INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

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SI: 422   Team Blue

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The goal of these interviews was to better understand how college sorority girls are more (if they are more) susceptible to feeling poorly about their body image and the motivations for social comparison.

In order to recruit participants, the researchers began with their inner circles and expanded outward. Researcher Danielle is in the Alpha Phi sorority and was able to ask her sorority sisters to participate in her interviews. Researcher Kelly's sister is in Gamma Phi Beta, and so she was able to interview her sister's friends. Researcher Christian emailed an acquaintance in a sorority he was familiar with and asked her for an interview. He does not know a lot of people in sororities, but the ones he does know do not use Instagram. Hence, they were not the ideal candidates for this project. Researcher Christian interviewed Kelly's sister after struggling to find a second participant. Researcher Julia also did not know many girls in social sororities at Michigan, so she branched out to a friend in a multicultural sorority and a girl from her hometown that is in a sorority at a different school. Overall, our recruitment process was difficult with the time constraint, but the researchers were able to make it work by reaching out to acquaintances.

Researcher Danielle and Researcher Kelly interviewed participants at their home. Researcher Danielle lives with her participants, which is convenient for both researcher and participant. Researcher Kelly asked her participants to come to her house because her roommates would be gone, and the house would be quiet. Both Researcher Christian's interviews took place at Espresso Royale, while Researcher Julia conducted an interview via Skype. Her other interview took in a residence hall lounge. Researcher Danielle and Researcher Christian both used their phone's built-in voice recorders; Researcher Julia used the smart phone app "Super Note", and Researcher Kelly used the audio recording capabilities of Quick Time Player on her laptop.

In regards to the participants, the table below summarizes the characteristics individuals who were interviewed:

Pseudonym	Gender	Tech Expertise	Age	Sorority
Grace	Female	Basic Knowledge of Instagram and Afterlight	20	Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority Incorporated
Polly	Female	Extensive knowledge of Instagram, Vsco, Pinterest, and Photoshop (Adobe Suite)	19	Phi Mu
Claire	Female	Extensive knowledge of VSCO and Instagram and long-time user. Familiar with Afterlight as well	20	Gamma Phi Beta

Molly	Female	Extensive knowledge of FaceTune and consistent long-time user of Instagram	20	Kappa Kappa Gamma
Kitty	Female	Expert Instagram and Facetune user, familiar with VSCO	19	Alpha Phi
Michaela	Female	Extensive knowledge of Instagram and VSCO. Basic knowledge of Afterlight.	19	Alpha Phi
Connie	Female	Prefers to edit photos on Instagram. Too lazy to use other apps.	20	Gamma Phi Beta
Marnie	Female	Uses VSCO to edit photos. Knows how to use, but doesn't use, Facetune. Uses Perfect 365 to get rid of under eye circles	19	Gamma Phi Beta

To best analyze our interviews, the researchers met together to hand code. They started by looking at the questions they had decided to ask the participants while analyzing each of their interviewee's responses to the question. From then, themes were established across interviews. Occasionally, there would be a single theme of how all the interviewee's answered the question, upon which a discussion would commence based around why interviewees answered this way and how/why Instagram would make users experience these feelings or interact with the application in this manner. On the other hand, when multiple themes were seen in the responses, the interviewee's background— including their usage of the application, how often they were on Instagram, and how much effort they put into their posts – were considered. After looking into these ideas, the researchers then checked for response patterns across the participants to try and understand for these responses. Lastly, when there was a drastic mixture of responses found across the interviews, each response was further analyzed in greater context of the interview, and how that specific person had previously responded about similar questions or topics. The researchers were looking at how each question's answers either built on or deviated from other question's answers, as well as how the data was related.

Our interviews began with a warm-up where the researchers asked introductory questions. Researchers then went into general issues. The general issues section built up to the deep focus questions, and finally the researchers ended with a conclusion. Beginning with the warm-up section, the researchers found that all participants began using Instagram prior to college. The majority of the interviewees began using the application during their freshman and sophomore years of high school, but did not get fully invested in posting

on a regular basis until college. The average interviewee posts every one to two weeks - depending on whether or not they have any significant activities going on that they wish to share with their followers.

In regards to the posting frequency, Marnie stated, "I would say, average one a week. Depends on what I'm doing, and if I get good pictures maybe it'll be like, when I was in Miami I think I posted every day that I was there." A common theme researchers discovered was that interviewees posted mostly when they were doing something noteworthy, such as during game days or vacations. This theme directly correlates to the type of pictures they post. Most interviewees identified the type of photo they posted as a 'candid' photo. Candid is the term given to non-posed pictures; however, a few of our interviewees noted that candid pictures are just as posed, if not more so. Kitty said there have been an increasing amount of candid pictures "that aren't really candid but kind of reinforces that like you want people to see pictures of you having fun. And like maybe posed pictures don't show how much fun you're having."

Furthermore, there was a noticeable deviation with the logistics of their photos. While fewer participants preferred group pictures, the majority frequently post "solo shots" of just themselves taken by another person. According to Marnie, this was due to her "narcissistic self". The researchers also asked our participants whether or not other people's opinions impact what they decide to post. This question yielded a mixture of responses, yet none of the interviewees said other people's opinions are the driving force to posting a certain picture. Many of them stated that they will only post something they like, but they keep in mind what their followers would like to see. For example, Connie said, "I'm not gonna post something I don't like, but if it's a super cute picture and it's someone else in the sorority I know I'm gonna get a ton of likes." Therefore, knowing who follows an individual, indirectly influences what a he/she will post. A recurring theme the researchers noticed throughout the interviews was an emphasis on posting Greek related pictures. Knowing that their sorority sisters will like the picture confirms the participants' desire to post.

Following the warm-up, the general issues section of the interview highlighted interviewees' likes, dislikes, pressure to post, and their posting process. Most of the interviewees felt that Instagram has evolved significantly from its original design. However, the fundamental themes of Instagram, a platform to highlight personal events, has remained constant. Most participants liked the fact that they could use Instagram as a platform to showcase the significant aspects of their life. Furthermore, this allows participants to connect with friends who they might not have seen in a while without actively engaging in conversation. Polly asserts, "I guess it's [Instagram] more just to keep up to date with people. Um, just to see what else is happening in others." This passive nature of Instagram feeds is a positive feature that participants enjoy a lot on the Instagram. In regards to dislikes of Instagram, interviewees specified a general dislike for current Instagram algorithm feed. Originally, the Instagram news feed was based on time, but it has since changed. Interviewees dislike the idea of Instagram manipulating what they are able to see.

The general issues section of the interview also discussed the pressures that the participants experienced when posting on this platform. Most interviewees specified that they did not feel that much pressure or at least, this pressure did not come in the form of social pressure to post. The pressure that some interviewees felt mainly came from the need to maintain good-quality photos. For example, Marnie stated that during her trip to Miami, she posted a lot of 'good pictures'; however, after she returned from her trip, she felt pressured to keep up the high caliber of her photos. Another interviewee mentioned that her relationship status made her feel pressured to post certain kinds of pictures on Instagram. Grace specifically mentioned that "sometimes I feel pressured-- 'pressured,' to like post pictures of like myself and like my significant other just because a lot of people do that." Hence, while most participants did not experience much pressure to post, this is not entirely the case for every individual.

Furthermore, the general issues section also focused on learning about each participant's posting process. In regards to this topic, posting processes ranged from those who worked profusely to get the perfect 'Insta' to those who just slapped a picture on Instagram and called it day. However, the posting process generally used the following structure:

1. Select the best picture from a variety
2. If you still cannot decide, send the pictures to friends and have them choose
3. Use a filter. If that is not enough, other apps (Vsco, Afterlight, FaceTune) can help.
4. Add a caption.

The more intense Instagram users tended to seek advice from friends about which picture to post and used additional editing ups. These intense posting processes were mainly used on modeling, 'candid,' and game day pictures. Many interviewees noticed these aforementioned types of pictures to be a social trend on their Instagram feed.

For the final part of our interviews, questions mainly focused around self-consciousness and how it is reflected in the participants' lives. During this portion of the interviews, there was a split response of how the individuals felt Instagram affected their view of others and themselves. Some of the participants felt self-conscious when seeing Insta-famous accounts or when seeing numerous posts by other girls in sororities during welcome week and rush. In regards to welcome week Instagram posts, Kitty – an individual wo spends a vast amount of time on this platform – said, "It's one thing seeing everyone in their bikini tops and shorts every day in person, and it's completely another thing seeing that on Instagram fully edited looking like that… It's slightly more I think glamorized a little bit." Hence, there is some correlation between the amount of time spent on Instagram, and the amount of insecurity experienced by an individual.

A majority of the participants also stated that they had little to no feelings when seeing other users posts; however, it is hard to discern how many of these responses truly reflected the interviewee's feelings and how

many came from insecurity or lack of trust with the interviewer themselves. Participant Marnie claims, "I'm a pretty confident person, so I don't think I've really had an issue. Usually when I see some really pretty girl with a good picture I'm like "oh my god this is such a cool picture- go you" or something". However, Connie acknowledges that other girls posts can make her feel slightly jealous, but only for a moment: "I wouldn't say looking at anyone's posts makes me feel bad about myself, but there are people that I'm like "oh wow you do look really great" or "I wish I could be like that" but I don't think it makes me feel negative about myself". Thus, responses related to body image were mixed.

When talking to the participants about how accurate their Instagram profile was of their lives, there seemed to be a common theme from participants. For example, Connie stated, "I think it's reflective of my life in the sense that… I'm not faking scenarios to post pictures, but I also don't post pictures of me studying or hanging out on North Campus… So I'm only posting pictures where I'm having fun". Instagram is an accurate representation of their social lives and the "high points" of their lives, but their daily lives of going to classes and to the library on a regular basis is not documented on Instagram. Even those who are less frequent posters or users of Instagram would commonly post only major events or something interesting that happened to them. The variation of frequency of post seemed to connect to the frequency notable events that they attended, which varied from person to person.

After analyzing our eight interviews, a topic that is worth continuing further research on is the idea of a 'Finstagram.' -- an Instagram separate from one's main account. This was a consistent topic mentioned throughout several of the interviews. Molly defined "Finstagrams" as "fake Instas" where people post "embarrassing pictures and funny things". She commented, "I definitely have noticed a lot of girls have those… [to] reduce the stress of posting like super pretty pictures and things like that it's more a way to just share funny stories with your friends." By further, analyzing the "Finstagram" scene, it could provide further insights as to why people do not feel as comfortable sharing funny or more personal images on their main accounts. Additionally, because our research focused mainly on personal accounts, a deeper analysis of specialized Instagram accounts—any account showcasing one hobby or skill – may be useful to examine in the future. Popular specialized accounts focus on topics such as fitness, makeup, art portfolios, or yoga, which indirectly influences its followers. Finally, since we narrowed our interviews down to the specific demographic of college sorority girls, future research could investigate various perspectives from males and females outside of Greek life. These perspectives would increase our sample source and determine if users outside of Greek Life experience body-image issues originating from Instagram.

In general, our findings did not reveal an excess of self-conscious feelings about body image, with only a few participants admitting to this. The research conducted demonstrates that there is a minor correlation between insecurities about body image, long posting processes, and time spent on Instagram. Generally, the longer the posting process and time spent on Instagram, the more likely an individual is likely to feel

insecurities about their body image. Some participants believe there is nothing Instagram can do to solve body image issues, and it is mainly a personal mental health issue. Other participants see Instagram as a source of motivation to inspire individuals to become healthier version of themselves. Because Instagram predominantly highlights individuals in their best moments, it is likely that it will inspire other people to create 'best' moments for themselves. Instagram can motivate users, but can also knock them down. Hence, the nature of Instagram culture produces both benefits and unintended consequences on its users. It will be interesting to see how Instagram can use this research to tackle this complex issue commonly considered to be a 'personal' problem.

Personas and Scenarios

A peek into Katherine's life	
Tech Experience	Extensive knowledge of Instagram and other editing apps (FaceTune and Vsco) Owns an Iphone, Ipad, and Mac
Education	University of Michigan College of Literature, Arts, and Sciences Major: Communication Studies Minor: Spanish Recently returned from a study abroad trip in Spain
Sorority	Kappa Kappa Gamma
Demographic	Age: 21 Socio-Economic Status: Upper Class Religion: Jewish Ethnicity: Caucasian Gender: Female Hometown: Westchester, NY
Social Scene	DKE, PKP, Ricks, Skeeps
Hobbies	Hillel Played lacrosse in high school.
Instagram Goals	To get as many likes and followers as possible To become 'Insta-famous' To be near as near to perfection as possible

"Self-Proclaimed Narcissist…"

"That is so not Insta-worthy"

"Confident on the outside, insecure on the inside."

KATHERINE PARKER

A Day in the Life of Katherine Parker:

Around 5:00 pm on Saturday, October 22, 2016, Katherine Parker and her sorority sisters are just waking up from their post-game day naps. After ordering feta bread from Pizza House, the girls begin scrolling through the couple hundred pictures they took during tailgating. One of the most important parts of Katherine's day is finding the perfect photo to post on Instagram. For this game day in particular, Katherine wore a Michigan cropped sweater to show off her small waist she has been working hard on for the past couple weeks. She favorites about 10 photos and sends them to the group chat with all her best friends. Her friends help narrow them down to the top two and Katherine makes the final decision to go with a candid from the top of an elevated surface at the Phi Psi pregame.

Katherine moves into the editing phase of the upload, beginning with Facetune to whiten her teeth and blur out blemishes. Although she is not an expert Facetune user, she is slowly becoming better at tampering with lighting and increasing the detail of key features. Next, Katherine moves to VSCO to filter her picture. She adds a few sun spots and settles on the premade C1 filter. Katherine imports the photo to Instagram to finalize the post. Because she perfected the photo using other applications, she skipped past Instagram's editing features. Katherine heads downstairs to the living room to see if anyone's around who can offer advice regarding a good caption. Her sorority sister Andy offers the idea of "Our win streak is a MAIZEing," and Katherine loves it. She sends the final image and caption idea to her group chat and receives praises for looking

good and for the punny caption. With that, Katherine hits the post button and waits. Within the first minute she's happy to see the notification for likes start to pour in on her home screen.

A peek into Dylan's life	
Tech Experience	Advanced knowledge of Instagram and other Afterlight (editing app) Owns an Iphone, and Dell Laptop
Education	University of Michigan College of Literature, Arts, and Sciences Major: Biochemistry (Pre-med) Research assistant to Dr. Chivens in pediatric surgery at Mott's Hospital
Sorority	Gamma Phi Beta
Demographic	Age: 19 Socio-Economic Status: Upper Middle Class Religion: None Ethnicity: Half Caucasian, Half Latino Gender: Female Hometown: Grand Rapids, MI
Social Scene	DTD, DU, Chi Phi, Pi Kapp, BTB Cantina
Hobbies	A part of Women's Glee Club
Instagram Goals	To use Instagram to stay in touch with friends and family. To use Instagram as a platform to keep a record of all her personal highlights.

"Instagram is an accurate reflection of the accomplishments of my life..."

"I use Instagram as a medium to stay in touch with my friends and family who are far away from me..."

Dylan Olsen

A Day in the Life of Dylan Olsen:

Dylan spends the day with her Gamma Phi sisters at Plymouth Orchard, enjoying the fall weather and activities. They take pictures throughout the day, but it's not invasive to the rest of their day. After they arrive back at school, they exchange photos in a group chat, and Dylan goes through them and finds one that is really cute. She and a friend are eating candy apples and looking happy. She decides it would make a good Instagram post because she hasn't posted for a few weeks, and this was a special sisterhood event. She edits the photos on Instagram because she is too lazy to use other apps. She goes to Instagram's "edit" tab and increases the brightness and color of the photo. She then applies the "Clarendon" filter. After thinking of a somewhat 'punny' caption for the photo ("We have a pretty sweet friendship"), she posts with the expectation she will get lots of likes because her followers are mostly her sisters, and the photo is with another sister at a sorority outing. As she scrolls through her feed after she posts her picture, Dylan sees several of her other friends visiting their families in other parts of Michigan. Dylan feels content as she is able to keep up with her acquaintances without having to actively engage in conversation with them.

A peek into Tess's life	
Tech Experience	Advanced knowledge of Instagram Advanced knowledge with Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator Owns an iPhone and a Mac
Education	University of Michigan School of Arts and Design Major: Graphic Design
Sorority	Alpha Phi
Demographic	Age: 20 Socio-Economic Status: Upper Middle Class Religion: None Ethnicity: Upper Middle Class Gender: Female Hometown: San Jose, CA
Social Scene	OX, PKP, DKE, AEPI
Hobbies	Photographer for SHEI Magazine
Instagram Goals	To use Instagram mainly as a platform to promote her art. Is trying to use Instagram to get her name out there as an artist

"Instagram is a great platform to get your name out there..."

"Appreciate the beauty of creation..."

Tess Gallagher

A Day in the Life of Tess Gallagher:

It's finals week of Fall 2015, and Tess is finally finishing up her portfolio for class. Coffee on her desk, music in the background, she opens up Adobe Photoshop and begins to put a final few touches on her last couple pieces of art. She finishes within the next hour, and considers posting these pieces on her Instagram account. With graduation coming up, Tess has been looking for job openings in major companies in New York. Thus far, she has not heard back from any company, and she is beginning to feel restless as her future is becoming a pool of murky water. Tess began using Instagram as a way to get her name and her art out there. She tends the files from her computer to her email account, so she can download it on her phone. She uploads the photo onto Instagram but does not use any of the editing features because the tools that Instagram provides is for amateurs. She writes a simple caption ('Beauty is found in the details') but adds a tremendous amounts of hashtags because Tess has noticed that artists on Instagram use hashtags to spread their art. As Tess presses upload, she hopes that somewhere in the Instagram universe, someone will see her work and feel a spark that ignites their passion for art.

Appendix

<u>**Interview Protocol**</u>

Introduction:
- Introduce yourself
- We are researching how college students use Instagram, more importantly their experiences on this platform and how we can further improve it
- Thanks so much for taking time out of your day to do this interview with me.

Warm-Up
- Can you tell us which sorority you're in and about it?
- When did you start using Instagram? How did you decide to start using it?
- How often do you post on the app?
  - o Is there a kind of picture that you post more often than others? (i.e. do you mainly post landscapes, food, selfie, etc.)
  - o Why do you choose to post that kind (fill in whatever kind of pic it is) of picture?
  - o Do you choose what to post based on what you like or what you think others will like?
    - ▪ Does knowing who follows you impact what kind of picture you want to share?
  - o How often do you scroll through your newsfeed? How do you interact with the content on your newsfeed?

General Issues
- Can you tell us about your feelings of Instagram?
  - o Do you feel any pressure to post certain kinds of pictures or at a certain frequency?
- Tell us about how you use Instagram.
  - o Tell us about your posting process. How do you decide what to post? When to post? Etc.
- What are some social trends that you see through habitual use of Instagram?
- Can you tell me about a time when your involvement in a sorority influenced your Instagram habits?

Deep Focus
- Can you give us an example of when Instagram made you feel self-conscious?
  - o How does seeing college-aged women on Instagram and make you feel about yourself?
    - ▪ Have your sorority sisters' posts ever made you feel insecure or influenced your emotions in any other way?
    - ▪ What about when you see famous celebrities and "Insta-famous" accounts?
- Tell us about your experience with other editing apps. (Have you ever used an editing app?) How did you decide to use those apps? (What were your motivations for using it?)
  - o Follow up for if they don't: Even though you don't use it, do you know of people who do use it?
  - o If they do: Tell us about how you use the app. (Could you please share with us what edits you make?)
    - ▪ Could be a personal question
  - o How often do you interact with people who do use it?
  - o How aware are you of people using these editing apps?
- Do you think Instagram is an accurate reflection of your life?
  - o How reflective is your Instagram profile of your life?
  - o Do you feel like you are the same person on Instagram that you are in real life?
- Discuss some of the positive experiences you have had with Instagram.
- What about negative experiences?
- Do you feel like body image has become a greater issue with the introduction of the internet?
- Do you think there's a way to prevent these issues?

Wrap-up
- What are some other stories you would like to add to your Instagram experience?
- Thanks for your time! If you have any other questions now would be the time to ask, or feel free to contact me at the email listed on the consent form.

Interview Transcripts: See Submission on Canvas

Interview Recordings: See Submission on Canvas

Guiding Research Questions:

Group Goals:
- Improve moral of users
- Help teenage-early 20s (time when you're finding yourself) – seeing an unrealistic standard of beauty and life – bring them back to reality
- Show them their worth and that their life doesn't have to be insta-perfect
    o Put your life in perspective

Targeted audience:
 College students (Focus on females - however we will also talk to males)

What kinds of research questions will you ask and be able to answer?
1. Why are female college students more susceptible to feeling poorly about their body image online?
    a. Motivations for social comparison
2. How do college females cultivate their digital identity?
3. What aspects of Instagram leave users feeling less positive about their body image?
4. How can Instagram create a more personal space that increase daily active users?
5. Compare to:
    a). Snapchat
    b). Facebook
6. To what extent can Instagram create a more inviting atmosphere for its users?