforementioned reasons and explanations provide credibility to the communication phenomenon that this thesis is addressing.

The conscious knowledge of social media takes a further step when there are informants, such as Henry, who knows celebrities on a personal and intimate level in real life in which the informants are exposed and educated to not easily believe the celebrities' images they see, thus strengthening their actual selves. This is the final reason on the existence of the relationship between discrepancy and non-discrepancy with positive emotion. For Henry, he responded that he feels normal when exposed to celebrities' Instagram images. Henry answered, "Might be, because,

because I know how they [celebrities] are" (Personal communication, January 24, 2017). Not only that, Henry mentioned that for the celebrities that he knows in real life, he observed they are dissimilar in pictures and in persons. Henry indicated that the celebrities are "different persons" (ibid) between on and off the social media platforms. Therefore, informants who are armed with conscious knowledge, be it general or personal, helps them not to fantasize the ideas associated with celebrities' Instagram images and thus, experience non-discrepant feelings between their selves and ideal celebrities. Thus, having personal convictions on the information presented on social media explains the absence of non-discrepancies between informants' selves and their ideal celebrities, thus assisting followers in their negotiation of their self-discrepancies along with their non-discrepancies of their selves, to co-exist.

4.2.2 The ways Instagram followers visually self-present themselves on their personal Instagram accounts in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images

In this thesis, the second response addresses followers' visual self-presentation is in terms of behavioral response, and it reads: RQ #2.2: How do Instagram followers visually self-present themselves on their personal Instagram accounts in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images?

To answer RQ #2.2 above, data analyses yield that there are two ways Instagram followers visually self-present themselves on their personal Instagram accounts in correspondence with celebrities' Instagram images. Firstly, followers' visual self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' images through their reports of feeling strong sentiments of themselves, giving opportunities for the public to get to know them, abstain from presenting their selves as fake, having personal and

conscious knowledge of celebrities and their images, not obsessing of celebrities' pictures, and not finding posting pictures as important. In addition, followers also mentioned that they are visually self-presenting their selves as individuals, their personal life and its realities, as well as part of their lives. These aforementioned reports reflect followers' visually self-presenting their actual selves. This summary is reflected in Figure 4.5 on page 122.

There are cases whereby followers imitate celebrities' fashion, however these behavioral imitations are documented off the Instagram platform. Instead of exact imitation on Instagram, what the researcher discovered that the majority of followers' visual self-presentation shares similar themes with their ideal celebrities' images, such as travel, composition, luxurious vehicle, fashion, family, poses, and sports.

Secondly, followers' visual self-presentation is absent and concurrently, present from imitating celebrities' images. This behavioral manner presents a new relationship in the theoretical framework of this thesis. The corresponding followers visually self-present their selves absently from imitating celebrities' Instagram images through their reports and researcher's analysis of personalized hash tag, composing their selves differently from ideal celebrities, and creating their own color tone. These findings reflect followers' visually self-presenting their actual selves. This summary is reflected in Figure 4.14 on page 142.

Through the followers' reports and the researcher's analysis, the respectively followers also visually self-present their selves by imitating celebrities' Instagram images in terms of posing as well as capturing the same building. The followers reported that they are motivated and inspired to imitate due to their personal interests, such as love of vintage, showcasing portfolio, trends, to look good. Even though the

followers imitate, nonetheless in their imitating behavior, they try to have their own personal take away, such as posing differently from the ideal celebrity, creating own color tone, and giving variety of ways to express one's actual selves that makes them look good. These aforementioned findings again reflect followers' visually self-presenting their actual selves. This summary is again reflected in the aforementioned Figure 4.14 on page 142. There is an imitation case based on celebrities' interest on plants portrayed through images, however this behavior imitation is documented off the Instagram platform.

Instead of exact imitation on Instagram, what the researcher discovered that the majority of followers' visual self-presentation shares similar themes with their ideal celebrities' images, such as attractiveness, landscape, building, water scenes, self-portraits, pose, fashion, places, Instagram tone and execution. Sections 4.2.2.1 and 4.2.2.2 will explain on how Instagram followers visually self-present in detail.

4.2.2.1 Followers' visual self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' images

From the data collection, the researcher learned that in corresponding with celebrities' images, out of 12 informants, eight informants namely four males and four females respectively, do not imitate celebrities' images on the Instagram platform. This revelation, procured from textually analyzing informants' personal Instagram images as well as their interviews, subsequently indicates that the majority of Instagram followers' visual self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' images on the Instagram platform. These very same informants also reported that they project their actual selves. The relationship between absence of imitation with actual self is revealed in Figure 4.5.

| BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES | |
|---|---|
| **FOLLOWERS' VISUAL SELF-PRESENTATION ON INSTAGRAM** | |
| **Actual Self** | **Ideal Self** |
| Absence from imitating celebrities' images | Imitating celebrities' images |
| **TOTAL: 8** **4M, 4F** | |

Figure 4.5: The Relationship Between Absence of Imitation with Actual Self

From the respective informants, the researcher learned that informants do not desire to imitate celebrities' Instagram images for their personal visual self-presentation, as they feel a strong sentiment of being true to one's self, such as the case of Tammie. When asked whether she is posting as herself or somebody else, Tammie responded below. Her behavior and manner of posting about herself is due to her personal interest to remain true to herself. This finding on Tammie coincides with Erving Goffman's view on self-presentation, whereby any individual manages his or her behavior and appearance to "…convey an impression to others which it is in his [sic] interests to convey (Goffman, 1956, p. 3). Thus, she truly detests posting as anybody else other than herself, and she is proud of herself.

"As myself…I don't want to be somebody else. That's not who

> I am. I am who I am …… I'm always satisfied and happy about
> myself. No one can let me down, unless I let them. I'm proud
> to be me" (Tammie, Personal communication, March 4, 2017).

Tammie's testament indeed implied that it is her personal interest to projecting her actual self on her personal Instagram account. In addition, Tammie's testament is aligned with the result of the researcher's prior analysis on the aforementioned informant's personal Instagram pictures. Among the 21 personal Instagram images that the researcher analyzed, the researcher did not detect any visual imitation between Tammie and her ideal celebrities. What stood out more for the researcher is that the aforementioned informant and her ideal celebrities share similar themes in their visual self-presentations, which is travel. This similarity is reflected in Figure 4.6.

Nonetheless, in spite of the similarity in themes, the researcher did not identify any exact imitation between Tammie's Instagram images and her ideal celebrities. Thus, the researcher deduce that not only Tammie's visual self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' Instagram images, but she also safely assumes that the informant is visually self-presenting her actual self on her personal Instagram account as it is her personal interest to remain true herself.
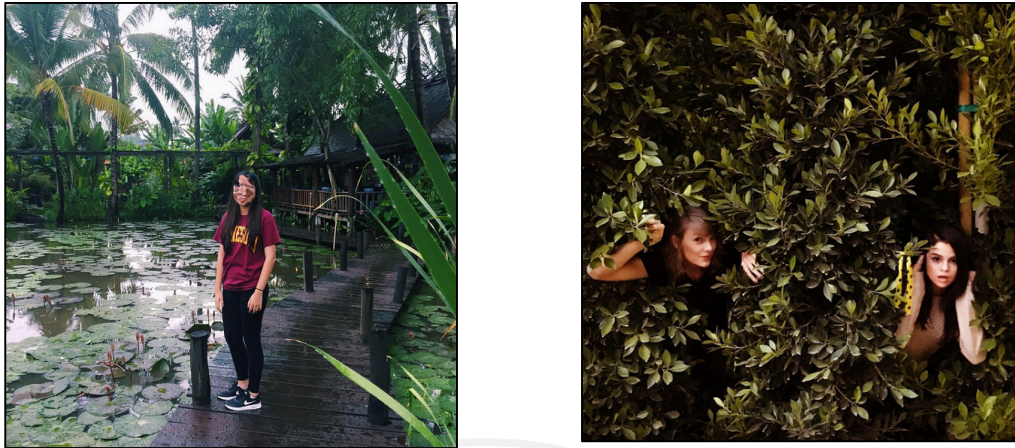
Figure 4.6: Similar Travel Theme Between Tammie and Her Ideal Celebrity, Taylor

Swift

Moreover, another informant shared that by being true to one's self, it gives other people an opportunity to get to know informants better, like the case of Tim, shown below.

> "It is okay to let somebody knows [sic] about myself, because if somebody knows, at least they will know who I am and know who I really admire too" (Tim, Personal communication, February 2, 2017).

When the researcher analyzed the aforementioned informant's Instagram images, all that the researcher could learn about the informant is that he is quite romantic and a pensive person, and he has interest in bowling. However, the researcher was not able to learn about the celebrity that Tim really admires. The researcher gathered that it is because the informant posts only four Instagram posts from December 2015 to December 2016, which was the research range determined in this thesis, thus the researcher only has limited pictures to analyze and to gain more insights.

Nonetheless, in the researcher's textual analysis of the informant's Instagram images, the researcher did not find any exact visual imitation between the informant and his ideal celebrity, therefore strengthening the informant's case of visually presenting his actual self. Tim did point out however, that he copies quotes to communicate about himself to the public, and to enlighten others as well. He uses these quotes as captions to accompany his Instagram posts. Nonetheless, the caption does not address the behavioral imitation that this thesis is tackling.

> "I used to quote from other people to inspire others too…to let them know that [sic] how I am. What kind of person I am. Yeah" (Tim, Personal communication, February 2, 2017).

What stood out for the researcher is that the informant and his ideal celebrity shared similar themes in their Instagram visual self-presentations, which is them positioned near or in the ocean. The similar-themes phenomenon is the same experience with the previously mentioned female informant. For Tim, his Instagram posts reveal him standing and sitting overlooking the ocean, with his back facing the camera. For his ideal celebrity, Pewdiepie, the celebrity's visual self-presentation also disclose him either standing near or inside the ocean, however Pewdiepie's face can usually be seen in front or at the side of the camera. This pictorial comparison can be reflected in Figure 47. The phenomenon that informants and ideal celebrities have similar themes in their visual self-presentation is indeed common, which the researcher continues to learn in the following informants. Thus, the researcher deduces that although there are similarities in theme, Tim's visual self-presentation is nonetheless absent from imitating celebrities' Instagram images, and that the

informant is visually self-presenting his actual self on his personal Instagram account.



Figure 4.7: Similar Ocean Theme Between Tim and His Ideal Celebrity, Pewdiepie.

Besides having a strong sentiment of being true to one's self, the researcher also discovered that in informants' visual self-presentation, they abstain from presenting fakery of their selves on their personal Instagram accounts. This finding on Tammie coincides again with Erving Goffman's view on self-presentation, whereby any individual manages his or her behavior and appearance to "…convey an impression to others which it is in his [sic] interests to convey (Goffman, 1956, p. 3), and for Honey, it is her personal interest to not visually presenting herself as fake on her Instagram account. For Honey, she has two Instagram accounts, and she responded that she is presenting as her self on both accounts.

> "It is both me. I didn't try to fake myself in my main account. I will post picture that is beautiful, make my Instagram tone become nice. But in my private account, I also be me" (Honey, Personal communication, January 24, 2017).

Honey's testament is indeed further supported by the researcher's prior analysis on the aforementioned informant's personal Instagram pictures. Among the 26 personal Instagram images being analyzed, the researcher did not detect any exact visual imitation between Honey and her ideal celebrity.

What stood out more for the researcher is that the aforementioned informant and her ideal celebrity share similar themes in their visual self-presentations, which is fashion and family. Regardless of the similarity in themes, the researcher did not identify any exact imitation between Honey's Instagram images and her ideal celebrity. Thus, the researcher safely assumes that the informant is visually self-presenting her actual self on her personal Instagram account, which also explains the absence of imitating celebrities' Instagram images in her Instagram account. Therefore, the researcher deduce that Honey's visual self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' Instagram images, and that she is visually self-presenting her actual self on her personal Instagram account.

Along with presenting Honey's authentic self, the researcher found out that the same informant is also interested to express herself in her own creative way. For Honey, the tone of celebrities' Instagram images gives her aspirations as shown below.

> "…that when we look at their tone, when we look at her
> profile, and then her tone is very nice…very nice, so
> sometimes I want to make my tone become nice too"
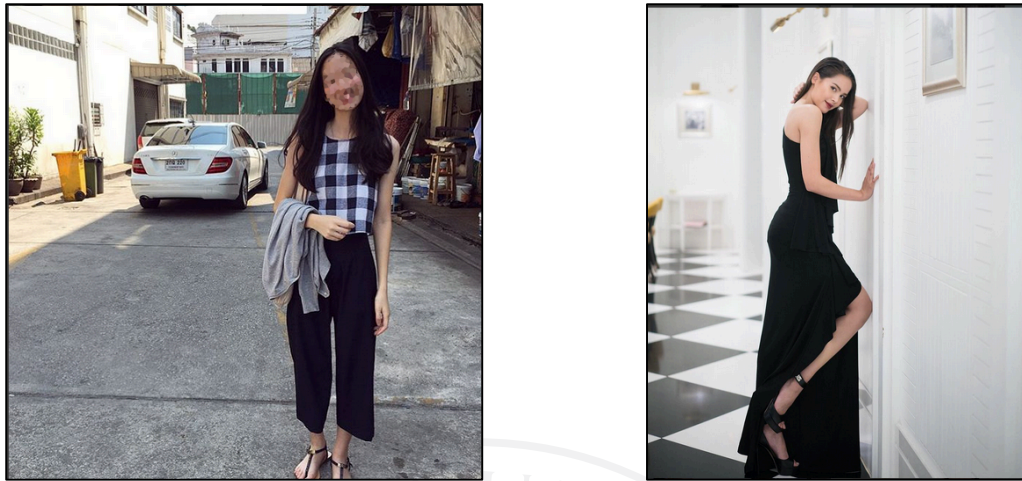> (Honey, Personal communication, January 24, 2017).

Figure 4.8: A Comparison On Tone Between Honey and Her Ideal Celebrity,

Urassaya.

When asked whether her tone will be the same as her ideal celebrity,

Honey was quick to disagree. "Different tone. Yes. Not the same tone, but my own

tone" (ibid). The comparison of tone is reflected in Figure 4.8. Creating her own tone

is a way of Honey asserting her actual self. This supports the researcher's

conceptualization between the linkage of personal interest and self-concept, as it is

"…the 'self' people presented to others" (Wong, 2012, p. 185). In the researcher's

textual analysis on the informant's Instagram images, the researcher again did not

find any distinct imitation in tone between the informant and her ideal celebrity.

Thus, the researcher reiterates that Honey's visual self-presentation is indeed absent

from imitating celebrities' Instagram images and also projecting her actual self as the

informant's testimonies are validated and supported between the researcher's textual

analysis on the informant's Instagram images and her interview.

Aside from visually presenting authentic and creative selves on

personal Instagram accounts, data analyses reveal that Instagram followers are also

equipped with personal and conscious knowledge on celebrities and their images.

For Henry, he shared that he is not inclined to imitate celebrities' Instagram images

as he observed celebrities are not the same persons in person and on their Instagram

accounts. Henry responded, "Yeah. Different persons" (Personal communication,

January 24, 2017), when asked to compare celebrities that he knows in real life and

their Instagram pictures. The observation does not happen in vacuum, as the

informant has direct contact with them. Henry shared, "I'm close to them, like in real

life" (ibid). Thus, the informant shared that he is more motivated to visually self-

present about himself and his actual life. "Just posting my life, where I go and, yeah.

What I do, those things" (ibid). Indeed, Henry's testament is aligned with the result

of the researcher's prior analysis on the aforementioned informant's personal

Instagram pictures. Among the 24 personal Instagrams that the researcher analyzed,

the researcher did observe that the informant regularly posted on the activities of his

life, whether it is socializing with friends, going to places or events, posting Happy

Birthday posts to his friends, and more. Indeed in Henry's case, his personal interest

is posting about his life and visually presenting the activities of his life on the

Instagram platform. Again, Erving Goffman's view on self-presentation is supported,

whereby any individual manages his or her behavior and appearance to "…convey

an impression to others which it is in his [sic] interests to convey (Goffman, 1956, p.

3), and in Henry's case, his personal interest to visually self-present himself is about

him and his actual life. In other words, Henry's visual self-presentation portrays his

actual self. Henry's Instagram pictures clearly coincides with existing research

whereby there is an distinct link between an individual's personal interest and how a

person self-presents (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006; Geurin-Eagleman & Burch,

2015; Goffman, 1956; Gonzales & Hancock, 2008; Hogan, 2010; Lindahl & Öhlund, 2013; Mendelson & Papacharissi, 2010; Wong, 2012). It should be noted that there is no detection of any visual imitation between Henry and his ideal celebrities.

In addition, the researcher also did not detect any similarity in themes between informant and his ideal celebrities' visual self-presentations, which is a direct oppositional experience from previously mentioned informants. This revelation is reflected in Figure 4.9. However, Henry did point out that he copied a sports quote and used it as a caption in one of his Instagram pictures. Thus, the researcher determines that although there is one sports quote that he copied and put it as a caption in his Instagram, nonetheless the caption does not address the behavioral imitation that this research is addressing. Tim's visual self-presentation is certainly absent from imitating celebrities' Instagram images, and that the informant is visually self-presenting his actual self on his personal Instagram account.



Figure 4.9: Dissimilarities in theme between Henry and his ideal athlete,

Kobe Bryant.

As for Larry, an analysis of his photographs indicates that the informant's conscious knowledge that celebrities' images on Instagram can potentially be false keeps him grounded, as shown below.

> "…when I play in Facebook or Instagram, I don't believe.
> I don't trust everything that I see there. Somehow it has to
> be fake…It is just a fake perfect world they are showing us…"
> (Larry, Personal communication, January 31, 2017).

With the conscious knowledge that the Instagram pictures which celebrities are presenting to followers can be a façade, this realization certainly is a reason that Instagram followers are not encouraged the imitating behavior of celebrities' pictures. The researcher also learned that the informant's conscious knowledge also aid the informant to visually present the realities of his life as it is. "…I tell myself that to be careful not to believe in everything that I see, cause can't [sic]. I have to be like the real life" (ibid). When asked whether he is posting as himself or somebody else, Larry responded, "It is an exaggerated me…it is a [sic] real me, but it is exaggerated" (ibid). The informant further elaborated that in real life, he is a funny and crazy person, but in Instagram, the informant goes the extra mile, as he explained below.

> "…In Instagram, I try to do more, like showing my abs, or even I don't
> know, put some make up one, so it is really an exaggerated me, but it
> is a [sic] real me…" (ibid).

Although one may be quick to assume that the hyperbolic or exaggeration of Larry means falsehood, or showcasing a false self of the aforementioned informant in this situation, however, this is not the case as Larry is portraying his actual self but in a grander and more exciting scale. Larry's testament coincides with Wong, as well as Mendelson and Papacharissi's research, whereby a person's selected visual self-presentation may not be necessarily false as these attributes "…reflected their own

values" (2012, p. 186), and in those selection, "…they are presenting a highly selective version of themselves" (Mendelson & Papacharissi, 2010, p. 252). Undeniably, the informant self-reported that off the Instagram platform, he is a fun person to be with, in which according to the informant, his friends also attested his character. Larry shared, "…I want them to see the real me, you know, not just the appearance…I prefer my character than my appearance" (Personal communication, January 31, 2017).

Indeed, Larry's testament is aligned with the result of the researcher's prior analysis on the aforementioned informant's personal Instagram pictures. Among the 24 personal Instagrams being analyzed, it was observed that the informant posted pictures where he is extremely comical, such as the informant sitting inside a small bucket in the bathroom while laughing, to acting and posing like a woman with a frangipani behind his ear, reflected in Figure 4.10. Based on conversation with him below, his visual self-presentation is motivated from his intrinsic desire to make people laugh.

> "I like, you know, that when people say, 'You know, I had
> a bad day, but you made my day'…it's cool to know that
> it is because of me, I'm the reason of the laugh"
> (Larry, Personal communication, January 31, 2017).

In Larry's case, as his personal interest is to make people laugh, Larry's interest plays a huge role in determining his aforementioned choices to visually self-present himself on his personal Instagram account. Indeed, Larry's testimony solidifies Goffman's self-presentation theoretical framework whereby any individual manages his or her behavior and appearance to "…convey an impression to others which it is in his [sic] interests to convey" (Goffman, 1956, p. 36), and for

Larry, his personal interest is to make someone laugh, and the informant

accomplishes that by visually self-presenting his "exaggerated" (Larry, personal

communication, January 31, 2017) self. The aforementioned explanations are the

reason behind the existence of the distinctive link between personal interests and

how a person self-presents presents (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006; Geurin-

Eagleman & Burch, 2015; Goffman, 1956; Gonzales & Hancock, 2008; Hogan,

2010; Lindahl & Öhlund, 2013; Mendelson & Papacharissi, 2010; Wong, 2012), thus

making this finding a significant contribution to this research.



Figure 4.10: Larry's Visual Self-presentation of His Exaggerated Self.

Interestingly, the researcher also learned from the Larry that he is a

type of person who overthinks, and thus prefers to surround himself with friends as

indicated below.

> "…every time I have something in my life, I prefer to avoid
> it, just to go with friends and don't think about it…"
> (Larry, Personal communication, January 31, 2017).

This is evident in his visual self-presentation on his Instagram account, where the researcher observed that the informant is pictured quite frequently doing joyful activities or traveling with his family, friends and girlfriend. Although at first glance, it may seem that the informant is not visually presenting his actual self because he is selectively instagramming himself, however, the researcher keeps in mind that the informant's visual self-presentation is still reflecting part of his life.

Larry also shared that there are parts of his life that he does not intend the public to know. However, he affirmed that it is still his life. He responded,

> "Of course, but it is not someone completely different…I'm not on social network like some other people to make a new life …it is not another life, it is just my life. (Larry, Personal communication, January 31, 2017).

In continuation with those findings on analyzing Larry's Instagram images, no detection of any visual imitation between Henry and his ideal celebrities was found. However, the researcher did detect one picture from the informant that has a similar theme with his ideal celebrity's Instagram account, which is a luxurious vehicle. The respective up-close Instagram picture depicts a luxurious motorcycle. When analyzing the ideal celebrity's Instagram account, the researcher did not detect any picture of motorcycles. However, the ideal celebrity did visually self-present other luxurious vehicles often, such as cars and jets. Even though there is a presence of similarity, nonetheless the researcher only detected one picture from the informant, thus making thing the phenomenon extremely minor. Therefore, the researcher deduced that Larry's visual self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' Instagram images, and that he is visually self-presenting his actual self, which is his amplified self in this case, on his personal Instagram account.

Another interesting fact that the researcher discovered about Instagram followers' visual self-presentation and their exposure to celebrities' Instagram images, is the non-obsession feelings that the informants have towards celebrities' pictures. The non-obsession is revealed through how the informants treat their exposure to celebrities' Instagram images. Informants generally shared that seeing Instagram pictures of celebrities is a passive activity. Onie shared, "Sometimes we look at celebrities' pictures, just like, look through it, and then gone. Nothing much…" (Personal communication, January 19, 2017). This passive sentiment is also shared with Apple. "Actually, I'm not into those celebrities. Just looking like, just like that ah [sic]" (Apple, personal communication, January 17, 2017). Due to their nonchalant treatments towards being exposed to celebrities' Instagram images, the researcher was not surprised when both informants reported that they are visually self-presenting as their actual selves on their Instagram accounts. When asked if she is posting as her self or somebody else, Onie responded, "Just me. If I feel like I want to post, I just post" (Personal communication, January 19, 2017). When asked the same aforesaid question, Apple answered, "My true self" (Personal communication, January 17, 2017). The minimum investment, in terms of idealization on celebrities and their images, is a reason for Instagram followers to not be motivated to imitate celebrities' Instagram images.

The testaments of Onie and Apple are further supported by the researcher's prior analysis on the aforementioned informants' personal Instagram pictures. In the 22 personal Instagram images that the researcher analyzed, the researcher did not detect any distinct visual imitation between Onie and her ideal celebrity. However, the researcher did observe that the aforementioned informant

and her ideal celebrity share similar themes in their visual self-presentations, which is travel. This similarity is reflected in Figure 4.11. The researcher also arrived at the same analysis for Apple, whereby in the 26 Instagram images belonging to the aforementioned informant, there was no exact visual imitation between Apple and her ideal celebrity, yet the visual self-presentations between Apple and her ideal celebrity share similar themes, which are fashion and poses. This similarity is reflected in Figure 4.12.



Figure 4.11: Similar Travel Theme Between Onie and Her Ideal Celebrity, Pallida.
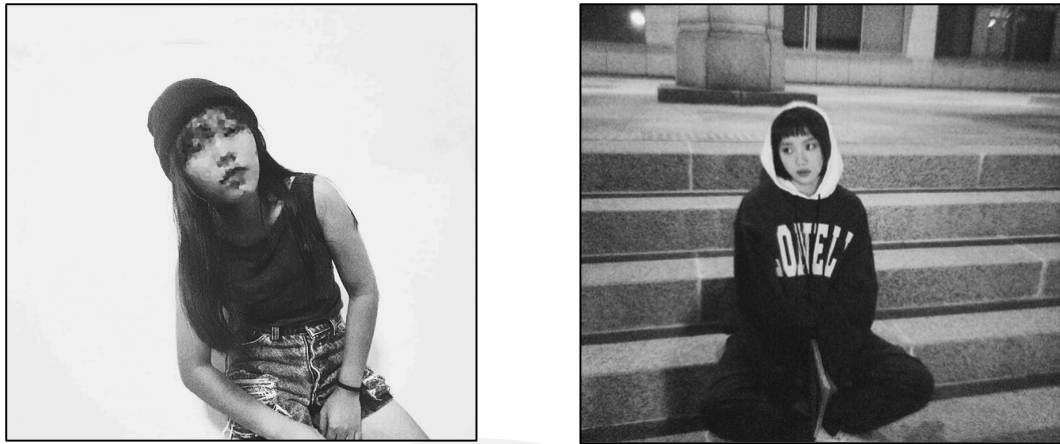
Figure 4.12: Similar Fashion and Pose Theme Between Apple and Her Ideal

Celebrity, Lee Sung Kyung.

Before the researcher can conclude on the followers' visual self-presentations on their Instagram, there is another fascinating fact that the researcher did not expect to discover. When asked whether the exposure of celebrities' Instagram images has any effect on their visual self-presentations, both informants revealed that the effect is not documented on their visual self-presentations on Instagram, but rather, the effect is applied outside of the Instagram platform. Onie shared,

> "…I look up when I dress in my real life, but not in the pictures…like, I look at her pictures and see how she dress and when I like it, I copy her but not to post the pictures…" (Personal communication, January 19, 2017).

Apple also shares the exact sentiment. She mentioned,

> "In posting pictures, no. But in dressing the way they dress, I wanna [sic] dress like them, yes…yes, outside [of Instagram]. Like posting pictures, no. I don't pose like them" (Apple, personal communication, January 19, 2017).

The reason behind the testaments of Onie and Apple is because individuals typically desire to be like the celebrities that they admire (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Marcus, 2015; Marwick, 2015; Meisser, 2015), and in the case of the two aforementioned informants, the desire lies in the celebrities' fashion. Not only do followers desire, but they are also learning current and acceptable social trends on celebrities' fashion (Gorin & Dubied, 2011, as cited in Meisser, 2015) to the point of imitating the celebrities' dressings off the Instagram platform (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Gorin & Dubied, 2011, as cited in Meisser, 2015). However, Onie and Apple do not consider owning the imitating the celebrities' dressings as part of their identities and their selves, which contradicts with the research of Feasey and Gamson (Feasey, 2008 & Gamson, 1994, as cited in Marwick & Boyd, 2011). Possibly because with the growing sense of self-empowerment, there is more value and a sense of pride when individuals do not give in to incorporating other people into their perceived self-concepts, which is a way of containing one's actual self. Although the respective informants do imitate celebrities' fashion from exposure of celebrities' Instagram images, nonetheless, the imitation is applied outside of the Instagram platform. Therefore, from the testimonies above, the researcher deduce that the Instagram visual self-presentations of Onie and Apple are absent from imitating celebrities' Instagram images, and thereafter, they are visually self-presenting their actual selves on their respective Instagram accounts.

The non-obsession in celebrities' pictures is not the only nonchalant response that Instagram followers experience in this thesis. The researcher also discovered that there is an informant who does not find posting visual self-presentations as important. For William, it is not a life or death situation when it comes to posting pictures.

> "I think I just post what I like to post…I don't think it [posting pictures] is very serious. So, I don't really care for that post…"
> (William, personal communication, January 20, 2017).

In William's case, his personal interest is that posting is not a serious matter. However, despite the unimportance, William did assure that when he does post, he is being authentic. "…I don't create a picture. I am who I am" (ibid). In other words, William self-reportedly portrays his actual self. William's testament shows support that an individual's self-interest will determine how he or she will present (Goffman, 1956), thus making this finding credible to this research.

William's testament on his visual self-presentation is indeed aligned with the result of the researcher's prior analysis on the aforementioned informant's personal Instagram pictures. In the 11 personal Instagram pictures that the researcher analyzed, the researcher observed that the informant posted on his life, such as his sports and social activities, as well as Happy Birthday posts for his friends. The researcher did not detect any visual imitation between William and his ideal celebrity, a basketball player.

Besides that, the researcher also did not detect a major similarity in themes between the informant and his ideal role model's visual self-presentation. This thematic contrast is reflected in Figure 4.13. There were only two Instagram pictures that the researcher observed that has sports theme, but none of the two respective pictures relayed basketball sports. William however did point out that for one of the pictures, he copied a sports quote from his ideal celebrity and used it as a caption for the particular Instagram post. This is the same case as Henry. The caption that William copied, however, does not address the behavioral imitation that this thesis is addressing. Therefore, William's visual self-presentation is certainly absent

from imitating celebrities' Instagram images, and that the informant is visually self-presenting his actual self on his personal Instagram account.
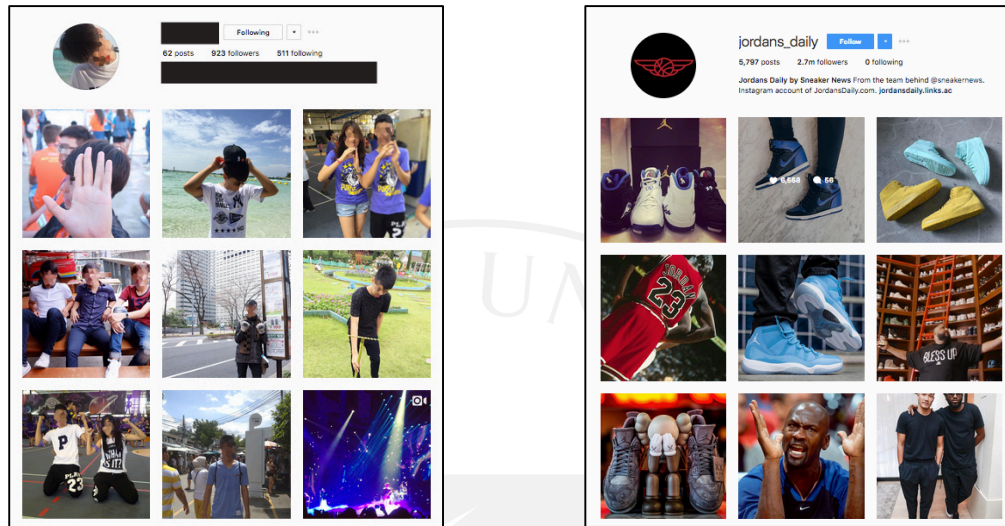


Figure 4.13: Dissimilarities in Theme Between William and His Ideal Athlete, Michael Jordan.

4.2.2.2 Followers' visual self-presentation is absent and concurrently, present from imitating celebrities' images

In this thesis, it is already ascertained that the majority of followers' visual self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' Instagram images. In other words, the Instagram followers are visually self-presenting their actual selves on their personal Instagram accounts. However, in the followers' efforts to presenting their actual selves and keeping their pictures imitation-free from celebrities' images, the researcher discovered that it is very possible for Instagram followers to also imitate celebrities' Instagram images at the same time. Four informants, namely two

females and males respectively, experience this relationship. This is a new

relationship, revealed in Figure 4.14.

| BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES | |
| --- | --- |
| FOLLOWERS' VISUAL SELF-PRESENTATION ON INSTAGRAM | |
| **Actual Self** | **Ideal Self** |
| | |
| Absence from imitating celebrities' images | Imitating celebrities' images |
| **TOTAL: 4** **2M, 2F** | |

Figure 4.14: The Relationship Between Absence and Presence of Imitation with

Actual Self

From the textual analysis conducted, the researcher discovered that the

presence of imitation is minimal as the majority of Instagram followers' behavioral

response are free from imitating celebrities' Instagram images. The researcher was

only able to detect three pictures that had direct semblance with celebrities' Instagram

images. Thus, this makes the case that the behavioral imitation is indeed minor.

Nonetheless, in the followers' visual self-presentations, there seemed to be a difference of theme between genders when it comes to imitation. For instance, the imitation from the female informants is related to posing. This imitation is reflected in Figure 4.15 and Figure 4.16.
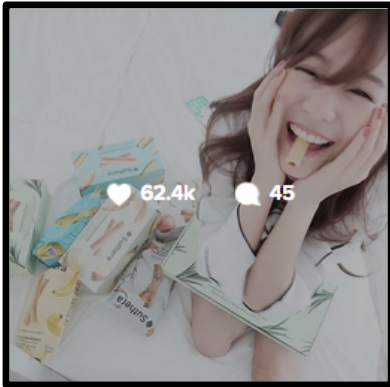


Figure 4.15: An Instagram Picture From a Thai Celebrity, Pimtha.

Figure 4.16: An Instagram Picture Imitating Pimtha's Pose (Both Palms on Side of Face).

As for the male informant, the imitation was a picture of the same building instagrammed by his ideal celebrity, although taken in a different angle and has a different tone. This imitation is reflected in Figure 4.17 and Figure 4.18.

Figure 4.17: An Instagram Picture
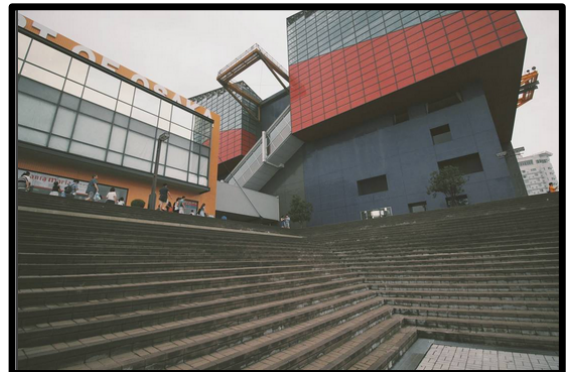From Ideal Celebrity,
Toey.



Figure 4.18: The Male Informant's
Instagram Picture of the Same
Building in Toey's Instagram
in Figure 4.17.

From the in-depth interviews, the informants also pointed out the Instagram images that they imitate from celebrities. Similar to the textual analysis, there were only three pictures indicated from both genders, which strengthens the idea that behavioral imitation is truly minor. This time around, however, the theme for the imitation is posing for both female and male informants. The pictorial examples are indicated in Figure 4.19 and Figure 4.20.

Figure 4.19: An Example of a Female
Informant Imitating a
Celebrity's Pose.



Figure 4.20: An Example of a Male
Informant Imitating a
Celebrity's Pose.

When asked the reasons behind imitating celebrities' images,

informants shared that it is their personal interest that geared them to pose that way.

Instagram followers' personal interests, such as creating one's own style, trends gives

more actions for self-expression, and imitating celebrities' pose make followers look

good, motivate the case of Rose, Ingrid, Aaron and Ian to imitate celebrities'

Instagram images. But when one looks closely into the aforementioned types of

personal interests, these interests are actually ways for followers to express their

actual selves, not their ideal selves. This finding is the reason that explains the

possibilities of concurrencies on imitating yet absently non-imitating off celebrities'

Instagram images to co-exist, hence the relationship between absence and presence of

imitation with actual self. In addition, this finding contradicts Goffman's theory, in

which he believes an individual "…presents an 'idealized' rather than authentic

version of herself [sic]" (Hogan, 2010, p. 378), which is not the case. In those specific

personal interests, followers reported that although they imitated the celebrities'

Instagram images, nonetheless in those pictures, they are still presenting their actual selves. This supports self-presentation framework whereby an individual's self-interest will determine how he or she will present (Goffman, 1956).

For example, for Ian, he expressed that in his Instagram picture that he imitated, the informant likes the vintage feel. This is reflected in Figure 4.20. "I love this one so much because it looks old" (Ian, personal communication, January 31, 2017). He also pointed out that the celebrity's picture also has a classic feel, which Ian admire and thus, imitated. He shared, "…his picture is very vintage…it looks so nice" (ibid). It needs to be taken note that the source of the celebrity' image is from Facebook.

When asked whether the informant was posting as himself or as somebody else, Ian responded that he is posting as himself. He shared, "I got my style…Try to have that [picture] to be similar, tone similar" (Ian, personal communication, January 31, 2017). Indeed, Ian's testament is aligned with the result of the researcher's prior analysis on the aforementioned informant's personal Instagram pictures. Among the 26 personal Instagram images being analyzed, the researcher took note that in 10 pictures, the informant writes his personal hashtag at the end of the Instagram caption. These pictures were taken after the informant started university life. The researcher discerns that having a personal hashtag is certainly an indication from the informant that he is creating his own creative expression. The informant shared, "Be Ian style, my own style" (ibid). Having his personal hashtag is a way for him to assert and present his actual self, regardless the presence of imitation or not. By the informant visually self-presenting himself using his own style, this finding contradicts the idea

that people are only posting their ideal selves (Mendelson & Papacharissi, 2010, p. 252), as it turns out in this thesis, people do post their actual selves.

On top of that, the researcher did not detect exact visual imitation between Ian and his ideal celebrity. This is another evidence that the researcher discerns that the informant is indeed visually self-presenting his actual self. In spite of the absence of visual imitation, the researcher detects that Ian and his ideal celebrity share one similar theme in their visual self-presentations, which is their attractiveness. What this means is that when it comes their solo pictures, they are very attractive in those Instagram pictures. Despite the similarity, Ian visually self-present his attractiveness in a different manner than his ideal celebrity. For example, Ian's visual self-presentation involves someone taking his pictures that display full body. Ian's pictures are also very composed which resembles a model photo shoot, and it displays the informant as attractive. On the other hand, the visual self-presentation of the informant's ideal celebrity is generally selfies. In other words, the pictures are mostly an up-close look of the celebrity's face. Unlike the composed manner of the informant, the ideal celebrity's selfies are very casual in manner. Even though the pictures are informal, the ideal celebrity's attractiveness is still visible. The different manners in projecting attractiveness illustrate the informant's absence of imitation, as he is visually self-presenting himself distinctly from his ideal celebrity. This visual comparison is reflected in Figure 4.21. Thus, the researcher deduces that although Ian imitates a pose from a celebrity's image, nonetheless the behavioral imitation is minor. This is because the majority of the Ian's visual self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' Instagram images, which is by having his own personal hashtag and presenting himself differently from his ideal celebrity. This subsequently

indicates the informant is visually self-presenting his actual self on his personal

Instagram account.



Figure 4.21: Different Visual Self-Presentation In Portraying Attractiveness Between

Ian and His Ideal Celebrity, Bun Baek-hyun.

Ian is not the only Instagram follower who is motivated to produce his

own style. This is applicable in Aaron's case as well, whereby his personal interest for

his Instagram account is to showcase his works. This is another example on how

personal interest has a role in self-presentation, showcasing his works is a way of

letting people to know him. In Aaron's case, creating his own color tone through filter

is a way of producing his personal style of visual self-presentation. The researcher

later learned that the informant is inspired by his ideal celebrity, Toey. Therefore,

ideal celebrities can indeed be a source of inspiration to Instagram followers to create

their own styles.

"As I said, it's [Instagram account] is like a portfolio. It's like

your face. If you want to look good, you will post something good. And it makes people think who you are…"

"I want to have the same filter, like that. That kind of filter that she (Toey) uses" (Aaron, Personal communication, January 18, 2017).

In the Aaron's selected Instagram pictures, it was found that there is one picture that the informant imitated from Toey. The imitation is noticeably capturing the same building, reflected in Figure 4.17 and Figure 4.18. Although the pictures of the building are captured in different angles, nonetheless it is still imitation as the same building is instagrammed. However, the researcher learned that for the informant, he did not see the picture as imitating the celebrity. Rather, the informant saw that his inspiration of Toey led to his production of that particular Instagram picture. "Actually, I got hers, I was inspired by Toey Jarinporn" (Aaron, personal communication, January 18, 2017). To be more specific, the informant refers the color tone plastered on Toey's respective picture as the inspiration. However, the informant later divulged that instead of producing the same color tone as Toey on the building picture, he modified it. Aaron elaborated, "Her feed is like the same color. So I change. I tried to change. Yeah" (ibid). The informant's choice to do so is the reason that he is interested to visually show his own style, which he also revealed in the interview, that his Instagram is his portfolio and he is only self-presenting himself. Aaron commented, "…I'm not trying to be someone else, but, I [sic] be myself…" (Personal communication, January 18, 2017).

Indeed, Aaron's testament is aligned with the result of the researcher's prior analysis on the aforementioned informant's personal Instagram pictures. Among the 26 personal Instagram images being analyzed, except for the aforementioned one

Instagram picture of the building, the researcher did not detect any precise visual imitation with Toey. The researcher did notice that there are quotes and lyrics accompanying the informant's Instagram pictures, which the informant reaffirmed that he uses lyrics from his favorite songs and singers as Instagram captions. The informant also shared that he uses quotes from other celebrities and the Internet as captions to his Instagram posts. However, the caption does not address the behavioral imitation that this thesis is addressing.

What stood out more is that the aforementioned informant and Toey share similar themes in their visual self-presentations, such as landscape, buildings, as well as water scenes. Not only that, the researcher also observed that in their Instagram projection of their self, the informant and Toey do have similar execution on color tones. This is not a surprise as one of the reasons behind Aaron's idealization on his ideal celebrity, Toey, is her color tone on her Instagram. He is "obsessed with her tone" (Aaron, personal communication, January 19, 2017), as shown below and in Figure 4.22.

> "…I like her [Toey] filter. Like, the filter that she uses on
> each picture is the same. And it looks nice. So, I try to be
> – try to post something like that..." (Aaron, Personal
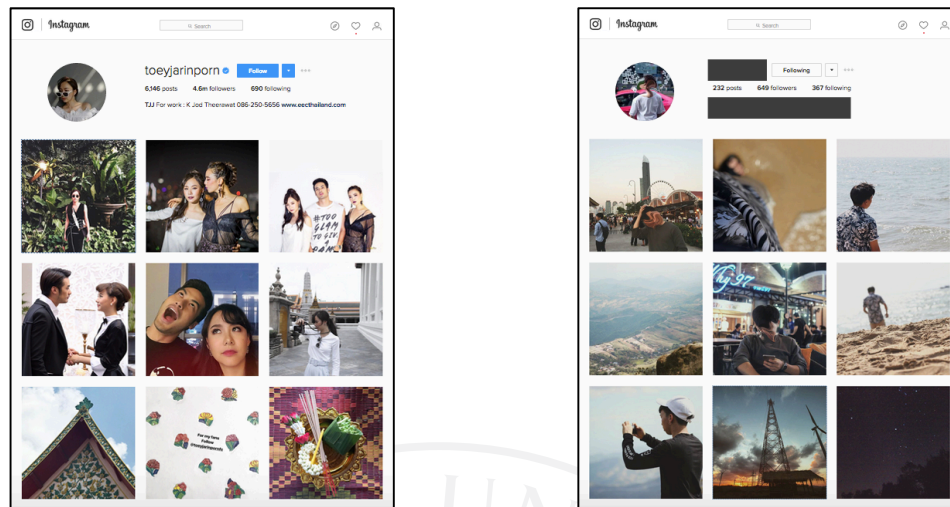> communication, January 19, 2017).

Figure 4.22: Similar Consistency on Color Tone through Filter Execution Between
Informant and His Ideal Celebrity, Toey.

Nonetheless, in spite of the similarity in themes and Instagram execution, the researcher did not identify any exact imitation between Aaron's Instagram images and his ideal celebrity, except for one building picture. Thus, the researcher deduces that not only Aaron's visual self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' Instagram images in majority, but she also safely assumes that the informant is visually self-presenting his actual self on his personal Instagram account.

Continuing the conversation on personal interests, trends are another feature that motivates visual self-presentation, such as the case of Ingrid. She acknowledged that trends have a presence, and it personally motivated her to imitate the celebrity. Ingrid shared, "It's a trend that I follow her. Just that. The pose" (Personal communication, January 18, 2017). This is reflected in Figure 4.19. This result corresponds with research that fans do learn the current and acceptable social trends (Gorin & Dubied, 2011, as cited in Meisser, 2015) to the point of imitating

those behaviors (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Gorin & Dubied, 2011, as cited in Meisser, 2015). What needs to be pointed here is that the celebrity whom the informant imitated is not her self-reported ideal celebrity, but another celebrity named Pimtha Manalertruengkul. Certainly, Ingrid's testament is validated after the researcher analyzed the 26 Instagram images belonging to the informant, and compared with Pimtha and Kamolned's Instagram images. When compared to her ideal celebrity's Instagram account, Kamolned, the researcher did not find any visual imitation between the informant and the aforementioned celebrity. However, when compared to Pimtha's Instagram account, the researcher was able to detect the trend pose that Ingrid imitated. On top of that, the researcher was also able to identify an additional trend pose that the Ingrid also imitated. The behaviors involve Ingrid putting both palms or pointing fingers onto her face. This is reflected in Figure 4.15 and Figure 4.16. Ingrid did mention that the different trends on posing are a reason to give her more variety to express her own self.

> "I feel like I have more pose to do…more actions…like,
> I have one more position…other ways to take a picture"
> (Ingrid, Personal communication, January 18, 2016).

Ingrid's statement clearly agrees that from imitation, fans will own the behaviors as part of her self (Feasey, 2008 & Gamson, 1994, as cited in Marwick & Boyd, 2011), as in this case, the imitated pose gave her more ways to express her actual self. This case is the reason on how Ingrid negotiates between imitating yet visually self-presenting as herself, to co-exist.

For Ingrid, her behavioral imitation does not only occur on Instagram, but also off the Instagram platform. The researcher learned that Ingrid adapts Kamolned's love for houseplants. In fact, one of the informant's idealized Instagram

picture of her ideal celebrity is when Kamolned is pictured with her plants. This

finding coincides with research that celebrity idealization does prompt fans to adopt

celebrities' activities or in this case, hobbies (Boon & Lomore, 2001). Ingrid shared,

"She grow plants in her condo. And I like the plants because of her. Like, very

motivating" (Personal communication, January 18, 2017). What this research can

establish here is that exposure of celebrities' Instagram images do influence

informants to behaviorally imitate them outside of the Instagram platform as well.

Coming back to the topic of visual self-presentation on Instagram,

when Ingrid was asked whether she is posting as herself or somebody else, Ingrid

replied, "It's me…" (Personal communication, January 18, 2017). Indeed, Ingrid's

testament is aligned with a twist, based on the result of the researcher's prior analysis

on the aforementioned informant's personal Instagram pictures. Among the 26

personal Instagram images being analyzed, the researcher did not detect any visual

imitation between the informant and her ideal celebrity. When the visual self-

presentation of the informant is compared with Pimtha's Instagram account, only two

pictures from the informant were imitated from Pimtha's Instagram account. The

small number indicates that the behavioral imitation is minor, thus, the absent of

imitating celebrities' Instagram images are greater than the imitation itself, which

supports the informant's testament of projecting her actual self.

In spite of the fact that the majority of the informant's visual self-

presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' Instagram images, it was interesting

that the researcher was able to observe that in terms of visual self-presentations,

Ingrid and Pimtha do share similar themes. The similarities encompass their self-

portraits, pose, fashion, places and Instagram tone. Sharing similar themes between

Instagram followers and celebrities in their visual self-presentation seemed to be a recurring pattern in this thesis. Thus, the researcher deduces that although Ingrid imitates two poses from a celebrity's images, nonetheless the behavioral imitation is minor. In spite of the similar themes shared between the informant and the celebrity, the majority of the Ingrid's visual self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' Instagram images. This supports the informant's self-report that she is visually self-presenting her actual self on her personal Instagram account.

Besides trends, another personal interest that the researcher assumes Instagram followers imitate celebrities' Instagram images, is due to the fact that the celebrity's imitation portrays the followers to look good, which is the case of Rose. For Rose, she pointed out that in one Instagram picture, she copied a pose from a celebrity. In that pose, the informant is sitting very comfortably on a chair and she is leaning against the backrest of the chair. Her long hair flows down, and the picture is captured from the back of the informant. However, the side of her face is still visible. Although the informant did not provide the reason behind imitating the pose, however the researcher is able to deduct that from the informant's interview, the informant will visually self-present herself on her Instagram account if she looks good in the picture. She shared, "…I just post picture that I'm beautiful. I will just post it…" (Rose, personal communication, January 19, 2017), which serves a reason behind her visual self-presentation. Rose also mentioned that she will post pictures that is according to her liking (ibid). When the researcher textually analyzed the aforementioned Instagram picture, the researcher also agrees that the picture portrays the informant as good-looking, accompanied with her laid back and carefree pose. This picture is reflected in Figure 4.23.
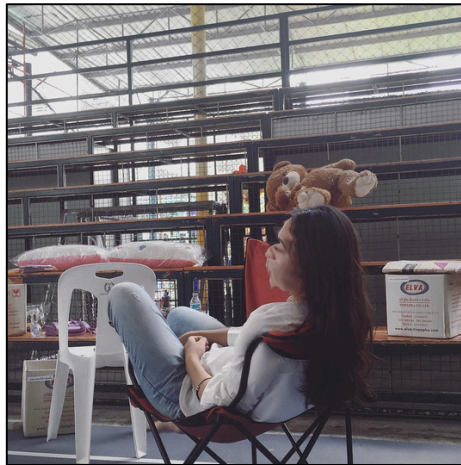
Figure 4.23: Rose's Self-Reported Imitation From Celebrity.

There is one noteworthy thing that the researcher would like to point out in relation to the aforementioned picture. When asked the name of the celebrity that the informant imitated the pose from, the informant expressed uncertainty, "Not sure" (Rose, personal communication, January 19, 2017). Not only that, the informant did hesitate when it came to explaining the origin of the imitation. "Just, hmmm I don't know. I think the pose I just copy it from someone else. The position…not sure, but I think celebrity" (ibid). Therefore, the researcher is quite skeptical whether the informant's pose was truly imitated, as there was no celebrity's name provided for the researcher to further validate the imitation.

On the other hand, based on the researcher's textual analysis, the researcher spotted one Instagram picture of the informant that the researcher felt could be an imitation from the informant's ideal celebrity, Gigi's Instagram. In this picture, the informant was spotted posing with her back facing the camera, but her face is fully face-front towards the camera. The researcher would also like to point out that the back of the informant is backless. The reason why the researcher

considers this picture as potentially imitating Gigi's Instagram pictures, is because in Gigi's Instagram account, the celebrity regularly posted her being backless. When the researcher questioned the informant in regards of the possibility of imitation in this picture, the informant was very quick to defend. She responded, "No, no, no, no. This [picture] was even before I follow her" (Rose, personal communication, January 19, 2017). The researcher found this fact interesting as earlier in the interview, the informant mentioned that she followed Gigi for about a year, and the Instagram picture was taken in April 2016. From the researcher's perspective, it looked as if there is a negative connotation if one imitates. It implies that the person is not original and that he or she is easily influenced. Possibly because of the reason that there is a growing sense of self-empowerment, there is more value and a sense of pride when individuals do not give in being influenced by other people into their perceived self-concepts, which is a way of containing one's actual self. According to the informant, the reason why she posted this particular picture on her Instagram is to remember it as a memory. She had lost her phone and that was the only picture that documented the informant in the prom event. She shared, "This is the only picture, I have no choice but to post it. The only memory from that…" (ibid).

The fact that Rose could potentially have two Instagram images that may imitate celebrities' Instagram images, it consequently means the behavioral imitation is minimal. This is also supported by Rose's testament whereby if she likes any picture of a celebrity and tries to post a similar picture, the imitation is very small. Rose shared, "Just only like, a little influence. Like little, like 5%" (Personal communication, January 19, 2017). Having said that the behavioral imitation is minor, this also may subsequently mean that the majority of the Instagram follower's

visual self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' Instagram images. This is supported by the researcher's textual analysis of the 25 personal Instagram images belonging to the informant. Except for one aforementioned picture, the researcher indeed did not detect any visual imitation between the informant and Gigi.
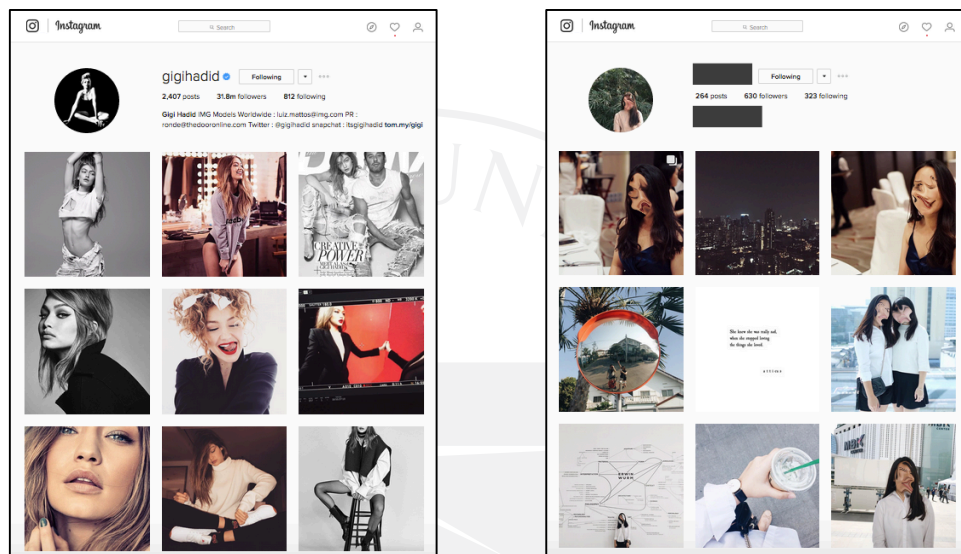


Figure 4.24: Similar Execution in Keeping Instagram Images in a Schematic Color Between The Informant and Ideal Celebrity, Gigi Hadid.

In true recurring fashion throughout the Findings chapter, the researcher did notice that the informant and her Gigi share one similarity in their visual self-presentation, and that similarity involves Instagram execution. When the researcher compared the Instagram images between Rose and Gigi, both of their pictures have similar executions in terms of keeping the images cohesive in a schematic color. This comparison can be observed in Figure 4.24. The informant did mention that she has interest to express herself as an individual. This may explain the

informant's attempt to visually self-present herself in similarities, rather than exact

imitation.

> "Sometimes, I just want to create my own style. And I want
> to see if others like my photos. Like my style. If they like,
> then they will follow me…" (Rose, Personal
> communication, January 19, 2017).

However, for the researcher to subsequently conclude that the

informant is visually self-presenting her actual self is juvenile, as the informant

further enlightens about her visual self-presentation and how each presentation differs

on the number of Instagram accounts that the informant has. According to the

informant, she has four Instagram accounts, namely main account, private account,

group account and travel account. The researcher will address the two initial accounts,

which are main account and private account, as the accounts pertain to the followers'

visual self-presentation, which is the interest of this thesis.

According to Rose, the researcher learned that in the informant's main

Instagram account, she would only post good and positive pictures. Rose responded,

"All the nice ones, all the happy, nice" (Personal communication, January 19, 2017).

This testament is supported by her earlier statement whereby she would only post

pictures whereby she is beautiful (ibid). The finding on purposeful self-presentation is

also due to the fact that the aspects of self-presentation, such as intentional, selective,

favorable and performance-like, are what people use online to communicate to others,

which coincides with existing communication research (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs,

2006; Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2015; Gonzales & Hancock, 2008; Hogan, 2010;

Lindahl & Öhlund, 2013; Mendelson & Papacharissi, 2010; Wong, 2012). In addition,

this finding also reflects the reason that individuals declined to project unfavorable characteristics (Leary & Kowalski, 1990, as cited in Wong, 2012).

The informant also mentioned that her visual self-presentation on her main account is selectively positive because she wants to portray her life as amazing. "…But if you check my [main] account, you will say that, "Oh. Her life is good", something like that. I want to show how, kinda [sic] like show off, show off my life… (ibid). The researcher then found out that the informant considers her main account as fabricated, which is the complete opposite of her private account. Instead, she self-reportedly shares that the private account portrays a more comprehensive picture of her visual self-presentations on Instagram, and that she is able to post anything on her private Instagram account because of the selective audience, which are her best-friends, as elaborated below.

> "Actually for the private account, it is like a behind-the-scene picture. The picture that we will never post in our real one. So we can say that our real account is like fake. Like, you only see the good side of the picture, but you never know what is behind the story, like story behind the picture…"

> "But for the private account, just post anything because only best-friends follow the private account"
> (Rose, Personal communication, January 19, 2017).

Rose's experience clearly corresponds with Uhlir whereby "…people tend to post the most socially desirable parts of their lives on their profiles in order to create an ideal representation of themselves" (2016, p. 11). Not only that, the reason behind Rose's selective visual self-presentation is to lessen the risk from being judged as the informant's type of audience in her main account is more public.

Therefore, with the presence of main and private Instagram accounts in mind, the researcher deduces the following visual self-presentation of Rose; whereby that the majority of the informant' visual self-presentation on her main Instagram account is absent from imitating celebrities' Instagram images, as the informant's behavioral imitation is minimal. The informant is also visually self-presenting her actual self on her main Instagram account though the self-presentation is selective, as those visual self-presentations are showcasing the best parts of the informant's life. However, the researcher assumes that the informant is most likely to visually self-present her actual self more comprehensively in her private Instagram account compared to her main account, due to the type of audience she has given access to her private account, which are her tight circle of friends.

4.3 Main Instagram accounts versus private Instagram accounts

During the interviews, the researcher found out that the majority of informants have an average of two Instagram accounts. All the female informants have at least two Instagram accounts, and half of the male informants have two Instagram accounts. There is a distinct difference between these two Instagram accounts: one is considered as the main account of the Instagram user, and the other account is considered as a private account.

When asked the reasons behind having two Instagram accounts, the Instagram followers brought up issues, such as the freedom to post anything without judgment, privacy, and non-disturbance to followers' feeds. For Aaron and Rose, their private Instagram account allows them the liberty to post pictures without the need to

consider other people's feelings, and knowing who are his audience or followers

facilitates that freedom, as indicated below.

> "Oh, private account, I post everything that I want. Everything,
> I don't care what people think. Because it's like, only these
> followers that follow me is the one I know and I know they
> won't…do anything bad about me. So I post anything that
> I like" (Aaron, Personal communication, January 18, 2017).

> "…for the private account, just post anything because only best-friends
> follow the private account" (Rose, Personal communication,
> January 19, 2017).

From the testimony of Aaron and Rose, it introduces the idea that the type of

audience or followers are a determining point of facilitating the freedom and privacy

that a private Instagram account offers, and other informants also share the same

opinion. For Henry, having a private Instagram account is only for reliable people as

for his main account, the public can have access to his pictures.

> "Because on main account, everyone can see. And there are people
> who don't like you…so you want to reduce the risk…[Private account]
> is only for the person you trust. That you really trust" (Henry,
> Personal communication, January 24, 2017).

Apple also supports Henry that there are things that Instagrammers only wants

to share with people whom they are close with.

> "Because sometimes when you post something on public, like,
> not bad but something that you don't want to share with people
> whom are not close that [sic] you, so the second one [private account]
> is only for close people" (Apple, Personal communication,
> January 17, 2017).

Thus, the general makeup of the audience in an Informant's private Instagram

account is undeniably circling around the value of trust. Not only that, most of the

audience comprised of important friends, such as best friends and close friends of the

informants. Honey goes further by stating that because of the intimate relationships, these very friends will not be shocked by the Instagram posts that they upload on their private Instagram accounts.

> "I think that the people that we are very close with – they're like, we can post any funny pictures and they will comment and like it, and they will have fun. But when we post on the real Instagram sometimes, when our cousins following us and they will, like, 'Why are they speaking so bad?' The bad words sometimes, yeah." (Honey, Personal communication, January 24, 2017)

The testaments above address another matter, in which the nature of private posts on private Instagram accounts. As mentioned earlier, the posts on private Instagram accounts are different from main accounts, as Instagram users can post anything they want in their secret accounts. Private accounts are "post people that people won't post on their [main] Instagram" (Honey, personal communications, January 24, 2017). For Rose, her private account encompasses the good and bad posts, which she responded as "everything" (Personal communication, January 19, 2017).

The private posts also imply that the pictures may not be ethically moral, which may lead to social consequences if the pictures were published on main Instagram accounts. For example, Tammie shared that she will not post pictures of her and her friends in bad situations as her mother will be angry.

> "Because sometimes my friends, they're crazy and do some weird things…I think I have a couple of pictures with my friends, but they're all in good behavior. Because if not, my mom is going to get real mad" (Tammie, Personal communication, January 17, 2017).

For Apple, her personal experience of posting of her doing something wild led people to talk about her.

> "It becomes a rumor, but for people who know what kind of person
> you are, like you, like you do crazy things, best-friends will know.
> But for other people who saw you doing something crazy things,
> what are you doing! So be careful. Not everyone understands"
> (Apple, Personal communication, January 17, 2017).

Therefore, owning a private account whereby Instagrammers can express their truest selves helps reduce or even avoid social consequences from the public. Onie shared, "No one can see it [pictures] on private" (Personal communication, January 19, 2017), and Rose goes further by stating, "No one will judge us like that" (ibid).

The interviews indeed reveal that informants are well aware that there are social consequences when certain etiquettes on posting pictures on Instagram are broken in public viewing. Henry mentioned that personal choice keeps him in tact. "You have to choose whether it's appropriate or inappropriate" (Henry, personal communications, January 24, 2017). As for Apple, she implored carefulness and the importance of common sense on the acceptable manners.

> "Anyone can [criticize], so be careful. So, everyone knows what
> you should or should not post. We know what we should do
> and shouldn't do" (Apple, Personal communication, January
> 17, 2017).

For Larry, it is very important to know the limit of posting and to have self-respect.

> "…so you can't just post all pictures there, there is a limit that you
> have to respect. Well, you have to respect yourself. If you don't
> respect yourself, of course you can post whatever you want…"
> (Larry, Personal communication, January 31, 2017).

Thus, having a private Instagram account gives informants more freedom to express their selves, which could mean breaching social etiquettes within the safe comforts of their close and trustworthy friends.

The researcher also found out that having a private account allow informants to post without worrying they will overtake the Instagram feed of their own followers to the point of disturbance. Henry affirmed that having a private Instagram account gives him the liberty to post anything that he wants without disrupting the public's Instagram news feed.

> "Simply [post] everything you do, because it won't interrupt anyone.
> In your main [account], there's [sic] a lot of people following
> and it kinds of interrupt [sic] them" (Henry, Personal
> communication, January 24, 2017).

When asked about the presence of both main and private Instagram accounts, Aaron shared that for the main account, it is important not to intrude the public's news feed with private posts that society may deem as inappropriate. "So they don't disturb other people, for posting some funny pictures, and stuff" (Aaron, personal communication, January 18, 2017).

The concept of public disturbance is an interesting phenomenon, as the research reveals that posting too much are bothersome to the Instagram followers, and this upsetting act is not looked upon favorably, such as the case of Rose. "And like, if someone post like, too many pictures, I will be like, super annoyed too…" (Rose, personal communication, January 19, 2017). Another example is from Tammie. She shared that she chooses to follow the personal Instagram accounts of her ideal celebrities instead of the fan clubs' Instagram accounts, as the latter are more interruptive. "Sometimes, it's annoying. They post like, everyday, but the real person,

they don't do like, everyday" (Tammie, personal communication, January 17, 2017).

As for Ingrid, she mentioned that she is happy that her ideal celebrity, Kamolned, does not post daily. "I feel good, because she didn't post her picture everyday. Like, once in two days, something like that. So, it is very good" (Ingrid, personal communication, January 18, 2017). Since over-posting on public Instagram accounts are not highly looked upon favorably, therefore this strengthens the significant presence of private Instagram accounts because through this type of account, Instagram followers are free to over-post without feeling bad of interrupting the public's news feed.

In conclusion, multiple Instagram accounts have different purposes, and the different accounts help Instagrammers with their visual self-presentation. The researcher assumes that the presence of main and private Instagram accounts explain why Instagram followers do not feel constricted to only show one side of their selves, because with this particular technology affordance, they can present different parts of their selves to different audiences (Marwick, 2005; Mendelson and Papacharissi, 2010). In other words, the multiple accounts give more options for Instagram followers do have more control on their self-presentations (Ganda, 2014; Kramer & Winter, 2008, as cited in Huang, 2014; Mehdizadeh, 2010), with the assistance of technology affordances (Britt, 2015; Mehdizadeh, 2010), such as the filter effects, privacy features, and selective access to informants' private and public photos, to name a few. With the existing presence of multiple accounts, the informants already visually self-present their selves, whether it is the good, the bad or both altogether. Therefore, technology affordances, such as selective postings and variety of accounts with different public and privacy settings work, is a reason behind the see-saw

relationship for concurrencies between absence and presence from imitating celebrities' Instagram images to co-exist as there are multiple accounts for Instagram users to visually self-present to whichever self they want to present. This discovery also supports the notion that the social media platforms are a great place for people to present their selves (Huang, 2014, p. 417).

Indeed, the relationship between the exposure of celebrities' Instagram images with followers' perceived self-concept and visual self-presentation are significant. The significance is portrayed through the type of emotional and behavioral responses that followers experience when they come in contact with celebrities' pictures channeled through Instagram. For the emotional responses, the followers experience happiness, satisfaction, normalcy, motivation, inspiration, dissatisfaction, disappointment, jealousy, and not proud of one's self when comparing their actual selves with their ideal selves, based off ideal celebrities, though it is important to note that followers generally experience positive emotions more than negative emotions. As for behavioral responses, the followers were found posting about themselves absently from imitating celebrities' Instagram images, and also there were cases whereby they concurrently imitate celebrities' pictures on their personal Instagram accounts, although the behavior imitation was minor.

In conclusion, the results from this research inform that Instagram followers are generally capable to navigate their sense of self and postings on their personal Instagram accounts, in correspondence with exposure of celebrities' images on Instagram. This navigation is conceivable due to the similarities of followers' selves with their ideal celebrities, the established and growing sense of self-empowerment as an individual, the followers' interest to keep their selves authentic, and their

conscious self-knowledge and first-hand experience about celebrities and pictures posted on social media. In addition, the technology affordance feature of creating a secondary Instagram account, dubbed as private account, provides followers an intimate outlet to express their truest actual selves without hesitation and judgment from the public. The aforementioned noteworthy explanations carryback the possibilities for concurrencies between discrepancy and non-discrepancies of actual and ideal selves, as well as imitation and non-imitation of celebrities' Instagram images, to exist. Thus, the relationship between the following constructs, namely exposure of celebrities' Instagram images, followers' perceived self-concept and visual self-presentation, provide a meaningful dialogue to the social psychology and communications fields, especially in the area of identity and social media, respectively.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter deliberates the summary and discussion of findings of this study. This discussion chapter also provides the limitations of the study, and recommendations of further application as well as research. Below are the following sub-sections of this chapter:

5.1 Summary of findings

    5.1.1 Types of photo categories

    5.1.2 Followers' perceived self-concept

    5.1.3 Followers' visual self-presentation

5.2 Conclusion of study

5.3 Discussion

    5.3.1 Thai Instagram followers idealize similarly with global audience across the photo categories

    5.3.2 Instagram followers finding resemblances with their ideal celebrities as a recurring theme in this thesis

    5.3.3 Instagram followers' negative emotional responses between their actual and ideal selves

    5.3.4 Instagram followers' consequent actions to cope with the presence of self-discrepancies

    5.3.5 Instagram followers' gender differences as a prominent highlight in this thesis

5.3.6 Instagram followers' strong sense of selves as a constant theme throughout this thesis

5.4 Limitations of the study

5.4.1 Restricted access to Instagram followers' private Instagram accounts

5.4.2 Time

5.4.3 Absence of secondary coder

5.4.4 Informants' language level of fluency

5.5 Recommendation for further application

5.5.1. For society and community leaders in the government and private sectors

5.5.2. For celebrities' agencies and celebrities themselves

5.5.3. For social media gurus and communication proponents

5.5.4. For parents and educators

5.6 Recommendation for further research

5.6.1 Recommendations in directions of study

5.6.2 Recommendations in methodology

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.1.1 Types of photo categories

According to the findings, the Instagram followers idealizing celebrities' Instagram images are portrayed across all photo categories, tabled in Figure 5.1. Even though the followers idealize all photo categories, their self-reports from interviews however showed that there are photo categories that are more idealized than the other categories. It is also imperative to take note that there are Instagram pictures that overlap between one photo category to another.

Table 5.1: The Types of Photo Categories

| EXPOSURE TO CELEBRITIES' INSTAGRAM IMAGES | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Personal** | **Social Relations** | **Activity** | **Luxury Items** | **Other** |
| Selfie Self-portrait | Friends Pets | Indoor/Outdoor Place | Food Gadget Fashion | Captioned Photo (attitudes, values, belief, entertainment) |

As a summary, the *Activity* photo category is the most idealized category with 10 reported pictures. Nine Instagram followers, in which five male informants and four female informants self-reported idealizing this category. Between its sub categories, the *Indoor/Outdoor* sub category is more idealized compared to the *Place* sub category, with eight and two pictures reported, respectively.

After the *Activity* photo category, the *Personal* photo category is the next photo category that is hugely idealized with nine reported pictures. Seven Instagram followers, in which five female informants and two male informants self-reported idealizing this category. Between its sub categories, the *Self-portrait* sub category is more idealized compared to the *Selfie* sub category, with seven and two pictures reported, respectively.

Next is the *Luxury Items* photo category, whereby five pictures are reported as idealized. Five Instagram followers, all of whom are female informants, self-reported idealizing this category. Between its sub categories, the *Fashion* sub category is the most and the only idealized sub category, with four pictures in tow. The findings of this thesis also introduces a new sub category called *Plants*, whereby only one picture is reported as idealized.

Second to the last photo category that is idealized is the *Social Relations* photo category, whereby four pictures are reported idealized. Four Instagram followers, in which three female informants and one male informant self-reported idealizing this category. Between its sub categories, the *Friends* sub category is more idealized compared to the *Pets* sub category, with two pictures and one picture reported, respectively. The finding of this study also introduces a new sub category called *Fans*, whereby only one picture is reported as idealized.

Finally, the *Other* photo category is the least idealized category with only one reported idealized picture. One Instagram follower, a female informant, self-reported idealizing this category. The aforementioned picture reflects the *Captioned Photo* sub category, which is the only idealized sub category in this research. The findings of this thesis also introduces a new element to add into the *Captioned Photo* explanation,

which is *Lyrics*, as it is certainly lyrics in the form of *Captioned Photo* that the female informant idealizes from her ideal celebrity.

In this research, there are also two other photo categories that Instagram followers idealize from celebrities' Instagram images, which are absent from the theoretical framework and Figure 5.1. These photo categories are official movie posters and model releases, and pictures taken from celebrities' themselves. Two idealized photos reflect the aforementioned photo categories, respectively. Two Instagram followers, in which two female informants, self-reported idealizing this category.

### 5.1.2 Followers' perceived Self-concept

Aside from the types of photo categories, this thesis also investigates deeply onto the Instagram followers' perceived self-concept. Specifically, this research examines how followers perceive their actual and ideal selves, with the latter self based off ideal celebrities, in correspondence to the exposure of celebrities' Instagram images. This investigation is based on Figure 5.2.

As a summary, this research reveals that there are three ways that Instagram followers perceive their selves, in correspondence with the exposure of celebrities' Instagram images. Firstly, the Instagram followers perceive their actual selves as not discrepant from their ideal selves. They also experience positive emotions about their selves, namely happiness and satisfaction. This revelation establishes credibility whereby there is a relationship between absence of self-discrepancies and positive emotions. Two Instagram followers, in which a female informant and male informant experiences this type of relationship.

Table 5.2: Followers' Perceived Self-Concept in the Form of Emotional Responses

| EMOTIONAL RESPONSES | |
|---|---|
| **FOLLOWERS' PERCEIVED SELF-CONCEPT** | |
| **No discrepancy between actual self and ideal self** | **Discrepancy between actual self and ideal self** |
| **Presence of positive outcomes / emotions** Happiness, Satisfaction | **Presence of negative outcomes / emotions** Dissatisfaction, Disappointment, Sadness |

Secondly, the Instagram followers perceive their actual selves as discrepant from their ideal selves, in correspondence with the exposure of celebrities' Instagram images. Along with the existence of self-discrepancies, there are followers who experience negative emotions about their selves, namely dissatisfaction and disappointment. There is also a report of jealousy of ideal celebrities, a sense of not being proud of one's actual self, and acceptance of one's actual self. This revelation establishes credibility whereby there is a relationship between presence of self-discrepancies and negative emotions. Three Instagram followers, whereby two female informants and one male informant experience this type of relationship.

The findings of this study reveals that along with the existence of self-discrepancies, there are also followers who experience positive emotions about their

selves, namely happiness, motivation and inspiration. This self-discrepancy/positive emotions relationship introduces a new manner of relationship to the theoretical framework of this thesis, and establishes significant contribution that there is a relationship between presence of self-discrepancies and positive emotions. Three Instagram followers, in which two male informants and one female informant, experience this relationship.

Thirdly, the Instagram followers perceive their actual selves as discrepant and concurrently, non-discrepant from their ideal selves, in correspondence with the exposure of celebrities' Instagram images. Along with the concurrencies of presence and absence of self-discrepancies, the followers experience positive emotions about their selves, which are happiness, satisfaction, contentment, proud, good, motivation and inspiration. This self-discrepancy and non-discrepancy with positive emotions relationship introduces a new manner of relationship to the theoretical framework of this thesis, and establishes significant contribution that there is a concurrent relationship between presence as well as absence of self-discrepancies and positive emotions. Three Instagram followers, in which two male informants and one female informant, experiences this relationship.

### 5.1.3 Followers' visual Self-presentation

Besides followers' perceived self-concept, this thesis also investigates deeply onto the Instagram followers' visual self-presentation on their personal Instagram accounts. Specifically, this research examines how followers visually self-present their actual and ideal selves, with the latter self based off ideal celebrities, in correspondence to the exposure of celebrities' Instagram images. This research

discovers that through textual analysis on informants' Instagram pictures and their

respective self-reports, followers are visually self-presenting their actual selves. This

investigation is based on Figure 5.3.

Table 5.3: Followers' Visual Self-Presentation in the Form of Behavioral Responses

| BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES | |
|---|---|
| FOLLOWERS' VISUAL SELF-PRESENTATION ON INSTAGRAM | |
| **Actual Self** | **Ideal Self** |
| Absence from imitating celebrities' images | Imitating celebrities' images |

As a summary, this research reveals that there are two ways that Instagram

followers visually self-present their actual selves, in correspondence with the

exposure of celebrities' Instagram images. Firstly, the Instagram followers' visual

self-presentation is absent from imitating celebrities' images. The followers also

reported that they are visually self-presenting their actual selves. This revelation

establishes credibility whereby there is a relationship between absence of imitating

celebrities' Instagram images and actual self presentation. Eight Instagram followers,

namely four male informants and four female informants respectively, experience this

type of visual self-presentation. Despite the absence from imitating celebrities' Instagram images, this research revealed that the majority of followers' visual self-presentation share similarities in terms of themes and Instagram execution with their ideal celebrities. On top of that, two female followers reported that they imitate celebrities' dressings in real life, but not to be documented on Instagram platform.

Secondly, the Instagram followers' visual self-presentation is absent and concurrently, present from imitating celebrities' images. The followers also report that in spite of the imitation, they are visually self-presenting their actual selves. This absence and presence of imitating celebrities' Instagram images with visual actual self-presentation relationship introduces a new manner of relationship to the theoretical framework of this thesis, and establishes significant contribution that there is a concurrent relationship between absence and presence of imitating celebrities' Instagram images with actual self presentation. Four Instagram followers, namely two male informants and two female informants, experience this type of visual self-presentation. The behavioral imitation is minor, as only three imitated pictures are self-reported as well as determined by textual analyzed were respectively notable, compared to 260 personal Instagram images. The majority theme in the imitation lies in posing for both genders.

5.2 Conclusion of Study

The aforementioned summaries of findings lead to the conclusion section of this study. The conclusion will be enumerated in terms of key points that include the impact of findings in extending the related theories, as well as the most important value behind this thesis report.

Overall, this study conclusively highlights several key points, such as gender. The findings have shown followers' personal interests do pertain according to gender. One of the prominent gender findings in this thesis is that male informants are personally interested in success, whereas female informants are more invested in physical attractiveness. Even followers' perceived self-concepts are tied with gender-guided interests, whereby male informants generally desire their ideal celebrities' achievement and trades, and female informants adore their ideal celebrities' beauty and fashion. Therefore, gender does play a prominent role in this thesis.

Another conclusive key point is that the findings of this thesis expand the related theories, specifically Self-discrepancy Theory. For Self-discrepancy Theory, the findings of this thesis have introduced new manners of relationships in relation to perceived self-concept construct, such as the relationship of between discrepancy and positive outcomes/emotions. In the theory, such relationship does not exist as the theory believes that the presence of discrepancy will result in negative outcomes/emotions. However in this thesis, the findings show that it is possible for followers to experience positive outcomes/emotions in spite of the presence of discrepancies. Another new relationship introduced is the relationship between discrepancy and non-discrepancy with positive outcomes/emotions. The relationship of concurrencies is unheard in the Self-discrepancy Theory, thus the existence of concurrencies relationship expands the aforementioned theory further. As for the visual self-presentation construct, there is also a new manner of relationship introduced, which is the relationship between absence and presence of imitation with actual self. Again, the concurrencies relationship is indeed unique as this manner of

relationship does not exist in the origins of Self-discrepancy Theory, thus expanding the theory ahead.

There are also new positive and negative emotions that extend the Self-discrepancy Theory. In the theory, the positive and negative emotions comprised happiness, satisfaction, disappointment and dissatisfaction. However, the findings of this study show that informants also self-report experiencing inspiration, motivation, normalcy, contentment, jealousy, and not being proud of one's self. These are new emotions, which further increase the perimeters of the emotions listed in the Self-discrepancy Theory. Acceptance is also a very remarkable key point as accepting one's self became a channel for informants to negotiate between their actual and ideal selves. Thus, new emotions reported in these findings contributes towards the expansion of Self-discrepancy Theory.

There are also new sub photo categories as well as photo categories that followers idealize. The new sub photo categories are *Fans*, *Plants* and *Lyrics*, and the discovered photo categories are celebrities' official movie posters and model releases and pictures taken from celebrities' themselves. The aforementioned categories indicate that followers' interests are growing, thus expanding the theoretical framework of this thesis.

Informants' self-concept or sense of selves serves as the concluding and most valuable key point in this thesis. The findings has shown that although informants are exposed to celebrities' Instagram images, the extent on how they allow their perceived self-concept and visual self-presentation to be influenced by the images, whether positively or negatively, lies on the strength and empowerment of their sense of selves. There were even cases whereby even though informants experience self-

discrepancies, they were able to rise above the negative outcomes/emotions due to their strong sense of selves. The strong empowering sense of selves includes informants' interests of keeping their selves authentic, and being proud of themselves. Therefore, the findings of this research truly bring out the valuable importance of our youth's self-concept. Further recommendation on instilling, boosting and strengthening our youth's self-concept is discussed in detail in section 5.5 Recommendation for further application of this chapter.

5.3 Discussion

The findings of this study have brought several outstanding significances that this research strives to discuss. Among the six research significances that will be explicated in this study are the similarities on photo categories idealization between Thai Instagram followers and global audience, recurring theme of followers finding similarities between themselves and their ideal celebrities, followers' negative emotional responses between their actual and ideal selves, followers' consequent actions to cope with the presence of self-discrepancies, gender differences amongst Instagram followers, and constant theme of followers' strong sense of selves.

5.3.1 Thai Instagram followers idealize similarly with global audience across the photo categories

Among the highlighted significance is the respective Thai Instagram followers idealize across the photo categories, portrayed by Figure 5.1 based on the work of researchers Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati (2014), which were also the experiences of the global audience from the aforementioned research. The researcher

believes the reason on why this idealization on photo categories occurs for both audiences, is because the phenomenon on celebrity admiration pervades cultural borders and knows no boundaries (Meisser, 2015). It is unsurprising that Instagram followers from Thailand will share similar celebrities' idealized Instagram images with followers from other parts of the world, as technology affordances of Instagram spreads celebrities' pictures instantaneously and ubiquitously worldwide (Marcus, 2015).

In addition, the reason on why the worldwide celebrity idealization is shared similarly between Thailand and the world is because the communication phenomenon is aided by the similar trends in increasing growth of social media usage facilitated through mobile phones, as well as the growing adoption of smart phones in Thailand and the world. For example, the Thailand overview in the We Are Social 2017's research indicated that there is a penetration of 62% of active mobile social users (Kemp, 2017). On a more global platform, the active mobile social users have also increased worldwide with a penetration of 34%. (ibid). Although the penetration rates differ, however what needs to be taken note is that the numbers of active consumers who are accessing their social media accounts through mobile phones are growing, both in local and global scales.

Because the world is generally experiencing similar trends in accessing social media such as Instagram through their mobile phones (Adler, 2014), and that more people are owning smart phones, whereby "more than half [of] the world uses a smartphone" (Kemp, 2017) and "more than half [of] the world's web traffic now comes from mobile phones" (ibid), these aforementioned phenomenon meant that not only people across cultural borders have similar access to social media, but that they

will also come across similar content, like celebrities' pictures. Joel Stein from the Time Magazine beautifully summarizes the unification of millennials regardless of where this generation comes from, whereby the Instagram followers of this study belong to. Stein stated, "Each country's millennials are different, but because of globalization, social media, the exporting of Western culture and the speed of change, millennials worldwide are more similar to one another than to older generations within their nations" (2013, Stein, p. 1). That is why we have the existence of communication phenomenon that procure a global effect and following from every part of the world, such as #KylieKennerLips, #Belfie, and #NoMakeup to mention a few. Therefore, the idealization of photo categories, portrayed by celebrities' Instagram images that are shared by the respective Thai Instagram followers with the global audience is a meaningful discussion.

5.3.2 Instagram followers finding resemblances with their ideal celebrities as a recurring theme in this thesis

The second significance in this study is the recurring theme of the Instagram followers finding resemblances with their ideal celebrities. By finding likenesses between selves and ideal celebrities, this reason explains why informants do not find their actual selves discrepantly from their ideal selves based off their ideal celebrities, because the followers see their selves in their ideal celebrities. Aside from that, finding resemblances between selves and ideal celebrities also explain why the informants visually self-present their selves similarly like their ideal celebrities, because the followers are first attracted to their ideal celebrities based on shared

interests and similarities that the informants find their selves in the respective ideal celebrities.

Finding or sharing similarities points to the Similarity/Attraction Theory. The main assumption of the aforementioned theory is whereby "…people like and are attracted to others who are similar, rather than dissimilar, to themselves…" (*Similarity/Attraction Theory*, n.d). Indeed, in the context of this study, the Instagram followers appeal to their ideal celebrities because the informants were first attracted to these celebrities due to the fact that these life personalities share similarities with the followers, whether it is physical attributes, attitude, personality, talents, skills or interests.  Thus, the Instagram followers finding similarities with their ideal celebrities give significant resonance to this research.

5.3.3 Instagram followers' negative emotional responses between their actual and ideal selves

The third significance in this research addresses the Instagram followers' negative emotional responses between their actual and ideal selves. As discovered in the Findings chapter, the act of comparison is what Instagram followers use to reflect their selves and their ideal celebrities. When the Instagram followers compare their selves with their ideal selves, based off their ideal celebrities who achieved the followers' idealized state or position, the informants experience dissatisfaction, disappointment, jealousy and not proud of their selves. This particular engaging act of comparison reflects the upward social comparison, which is a type of social comparison act that one compares of him or herself with others (Behan, 2015;

Corcoran, Crusius & Mussweiler, 2011). The upwards social comparison is a part of
the Social Comparison Theory by psychologist Leon Festingers.

According to Festingers, engaging in the upwards social comparison is a
situation whereby a person compares him or herself with another person who is better
than them (ibid). As a result, the person will experience "envy, jealously [sic], and
dissatisfaction with their own appearance" (Behan, 2015, p. 19), which is the same
negative emotional responses that the Instagram followers of this research experience
when they compare their selves with their ideal celebrities. Not only that, another
assumption of this theory is that people will only socially compare their selves with
people who are "…similar to themselves on the critical dimension" (Corcoran,
Crusius & Mussweiler, 2011, p. 124), which supports the previous significance of
Instagram followers finding similarities with ideal celebrities. Therefore, the
Instagram followers' act of comparison is meaningfully credible to this thesis.

5.3.4 Instagram followers' consequent actions to cope with the presence of
self-discrepancies

The fourth significance of this study relates to the self-discrepancies that
Instagram followers experience, and the consequent actions that the informants did to
cope with their self-discrepancies. As discovered in the Findings chapter, it was found
that Instagram followers engage with believing in their own perspectives of beauty,
accepting the reality of their situations, not obsessing with celebrities, and having a
strong sense of their actual selves as the informants' consequent actions to help them
negotiate the presence of self-discrepancies that they were experiencing. These
aforementioned actions reflect the efforts that a person would take when experiencing

dissonance or incompatibilities in their selves, which is part of a phenomenon that

Cognitive Dissonance Theory explicates.

According to the aforementioned theory, individuals "…desire consistency in

their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors" (West & Turner, 2010, p. 115) and when

individuals experience inconsistencies in their life, they are "…highly motivated to

avoid it" (ibid). Although the Instagram followers in this research do not avoid self-

discrepancies, however the respective informants do engage in certain actions to cope

with the dissonance that they experience, portrayed through the form of self-

discrepancies. For example, in the Cognitive Dissonance Theory, human beings will

"…ignore views that oppose their own" (ibid) in order to circumvent the feeling of

dissonance. For the Instagram followers in this research, the way that they disregard

other perspectives from their own is to actually have their own personal views or

perspectives on beauty, and stick to these views. Not only that, the followers are also

able to accept their selves, when compared to all generations, "millennials are more

accepting of differences, not just of among gays, women and minorities, but in

everyone" (Stein, 2013, p. 7).

The aforementioned responses of the Instagram followers in this research are

different in a way that they do not disregard the discrepancies that they experience

between their actual and ideal selves. Instead, the respective informants acknowledge

the discrepancies that they are experience, and yet, found ways to cope with these

discrepancies, such as having their own perspectives, accepting the realities of their

situations and not obsessing with celebrities. In fact, these aforementioned actions are

a way of "…reducing the importance of our dissonant beliefs" (ibid, p. 118), which is

a way to manage dissonance in the Cognitive Dissonance Theory. Therefore, the

discussion on coping self-discrepancies and how the findings of this research intersect with Self-discrepancy Theory as well as Cognitive Dissonance Theory makes this topic worthy.

5.3.5 Instagram followers' gender differences as a prominent highlight in this thesis

The fifth significance in this thesis addresses the gender differences amongst Instagram followers. The findings have clearly showed that male and female informants have distinct personal interests and idealization according to their respective gender. For instance, this study revealed male informants' personal interests and idealization generally circle around the theme of success achievement in life and trades, and female informants mostly on the theme of socialization and physical/outer attractiveness. Because the personal interests and idealization are gender-based, it was not a surprise that the presence of self-discrepancies and visual self-presentation imitation were reflected according to gender differences. The distinctness in gender can be explained with the Social Role Theory.

According to the aforementioned theory, individuals' perception of their self-concepts is distinctively gender-based due to gender roles (Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000). Gender roles are "…shared expectations that apply to individuals on the basis of their socially identified sex" (ibid, p. 127), and these expectations cover ideal and actual expectations (Cialdini & Trost, 1998, as cited in Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000). The expectations originated with occupation in the work force, which is labeled as "division of labor" (Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000) in the Social Role Theory, and later covered work at home.

The theory also discussed that in any of the works, whether at the field or at home, these activities correspond to the types of physical and social characteristics that men and women typically have to function in any given society (ibid). For example, men are physically stronger and embody roles that are exudes assertiveness and independence (ibid). The aforementioned description of men corresponds with the research of Gabriel and Gardner whereby men typically compete for "…power and status…" (1999, as cited in Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000, p. 149). Interestingly, the theory and research support the findings of this thesis, as this study disclosed that the male informants are personally invested in success achievement that status and wealth. As for women, they are physically more nurturing and are geared towards maintaining relationships (Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000). The aforementioned description of women is in correspondence with the research of Gabriel and Gardner whereby women typically emphasize relationships (1999, as cited in Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000). Again, the theory and research support the results of this thesis, whereby among the personal interests in which female informants are invested in revolve around social relationships. Because the expectations on gender roles "…foster behaviors" (ibid, p. 127) of men and women, the roles "…induce sex differences in behavior in the absence of any intrinsic, inborn psychological differences between women and men" (ibid). Indeed, the gender-based expectations become "…powerful influences on the self-concepts and behavior of both sexes" (ibid, p. 143). Thus, gender roles do influence people's perception of their selves (Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000).

It is also important to note that the line differentiating gender roles between men and women are becoming more invisible. In comparison with the types of roles

that men and women occupy decades ago, societies now experience more women in the work force and occupying higher positions, and that there are men who stay at home to take care of children. The Social Role Theory also predicted this societal and attitudinal changing and growing phenomenon, and stated, "…because the roles of women and men have become more similar, their attributes converge" (Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000, p. 159). What the aforementioned convergence is referring to is the "…personality, cognitive, and physical characteristics…" (Diekman & Eagly, 2000, as cited in Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000, p. 159) of men and women. This is an interesting fact and a supportive one to this thesis as there are female informants who expressed assertiveness, such as being proud of one's self, like the male informants. Therefore, gender differences are indeed a worthy key feature in this study, making this highlight a significant contribution to this thesis.

5.3.6 Instagram followers' strong sense of selves as a constant theme throughout this thesis

The sixth significance, which also serves as the final discussion for this sub section, addresses to the constant theme of Instagram followers' strong sense of selves. This is reflected through the respective informants' perceived self-concept, whereby in spite of the exposure of celebrities' Instagram images, the followers are proud of themselves, they do not want to be anybody else but their selves, they are motivated to just post about themselves and their lives, and that they do not want to post in unauthentically. Indeed, the attitude of these Instagram followers of being true to their selves reflect the general attitude of the millennials generation, whereby they challenge the status quo, refuse to be part of the crowd and that they are a more self-

entitled cohort (Stein, 2013). Aside from that, the generation of millennials is definitely made up of self-empowered individuals who are also living in a "…world of abundance" (ibid, p. 5). What this means is that millennials have more options to choose on whatever that pleases them, and this includes presenting their selves through the variety of Instagram accounts. Aided by technology affordance, the existence of main and private Instagram accounts in this thesis shows that Instagram followers do not feel confined in their visual self-presentations, as the informants have choices on portraying their truest selves without inhibitions and perceived judgments. The discussion on followers' strong sense of selves living in this age of choices makes this dialogue enriches the coherence of this study.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

    5.4.1 Restricted Access to Instagram Followers' Private Instagram Accounts

    Among the limitations presented in this study pertain to the restricted access to Instagram followers' private Instagram accounts. This limitation exists because the discovery on the access restriction to followers' private Instagram accounts came very late to the knowledge of the researcher. It is during the in-depth interviews that the researcher found out that prior to the interviews, she was actually only given access to the informants' public or main accounts, but not their private accounts. The researcher did not expect this knowledge at all. As revealed in Section 4.3 on page 158, there are distinct differences between informants' main and private Instagram accounts, and the informants' visual self-presentations do differ from one account to another. Thus, the researcher was not able to overcome the restriction of followers' private Instagram accounts, because the researcher has already conducted her textual analysis on the

informants' Instagram images prior to the interviews, whereby in her stringiest time phase, the researcher was already further along in her data collection.

In relation to the overall findings, discussions and conclusions of this research, the researcher believes that the impact of this limitation is minor. This is because despite the fact that the researcher only gained access to the followers' main Instagram accounts and that the conducted interviews are based on these main accounts, however, the researcher was still able to analyze the followers' Instagram images to answer the research questions of this study satisfactorily. The researcher needs to keep in mind though because the access that she had is to the followers' public Instagram accounts, therefore the findings, discussions and conclusions of this study is only applicable to address the followers' public visual self-presentations, and not the informants' personal visual self-presentations that this research initially had set forth. Because of this limitation, this study is only explicable for public self-presentations. The limitation presence of restricted access indeed addresses a direction for ambitious scholars to undertake in future research, which will be mentioned in the section 5.5 Recommendation for further research of this chapter.

5.4.2 Time

Another limitation this study present is time. The time limitation exists because of several reasons. Firstly, the expected educators were not able to assist the researcher in the recruitment of informants as it was a nationwide mourning period of time. Secondly, the vacation break came about and respective research participants were on holiday, thus, postponing further the process of the research methodology.

Because of the two aforementioned reasons, the researcher was not able to overcome the time issue to its fullest capacity that would have moved the researcher in a faster pace. One significant impact from this limitation has led the researcher to analyze and write concurrently in a very fast pace, to the point that the researcher may occasionally miss out important details or opportunities to delve deeper and richer into the research, due to the heavy pressure to catch up with time. Therefore, in comparison with all the two main limitations stated in section 5.3 of this study, the researcher is convicted that the time limitation carries the most impact towards the general findings, discussions and conclusions of this study. The limitation presence of time does address a direction for future researchers to undertake in future research, which will be incorporated in the section 5.5 Recommendation for further research of this chapter.

5.4.3 Absence of Secondary Coder

The absence of having a second coder is also another limitation in this research. This limitation exists because the researcher does not have the resources to engage the assistance of a secondary coder to aid analyzing interview transcriptions and Instagram photos. Therefore, it is solely the researcher who has analyzed the aforementioned data. With the limitation of not having a secondary code, the inter-coder reliability cannot be fully achieved in which to a certain extent, affects the reliability of qualitative data interpretation in this study. However, in spite of the presence of the aforementioned limitation, the reliability of data interpretation conducted in this study is nonetheless assured as the researcher used mixed methods research instruments, namely textual analysis and in-depth interview, to interpret the research data. The limitation of not having a secondary coder does address a direction

for aspiring researchers to undertake in prospective research, which will be included in the section 5.5 Recommendation for further research of this chapter.

### 5.4.4 Informants' Language Level of Fluency

The informants' language level of fluency is another limitation that the researcher face in conducting this research. This limitation exists because the researcher interviewed Thai Instagram followers in the English language, whereby for the majority of the informants, English is not their first language. Although the researcher is able to have a reasonably smooth interview sessions with the informants, nonetheless the researcher cannot deny that the capability and comfort to converse in the respective informants' mother tongue would help the followers to express their thoughts, convictions and experiences better and perhaps, even more accurately. This drawback is a reason on why the researcher chose to study with Thai students in the International program, which is to reduce this particular limitation on informants' language level of fluency. In this sense, the researcher is also limited for not speaking and understanding the Thai language, as her Thai language level is certainly not at the fluency level of a Thai native speaker. Indeed in this thesis, the level of fluency limitation could not be overcome to its fullest capacity, as the researcher is only capable to speak English fluently as English is her first language. Not only that, English is the only common and mutual language that both researcher and informants speak well. Indeed, the limitation presence of language fluency does address a direction for aspiring researchers to undertake in prospective research, which will be included in the section 5.6 Recommendation for further research of this chapter.

5.5 Recommendation for Further Application

Based on the overall findings, summary and discussions of this study, this research has shown that the exposure of celebrities' Instagram images do have positive and negative impact on followers' perceptions of their selves and their visual self-presentations on Instagram. Although the effect is more positive than negative, nonetheless the presence of negative impact still bears significant attention for relevant stakeholders to consider and conduct accordingly in their respective fields.

5.5.1. For Society and Community Leaders in the Government and Private Sectors

One of the relevant stakeholders that this research considers is the society and community leaders in the government and private sectors. The aforementioned leaders are in a great position to address the wellbeing of the youth, as the leaders have more governance to spread positive influence and make favorable impact for all youth in local, district, and nation-wide scales. Among the recommendations that this research proposes for these leaders to take upon are to set up training platforms in the community for the youth to instill, boost and strengthen their self-concept. When the self-concept and perception of youth are strengthened as worthy and valuable human beings, the youth will experience positive emotions about their selves, and thus, they will not go down to the pathway of sadness, depression or disappointment when exposed to their ideal celebrities' Instagram images. Therefore, this recommendation is beneficial, for it will fortify the youth's sense of self.

To go along with the training on youth's self-concept, another recommendation for the leaders is to encourage motivation and inspiration among the

youth. It is not a surprise that in real life, the youth will encounter self-discrepancies and deficiencies when it is through their own perception, or when they compare their selves with siblings, relatives, friends, and people around them. To be compared with celebrities are also not exempted, as this research has proven that the youth do look at celebrities as their ideal and role models, and the influence of celebrities are more massive and invasive with the channel of social media platforms, such as Instagram. One of the beautiful results that this research procures is that followers who experience motivation and inspiration of their ideal celebrities help followers to negotiate with their self-discrepancies, and that they perceive themselves positively. With that being said, the leaders can come up with community programs that will instill motivation and inspiration among the youth. Leaders can select sound and positive local or abroad celebrities, as well as life personalities to talk to the youth, and demonstrate activities that will be of interests to the youth. These invited celebrities or life personalities should encompass a variety of fields of interests, so that they can appeal to a wider range of youth who has diverse interests.

However, motivation and inspiration are not adequate as from this study, there is also a need for the youth to take action. Thus, the leaders could incorporate activities, which require the youth to actively take part in a variety of happenings, besides just sitting down and listening to talks. The leaders could also extend these activities to be post events, such as follow-up activities, so that the youth are involved in the activities longer, and thus, the impact is prolonging and lasting.

5.5.2. For Celebrities' Agencies and Celebrities Themselves

Celebrities' agencies and celebrities themselves are another important stakeholders in this research. The aforementioned stakeholders do play a vital role as they have direct access on the communication of celebrities and their images across social media platforms, as well as connection to fans or followers. The research recommends that the aforesaid constituents can encourage positive self-esteem through self-empowerment among followers through the celebrities' Instagram accounts. Provided the agencies are supportively invested in the followers whereby efforts align with the visions and goals of the agencies as well as the celebrities, the agencies can set up execution strategies for relevant events and activities, as well as communication campaigns that promote self-empowerment in which celebrities can be a part of, like women's empowerment, believe in yourself, you are worthy, and so forth. Celebrities then can promote the events, activities and communication campaigns through their Instagram posts, be it through the visual forms of pictures or videos.

Besides self-esteem, celebrities can also disseminate powerful messages on acceptance and loving one's self, contentment, and every unique beauty and success should be celebrated. The aforementioned values and life concepts will build upon the followers' self-esteem and empower their selves. Celebrities need to keep in mind though that followers do look for authenticity, so celebrities need to ensure that they use their own voice and present their selves as true as possible when crafting the message to further encourage and influence followers to be proud of themselves. As mentioned in the research, fans do look at celebrities at role models, thus celebrities can use their status as a platform to promote sound self-esteem values in their fans.

5.5.3. For Social Media Gurus and Communication Proponents

Another significant stakeholder group directly addresses the champions of the communication field, who are the social media gurus and communication proponents. These communication champions are in a relevant position as trailblazers to explore deeper and use findings on utilizing Instagram via celebrities' images as a vehicle to generate possible positive impacts on users' identity and behavior, as well as to spread the information to their necessary counterparts in the industry. Among the recommendations that this research proposes for these stakeholders to take upon are to conduct more comprehensive and timely studies on celebrities' Instagram images with positive impacts beyond this research. The way people communicate and use social media are dynamic, thus the social media gurus and communication proponents are the best stakeholders to monitor, evaluate and study on people's communication and social media usage as the present practices will inform the aforementioned stakeholders on new discoveries to help promote positive impact to the users. In response to this specific proposal, thee social media gurus and communication proponents can consider the recommendations for further research listed and elaborated in section 5.5 of this chapter.

Besides conducting more comprehensive and timely studies, this stakeholder group could also inform the public on media literacy. According to the Center of Media Literacy, media literacy is conceptually defined as "…a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate with messages in a variety of forms — from print to video to the Internet…" (n.d). In addition, media literacy also "…builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression

necessary for citizens of a democracy" (Center of Media Literacy, n.d.). With media literacy, the public will be informed that they need to exercise awareness when they come across social media information, as not all information is constantly truthful because everyone has access to the Internet, together with the convenience of technology affordances. The public will also be educated on how to detect between true and false information, and to decipher the meanings behind that information. Therefore, social media gurus and communication proponents are the right stakeholders to inform the public on media literacy, as they are actively participating in the social media and communication scenes, and thus, have the best platforms to disseminate media literacy information to the public. These respective stakeholders can disseminate information through their blogs, vlogs, social media accounts, articles, and so forth. Informing the public with the stakeholders' own voice will give more authenticity and importance to the issue matter to the public.

### 5.5.4. For Parents and Educators

Last but certainly not the least, parents and educators also are another stakeholder group that plays an important role in this study. Parents and educators are important, as their involvement and say in the life personalities that their children or students are following on Instagram can have a great impact on their quality of life. The research recommends that parents and educators can look out for life personalities who can be positive role models for their children and students. To strengthen the relationship between celebrities with the youth, parents and educators can search for celebrities whom their children and students can relate with, have similar or identical characteristics, and that the celebrities' interests and personalities

intersect with the personal interests of children and students. These criteria will encourage children and students to feel good about their self, the youth to be motivated and inspired towards the life personalities that ultimately, children and students to subsequently take in positive behavior, whether emulating or creating their own style based on their idealization on celebrities.

Besides that, parents and educators can also impart and teach numerous life values and knowledge such as acceptance and loving one's self, contentment, and having bigger and wider perspectives on the concept of beauty and success. Coupled with reinforcement from school together with home, children and students can learn these aforementioned valuable lessons and be equipped with necessary mechanisms that will help them cope with self-discrepancies and deficiencies. Parents should use every social situation to teach, impart and consistently reinforce relevant values to their children since young, so that the children will grow up, equipped with mechanisms to face life's challenges with a strong sense of self.

Educators can also combine textbook and life concepts and values for students, and that in every lesson, there should be application on real-life situations, case studies or scenarios. Not forgetting, educators are also the right persons to train students on media literacy. With media literacy exposure and training, the youth will not be easily swayed by information, such as images from social media such as Instagram, at first glance, and they will be better equipped in handling and understanding the information that come their way.

5.6 Recommendation for Further Research

Aspiring researchers who would like to pursue this study can consider the following ways to develop this study.

5.6.1 Recommendations in Directions of Study

In terms of directions of study, future scholars could expand the exposure of celebrities' images to include other social media platforms, such as Facebook and Youtube. By doing so, the researchers will have a more holistic insight onto informants' social media usage in general. Aside from that, academicians could also study informants' motivation and inspiration, as well as personal interests as determining constructs to informants' perceived self-concept and visual self-presentations. The aforementioned constructs play an important role in this research, thus worth studying. Not only that, interested scholars could also incorporate informants' social economic status as part of the research criteria in the future. Although there is no emphasis on informants' social economic status in this thesis, however if lower-middle class and below are studied, researchers may find different findings in terms of discrepancies and outcomes. Besides that, aspiring researchers could also examine the relationship of exposure of celebrities' online images with followers' offline self-presentations in real life. Studying the relationship between the online and offline lives goes hand-in-hand with the type of life we are living in this day of digital age.

5.6.2 Recommendations in Methodology

In terms of methodology, prospective researchers could contemplate on expanding the number of sample to a bigger size, so that the results will be more representative and significant. Not only that, researchers could also study this

communication phenomenon in the cultural context of the researcher's country of origin. For example, the researcher is a Malaysian and thus, the research can study Malaysians as the target sample. This proposition will reduce the impact of language level of fluency onto the research findings, discussion and conclusions, thus producing a more accurate research.

Aside from that, scholars could also consider converting this study into a quantitative research, so that the computation and analysis will be more objective, thus providing more objective results, which can be tested to hundreds of samples. Future researches could also envision analyzing all the Instagram images of each informant, as every posted picture makes up the visual self-presentation of a person. Researchers could also include captions as part of the textual analysis. Not forgetting, academicians could also strive to have access to informants' private Instagram accounts. With this access, researchers could inquire a more well rounded insight on Instagrammers' visual self-presentations holistically, and not limited to just individuals' public visual self-presentations.

Finally, prospective researchers could also incorporate collaboration with other passionate scholars to study this research. With teamwork through cooperation effort, the partnership will alleviate research burden, strengthen validity and reliability, and reduce time constraints through delegation and shared responsibilities in a shorter period of time. For example, when a researcher is conducting interview, another researcher could be transcribing the interview as well. Thus, a collaborative effort between researchers is indeed beneficial for communication studies such as these, and should be highly considered for future work.

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APPENDIX

**In-depth Interview Questions**
Order of questions will vary on real-time interview sessions.

1.1 <u>Background</u>

    1.1.1   Can you share with me about yourself?

    1.1.2   What are some of the social/moral values that you sincerely believe?

    1.1.3   How do you describe the lifestyle you are living right now?

1.2 <u>Instagram Usage</u>

    1.2.1   Describe a typical day on how you use Instagram in your daily life.

    1.2.2   Why do you use Instagram?

    1.2.3   What are the common activities that you usually do on Instagram?

1.3 <u>Celebrities' Instagram Images</u>

    1.3.1   Who do you idealize on Instagram? Why?

    1.3.2   What do you think about their Instagram images?

    1.3.3   How does looking at celebrities' Instagram images make you feel about yourself?

1.4 <u>Visual Self-Presentation on Instagram</u>

    1.4.1   How do you usually Instagram yourself on your account?

    1.4.2   Do you think being exposed to celebrities' Instagram images has any effect on how you visually present yourself on Instagram? Why?

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