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INSTAGRAM AND SELF-ESTEEM

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ABSTRACT

It is evident that Instagram has an impact on the self-esteem of its users. This study examined user experiences with Instagram using focus groups. The focus groups consisted of one all male group, one all female group, and one mixed gender group. Focus group results indicate Instagram impacts users' self-esteem. The impact depends on individuals' media-literacy knowledge as well as if the person is a high-self monitor or low-self monitor. In addition, users tend to utilize Instagram to promote their best selves, thus making their accounts somewhat idealistic. This is why many users favor Snapchat, so they can show a more genuine side of themselves without the pressure of likes and comments. This research can be used to better understand the sociological impacts that Instagram has on users.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Instagram is an image-based social media platform that was launched by co-founders Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger on October 6, 2010. This app gained 25,000 users by the end of first day, and has grown in popularity since (Our Story, 2017). Instagram has 600 million monthly users, and 400 million daily users (Our Story, 2017). Instagram is the second most prominent social media platform for young adults behind Facebook, with 59 percent of the 18-29 year old Internet user demographic having active Instagram accounts (Greenwood, 2016). In addition, there are more females that use Instagram than males (Greenwood, 2016). Facebook bought Instagram on April 09, 2012 (Our Story, 2017). “Instagram’s mission is to strengthen relationships through shared experiences” (Our Story, 2017).

Instagram’s team has taken notice to the dynamics that have surfaced between Instagram and users’ self-esteem. Instagram’s users utilize it for promoting the most glamorous parts of their lives, thus making their overall accounts inauthentic. In order to deter users from having this mentality, Instagram created Instagram stories, similar to that of Snapchat (Isaac, 2016). Because the Instagram story is a disappearing video and photo feature, it gives users the opportunity to show who they are through an unfiltered lens. The Instagram story gives users the comfort of being able to capture genuine moments throughout their days without the pressure of likes or looking perfect (Isaac, 2016).

Social Identity Theory provides the theoretical framework for this study. Psychologist Henri Tajfel proposed Social Identity Theory (McLeod, 2008). The logic behind this theory is

that the groups with which people identify, as well as the groups among them, shape their own identities (McLeod, 2008). It is of human nature to categorize oneself into specific groups, and to strive for a high social status within those groups (McLeod, 2008). These groups give people the comfort of feeling that they belong (McLeod, 2008).

Social Identity Theory involves the following three mental processes. Social categorization is placing oneself into specific groups (McLeod, 2008). These groups are called the “in-groups.” Social identification is taking on the traits that embody that group. Social comparison is recognizing other groups and comparing them to one’s own group (McLeod, 2008). These other groups are called the “out-groups.” The “in-groups” often put down the “out-groups” to build themselves up (McLeod, 2008). Social Identity Theory explains the dynamics of Instagram users. The users have adopted a social identity through Instagram and strive for a high social ranking through the number of likes they get, followers that have and types of pictures they post.

This thesis will build understanding about how images directly and indirectly impact females’ self-images and males self-images, as well as how young users perceive images of their own gender and other gender.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Tajfel and Turner (2004) discuss The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior. Intergroup conflict creates a stronger bond within the members of the in-group and weaker bond with the out-group. Even if certain members of the in-group are not directly involved with the conflict, they will still feel negatively towards the out-group because of their in-group association. A common conflict that arises between groups is social-status (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Groups that are not equivalent in social status tend to have hostility toward each other, and the subordinate group's self-esteem is affected. Interpersonal behavior is defined as "the interaction between two or more individuals that is fully determined by their interpersonal relationships and individual characteristics, and not at all affected by various social groups or categories to which they respectively belong" (Tajfel & Turner, 2004, p. 8). Intergroup behavior is defined as "the interactions between two or more individuals (or groups of individuals) that are fully determined by their respective memberships in various social groups or categories, and not at all affected by the interindividual personal relationships between the people involved" (Tajfel & Turner, 2004, p. 8).

According to Tajfel and Turner (2004), people define themselves by the groups they belong to. Furthermore, they compare themselves to other groups and judge those groups as being "better" or "worse." With this idea of social identity, it is assumed "individuals strive to maintain or enhance their self-esteem: they strive for a positive self-concept" (Tajfel & Turner, 2004, p. 16). In other words, individuals want in their own groups, as well as other groups to think positively of them, which increases their self-esteem. One way to gain this positive image is to differentiate oneself, as well as to discriminate against others. "The aim of differentiation is

to maintain or achieve superiority over an out-group on some dimensions” (Tajfel & Turner, 2004, p. 17). This creates competition between groups.

Tajfel and Turner (2004) go on to explain that social “status is the outcome of intergroup comparison” (p. 19). There is a clear hierarchy among social groups. Members of the lower groups have a desire to leave those groups and climb the social ladder, or reinvent their group so that people look favorably on it. With this being said, it is apparent that even the high-ranked social groups can still have an “insecure social identity” (Tajfel & Turner, 2004, p. 22).

Wilcox and Laird (2000) conducted research to examine the ways women are impacted by the images of slender woman in the media. Images are often unrealistic and have the capability to harm a woman’s self-esteem, causing damaging effects such as eating disorders or poor self-image. Wilcox and Laird (2000) examined 41 women participants who were between the ages of 18 and 35. The women were split into two groups, one group viewing ten images of thin models, while the other group viewing ten images of normal-sized models. The participants then discussed their self-esteem and body-esteem. They found participants who often compare themselves to these images had a lower self-esteem after being exposed to these images. The women who resonated with these images felt a higher self-esteem. This study asks:

RQ1: Do Instagram photos cause the participants to question body image and self-esteem?

Yamamiya, Cash, Melnyk, Posavac, and Posavac (2005) further explore the negative effects of media images on women’s body satisfaction. They examined if women who are informed about the media and its extreme use of airbrushing models and editing photos have a more positive body image, and if women who do not have that information have a more negative body image. Experimental results found the participants who saw photos of neutral objects had

more positive body images than the participants who saw photos of slender and attractive models. Furthermore, women who were exposed to a media-literacy message had a more positive body image.

RQ2: How much media-literacy knowledge does this age group possess?

Premack (2016), discusses that Dani Mathers, Playmate of the year for 2015, made fun of a nude older woman through Snapchat. Mathers was in her gym locker room and took a picture of this woman for her public Snapchat story with the caption, “If I can’t unsee this then you can’t either” (Premack, 2016 para. 2). Mathers is prohibited to go to her gym, LA Fitness for violating a member’s privacy and is facing a possible court case of “disorderly conduct” despite her public apology. Another term for this type of behavior is “body shaming.” According to the English Oxford Living Dictionary, “body shaming” is defined as “the action or practice of humiliating someone by making mocking or critical comments about their body shape or size” (English Oxford Living Dictionary, para. 1).

RQ3: What are the different ways people’s self-esteem determine their Instagram use?

Selfies have made the self-esteem issues on Instagram even more prevalent. Senft and Baym (2015) tackle selfies. According to Senft and Baym, the term “selfie” is defined as “a photographic object that initiates the transmission of human feeling in the form of a relationship. A selfie is also a practice—a gesture that can send (and is often intended to send) different messages to different individuals, communities, and audiences” (Senft & Baym, 2015, p. 1589). People who take selfies can be considered to have low self-esteem, and “harmful mental states such as narcissism, body dysmorphia, or even psychosis” (Senft & Baym, 2015, p. 1589). Pamela Rutledge, director of the Media Psychology Research Center, stated the idea of “damned-if you do damned if you don’t,” is actually a more accurate depiction of what is going

on in selfie culture (Senft & Baym, 2015, p. 1591). An example of this concept is when a girl felt pressured to post selfies in an attempt to seem more easy going. This backfired because she was then harassed for these selfies. A selfie is interesting in that it can make one feel disempowered but empowered as well (Senft & Baym, 2015). Instagram can be a powerful form of communication but it depends on how it is used. A perfect example of this social media empowerment was when Facebook was utilized for the Ice Bucket Challenge. This rose awareness about a disease called ALS. The article also examines the notion that a selfie prompts a response from the viewers, called “gestural responses.” These responses can be anything from liking to commenting, which can be considered a positive reinforcement. Users may feel pressured to post pictures in order to portray themselves in a certain way. It is also important to note that users may post pictures in the hopes of receiving a “gestural response” from their viewers.

Murray (2015) dives deeper into the selfie craze on social media. Murray (2015) found selfies can be considered very conceded. The selfie, self-obsession, and consumerism all go hand in hand. Some psychologists describe the girls who take many selfies as people with low self-esteem (Murray, 2015). Murray (2015) explains how some women see selfies as a way to fight the power that they believe males have over their bodies. Women will utilize their bodies and post sexual pictures with meaningful captions about the hardships that women go through, while other women will post pictures that defy the typical standard of beauty. This all is done in an attempt to show the misrepresentation of women on social media and furthermore how it connects to inequality. These types of selfies are actually considered more so “self-portraits.” The difference between a selfie and a self-portrait is that although “as a visual form they can be

totally indistinguishable, but the intentions that drive their production and social function vary greatly” (Murray 2015, p 499). This study asks:

RQ4: How often are users posting selfies with the intention of showing a self-representation?

Harper and Tiggemann (2007) investigated how sexualized media images can prompt women to objectify themselves. The initial inquiry of this research was to see if women could be provoked to objectify themselves by viewing idealized images. Harper and Tiggemann (2007) split women into three groups and each group was given a different set of photos. One set of photos contained products, another set contained thin and beautiful women, and the third set contained men and thin and beautiful women “as subject to attention” (Harper & Tiggemann, 2007). The women were questioned about their mood and body satisfaction before and after the study. The study found that the women who viewed the images of the thin beautiful women had “higher levels of state self-objectification, weight-related appearance anxiety, negative mood and body dissatisfaction” than the ones who viewed the neutral products (Harper & Tiggemann, 2007).

Olszanowski (2014) touches on the censorship aspects of Instagram by researching three feminist artists who post partially nude photos on Instagram. She found Instagram’s censorship rules are based on randomness as well as ideological views of what is socially acceptable. For example, if a woman posts an unconventional erotic photo, it is taken down once it is reported enough times. However, images of violence can be posted all over Instagram without the same result (Olszanowski, 2014). This sets a standard for images to not be less sexual, but to concede to a particular standard of sexualized beauty. Because the women that study did not agree with these Instagram policies, they reposted pictures that were taken down, or posted other similar

pictures to make a statement. While Olszanowski (2014) was conducting her study, two of the subjects' Instagram accounts were removed and one woman felt that she could not do it anymore. This begs the question; are these three women's photos censored due to the partial nudity, or are they being censored because they do not live up to the ideological concept of beauty? Also, what is this doing to the self-esteem of these three women? They are being told to look and act a certain way and that their idea of beauty is incorrect. The three women lashed out in rebellion against this standard; however, there are many people who concede and post pictures of what would be considered sexy or beautiful. The fact that users feel the need to do this could have an effect on their self-esteem.

RQ5: Do users think about the sexuality of their Instagram posts?

Smith and Sanderson (2015) examined athletes use of Instagram. They wanted to examine how athletes male and female, portray themselves on Instagram by looking at their posted pictures, and their captions. Athletes of the same sports (basketball, soccer, tennis, track, golf, swimming, baseball, and softball) were compared and contrasted. There were two male athletes and two female athletes per sport studied. The "50 most recent photographs from each athlete's Instagram account" were analyzed (Smith & Sanderson, 2015, p 348). After doing so, behavioral trends emerged. A lot of athletes had "ritualistic touching" in their Instagram photos. In about 50 percent of the photos, athletes were hugging or had their arms around the people next to them (usually family or friends). Athletes also seemed to post more full body shots rather than close up pictures. Furthermore, they did not post selfies very often. It was said that the far away shots could have been posted because the athletes wanted to show off their toned bodies (Smith & Sanderson, 2015).

Overall, “athletes seemed to use their Instagram to present a visual representation of a different side of their lives” (Smith & Sanderson, 2015, p. 354). This research is relevant in that the athletes used Instagram to portray themselves in the most positive light. This is seemingly what a lot of people strive for on Instagram. However, this self-portrayal is very subjective in that people may think that they portraying themselves in a positive light, when their viewers may not necessarily agree. For example what a girl may think of as a great picture of herself on the beach, another person may think that she is over-sexualizing herself and looking for attention.

Groesz, Levine, and Murnen (2002) studied the effect ideal images in the media have on women. They found that body satisfaction for women is significantly lower after viewing thin media images than after viewing media images of average size models, of cars, houses, or overweight models. Girls are more affected by ideological standards than boys are. “Boys learn to view their bodies as a tool to master the environment, whereas girls learn that their bodies should be used to attract others” (Groesz et al, p. 2). Girls see their bodies as something that defines them.

RQ6: Does the impact that Instagram has on users’ self-esteem differ based on gender?

Henderson-King and Henderson-King (1997) explain a person’s body type plays a role in body satisfaction when viewing ideal images. They showed participants pictures under two different conditions, the neutral condition and the ideal condition. In the neutral condition, pictures of objects in mostly advertisements were shown. In the ideal condition, pictures of objects as well as ideal images of slender models were shown. In addition, the experimenter had a conversation condition where she mentioned a friend. “In the neutral condition, the friend had moved to a new apartment. In the judgmental condition, the friend had ‘let herself go,’ gained a lot of weight, and become less attractive” (Henderson-King & Henderson-King, 1997, p. 405).

The study found that the images in the media do not affect every woman the same way. Low self-monitors were less affected by the images or conversation than high self-monitors.

According to Henderson-King and Henderson-King (1997), “high self-monitors are characterized by a greater concern with self-presentation; they also tend to assess social situations and to make behavioral shifts according to the perceived demands of the situation” (p. 404). With this being said, “low self-monitors, on the other hand, are more concerned with congruence between their behavior and their inner states and beliefs” (Henderson-King & Henderson-King, 1997, p. 404). Low self-monitors have no problem going against the crowd if it is for something that they believe in.

Winter (2013) discusses the idea Instagram has an even larger impact on one’s self-esteem than Facebook. This is so, because, although on Facebook users are looking at photos that could affect their self-esteem, they could also be doing things such as reading articles and playing games that won’t as heavily impact one’s self-esteem. Three aspects of Facebook trigger the most self-loathing “are basically the three things that Instagram is currently for: loitering around others’ photos, perfunctory like-ing, and “broadcasting” to a relatively amorphous group” (Winter, 2013, p. 2). A photo is the strongest form self-portrayal. Even if that portrayal is inaccurate, photos still prompt social comparison. In addition, because people spend so much time on Instagram, their perceptions of reality versus embellishment are indistinct.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach to investigate the self-reported connection between Instagram and self-esteem through focus group interviews. The interviews were conducted at a private residence located in downtown State College. There were about 20 participants, male and female students all between the ages of 18-24 years old and all attend Penn State University, located in State College Pennsylvania. This age group was selected because of their prominence on Instagram. “Fifty-five percent of all online 18-to-29-year olds in the U.S. are using Instagram, according to the Pew Research study” (Parker, 2016 para. 7).

Three different focus groups were conducted, with 6-7 participants per focus group. There were two gender-disaggregated groups, male and female, as well as a male female mixed gender group. This setup was chosen to enable gender examination of differences among the three focus groups’ responses. Food and beverages were served to create a relaxing and friendly atmosphere and facilitate conversation. The focus group durations were about 45 minutes each. These focus groups were conducted on separate days in early 2017 and were videotaped only for the use of Principle Investigator (PI.)

The consent process took place on the focus groups’ agreements to participate. A verbal consent announcement was made to all participants prior to research participation that the focus group participants’ conversation and answers were confidential and not to be discussed after the focus group conclusion. Participation was voluntary and participants were free to exit the process at any time.

The focus group participants were asked a variety of minimally invasive questions. The list of questions is included in Appendix A. Each question was subject to elaboration and editing in the context of the focus group discussion.

Data consisted of computer files and audio/video files of the focus group conversation. It was stored on PI computer that only PI had access to. This data was stored until completion of thesis and was destroyed after. Because PI had audio/video files facial images and voices were identifiable to PI. However, in the thesis, no identifiers were included with the data to protect the participants.

The focus group's questions were analyzed through finding connections among different participants' answers, as well as connections between participants' answers and the information in published scholarship.

Chapter 4

Results

All Female Focus Group Responses

Research Question 1 asked if Instagram photos cause the participants to question body image and self-esteem. All the participants said Instagram impacts their self-esteem. The photos viewed on a daily basis fell into the categories of clothes, travel, fitness, memes, friends, sorority girls, and advertisements. Some categories of photos impacted self-esteem while others did not. For example, one participant expressed she does not like to look at fitness accounts because she wants her time spent on Instagram to be somewhat mindless.

Another participant described her experience of seeing fit girls on Instagram: “sometimes I’ll look at a girl in a picture and think to myself ‘she’s so pretty she has such a nice body, but then I realize it’s edited and don’t care.’” It was a general consensus that seeing thin, beautiful models on Instagram made the participants think about their own bodies. With this being said, there were other types of images that hurt participants’ self-esteem as well. It was apparent seeing people living exciting lives on Instagram (e.g. traveling) made them jealous. Participants discussed friends abroad and how their lives looked so fun and exciting. This made participants jealous because they could not travel due to current obligations or monetary issues. Instagram posts can subconsciously bring up possible stresses in peoples lives, when they see photos of others who seemingly do not have those stresses.

When asked to talk about an image on Instagram that impacted their self-esteem, one participant described a model who was on vacation. This model shared one picture where she was standing straight up with a perfect looking body, and in another picture she was sitting with rolls in her stomach. The content of the caption explained how one’s body can look completely

different depending on the angle of the photograph. In seeing this picture and realizing that often times the way one's body looks in a picture is all about the angles, the participant felt better about her own body. She spoke about how she does not think about the fact a model's full time job is to look good.

Another participant believed a lot of models simply "won a genetic lottery" and those bodies are not really attainable for most. This relates to research question 2, which asks how much media literacy knowledge this group possesses. A participant also mentioned that seeing an ex's Instagram made her angry. She talked about how his traveling made her jealous. He is a person that she does not necessarily want to see all of the time, but Instagram makes that hard for her to do. This brought up the concept of being happier for some people on Instagram than others depending on one's relationship with that person.

As the discussion progressed, the participants talked about how much influence Instagram images have on their sense of appreciation of their own image. A participant explained the images she sees on Instagram have a high impact on her own image. For example, when she's getting ready to go out, she will think back to cute outfits that she saw other girls wearing for inspiration. The participants talked about how trendy and cool people look on Instagram.

The conversation eventually lead to the conclusion, people often promote the most glamorous parts of their lives on Instagram. For example, one participant explained how her best friend travels the world, and on the surface it looks glamorous; however, she hears all of the hardships that her friend has to go through while traveling, and thinks to herself that she is happy she is here getting her degree.

Another participant added: "When a picture looks perfect, you just assume that everything in that person's life is perfect, and don't take into account that everybody has down

days.” As the conversation progressed, the participants admitted they do the same thing. One participant stated “I just don’t let it get to the point where I am measuring myself up to a photograph” while explaining that she sees this happening with many of her peers.

Research Question 4 asked about how often are users posting selfies with the intention of showing self-representation. All of the participants said they did not believe their Instagram accounts accurately depict who they are. A participant elaborated “I don’t think I would want someone to look at my Instagram and be like ‘I get it.’” This was because she didn’t trust her picture taking ability so she did not want anyone to look at her Instagram and think that her Instagram depicts who she is, and also she did not take Instagram that seriously. She explained how she never looks at a person’s Instagram and understands who he or she is as a person. She stated, “I get what they like, or at least what they want me to see that they like.” Then went on to say, “I don’t trust Instagram more than I trust it.”

The focus group unanimously laughed and agreed they do not believe Instagram images shape their expectation of the opposite gender. They went on to explain how it is a negative if males post too much. One participant observed, “I feel like guys post about experiences while girls post about themselves and their friends.”

Participants explained their self-esteem is impacted by the amount of likes that they receive on a photo. One participant said when Instagram first came out, it felt good to get 11 likes, and now people think if they don’t break 100 likes their picture is bad. She said she was guilty of asking her friends to go like her picture, or posting at a good time to ensure maximum likes. Others agreed they do the same. One participant explained she posts a lot and accepts she won’t get as many likes.

Another participant explained a situation where her guy friend made fun of the amount of likes she had on Instagram, and she was genuinely confused thinking, “this is something I should care about?” She then explained how she started to look at her new roommate’s Instagram. This new roommate’s Instagram received so many likes, and she thought to herself that this roommate was the kind of girl that she couldn’t be friends with because the roommate was so “stunning and cool.” They laugh about it to this day because they are best friends.

Research Question 3 asked about the different ways people’s self-esteem determines their Instagram use. The focus group talked about the assumptions and judgments they make about their peers based on their Instagram pages. One girl explained how she becomes annoyed when people post pictures with people who they don’t like, but post the picture because they know that they look good. Or on the contrary, another participant mentioned how some people post pictures that they know they look good in but their friends do not because it makes that person look better. Multiple participants described pictures that they have seen on Instagram where they make themselves skinnier and in doing that everyone else in the photo looks fatter.

The media and its standards of attractiveness were discussed next. The participants agreed people are less concerned with the ways that guys look than girls. One participant stated that in order to look the way the media tells her to look, she would have to get plastic surgery, whiten her teeth etc. Another added some people look very different without makeup verses with makeup. The participants feel pressured to attain this standard. It was a general consensus the standard did motivate them to workout and eat healthy. However, one stated, “I would never do anything to compromise my health.”

When the participants were discussing who they want to see their pictures, one said that she would rather people see her Snapchat. Another explained it is more about the amount of likes

than the people who actually liked it. A participant added unless it is a crush then she would look to see if he liked it.

Research Question 5 asked, do users think about the sexuality of their Instagram posts? One participant described how her one friend often posts photos against a blank wall, where there is nothing particularly special about the picture but her boobs are out and she looks good. A participant agreed stating “everyone wears clothes now so that they photograph well.” Another stated, “if it’s not going to look hot or guys won’t like it, you won’t wear it.” It annoyed one participant the sexualized photos are the ones that get more likes. However, she almost feels sorry for them that they need that validation. Another participant agreed stating, “I always think that they must have such low self-esteem.” The group brought up one girl in particular explaining it is frustrating because “she has the most beautiful eyes but is constantly showing off her boobs.” A participant stated she would rather see pictures where girls look genuinely happy and it is not about their bodies but their happiness.

It was an overall consensus that girls’ nights revolve around taking a good picture instead of being in the moment. There are also certain measures girls will go through to get that perfect trendy picture. One participant described a time when she was abroad with her friend and her friend bought a flag to use for a picture. They then went to the beach in freezing weather and this friend took off her clothes to be in a bra and underwear. She wrapped the flag around her to get that artsy picture that everyone desires.

The participants agreed most people do not see the measures that others go through to get these pictures. They said that this holds true for models as well. People try to replicate pictures models take. One participant mentioned how it really upset her that it became a trend for models to pose with food such as hamburgers. She said, “it’s just advertising ‘we can eat like this but

still look like this.” This also has an element of being sexual. In addition to the concept of photos being sexualized, the Instagram accounts of “Big10Tens” and “Barstool Sports” were mentioned. These are sites dedicated to pictures of “hot” college aged girls. One participant described the account as unrealistic: “They will post a picture of a Penn State girl at a daylong (a party during the day), but I was at that daylong, I saw that girl, she didn’t look like that, it wasn’t that fun...you know what I mean?” When asked to describe the “typical Penn State girl,” she was described as “skinny, yet with really nice boobs and a really nice butt, always has a good tan, trendy, somehow is at every frat in one day, wearing Penn State clothing but not the kind you get in a store it’s a shirt that she probably spent a lot of time making.” The focus group compared college to high school explaining that there is such a pressure to impress people, as well as Greek life provides a hierarchy similar to that of high school.

The focus group discussed the percentage of followers they would consider themselves to actually be friends with. At first the group thought they are friends with a lot of their followers, but when asked if they had a conversation with everyone they said no. They came to the consensus they “know of” most of their followers but don’t know all of them personally. At the end of the focus group all of the participants agreed Instagram has an impact on their self-esteem. One went on to say after this conversation she realizes that Instagram allows for people to show parts of themselves that others may not know but they want others to know. Another explained how her friend and boyfriend look perfect on social media but they are so rocky. In conclusion everyone agreed that Instagram is used to promote the best version of oneself, but not necessarily one’s full self.

All Male Focus Group Responses:

Research Question 1 asked if Instagram photos caused the participants to question body image and self-esteem. Initially no one in the male focus group felt Instagram impacted their self-esteem. The photos and advertisements the participants view on a daily basis consisted of hot girls, clothing sites, sports sites, friends, abroad pictures, funny posts, and parody accounts. One male talked about how his friend tags him in funny posts that typically make fun of him. When asked if this negatively impacts his self-esteem his response was “yeah but then I just do it back so collectively our self-esteems are lower than they would be.” Another participant talked about getting tagged in an account called “texts from your ex” making fun of him. He said it did not affect his self-esteem; however, all of his friends disagreed with him. When asked to share an experience of a photo that has impacted their self-esteems, one participant shared a picture that he was tagged in indicating that he was unsuccessful in “hooking up” with a girl. The whole group just laughed it off and the participant said that he thought that it was funny and it did not really affect him.

The focus group then talked about how much influence they believe Instagram images have on their sense of appreciation of their own image. A participant said “a little bit” and the others agreed. Another participant admitted that he gets “a little sad” when looking at old pictures of himself being in shape. With that being said the participants agreed that they never really get jealous of seeing guys on Instagram who are really built. One participant stated, “I think those guys are douche.” Another participant admitted, “if I see a dude with a smoking hot girlfriend, and I can’t even get a text back, that hurts my self-esteem.”

Research Question 5 asked if users think about the sexuality of their Instagram posts. When asked about body image and gender. A participant said, “barstool smokes!” Another

laughed and said, “yes they should all look like barstool smokes.” A participant started explaining how he thinks it is stupid girls dedicate their time to getting thousands of followers and looking good on Instagram. His friend said “you’re just jealous dude.”

One admitted to following the accounts but still thinking the measures females go through are stupid. A participant explained how Instagram celebrities “make money because they are good-looking not because they have any actual talent.” The group went on to express how girls post selfies where they push their boobs up and edit them to the extreme just to get likes and comments to boost their self-esteem.

Research Question 2 asked how much media-literacy knowledge the group possesses. One participant described a time where he saw a photo that was clearly photoshopped to make the girl look skinnier in it. In this photo a pole in the background was bent. The participant said “the law of physics don’t align.” They agreed they know when girls alter photos, and they find it unattractive. Another participant said in relation to a specific girl “maybe she should work more on her personality than taking hot pictures.” This comment relates to Research Question 4, which asked how often users are posting photos with the intention of showing self-representation.

Research Question 3 asked about the different ways people’s self-esteem determines their Instagram use. The focus group agreed males hated how the amount of cleavage showing correlated to the amount of likes a girl receives. A participant explained a scenario where he knows a girl who is anorexic, and she takes pictures where the viewer can’t see that her arms are pushing her boobs up to make them look bigger in pictures. He went on to explain it is attractive but any guy who tries to “hookup” with her would be disappointed. He then said, “just be true to yourself.” In addition, another participant explained girls are fake on Instagram because girls who hate each other post nice comments on pictures. Males also disliked when there was no

caption on a photo. They said that there is a story behind each Instagram picture, and they want to know what that is.

When asked if they judge a girl negatively if she does not get a lot of likes or does not have a great Instagram, they all said “no.” They all agreed they do not care about the amount of likes a girl receives; they only care if a girl is posting too much. When girls really have a positive impact on Instagram is when they post something funny, or show they do not care about Instagram. Males said girls are on their phones too much taking pictures and it prevents them from being in the moment. One participant explained this is the reason why he likes Snapchat. He said Snapchat captured unique moments where people can be themselves. They all said Instagram should be utilized to promote unique moments and memories.

The group agreed it is a great feeling to get a lot of likes on a photo. If they don’t get a lot of likes, it may bother them slightly but it wouldn’t ruin their day. In addition, they would never take down a picture they did not get a lot of likes on. On the topic of likes, the participants explained they like photos based on the person. For example, they will always like pictures of girls who are their friends. However, when girls who they are not close with post photos, the liking then depends on the picture. One explained sometimes he does not like photos of girls with their boobs out because he does not want to give them that satisfaction. A couple others agreed they feel a little creepy liking sexualized pictures of girls who they know. If they barely know the girl, they won’t like the picture unless it is relevant.

Research Question 6 asked if the impact that Instagram has on users’ self-esteem differs based on gender. The focus group participants agreed the media constructs an unattainable standard of attractiveness. One participant jokingly stated, “this is true for girls and sensitive guys.” They went on to say that there is a clear standard of attractiveness for girls to attain but

they understand that it is not attainable. One participant stated, “it’s not guys driving girls to attain this standard it’s girls driving other girls.” The males said they want their friends, family, and crushes to see their pictures when posting them.

The focus group discussed the percentage of their followers they are actually friends with. A lot wanted a definition of “friends.” Most said that they were acquaintances with most followers but not necessarily friends with all of them. At the end of the focus group all of the participants agreed that Instagram has some type of impact on their self-esteem.

Co-Ed Group Responses:

Research Question 1 asked if Instagram photos cause the participants to question body image and self-esteem. Initially, all of the females in the focus group said that Instagram impacts their self-esteem and none of the males said that it impacts their self-esteem. With this being said, one male came in late. When asked the question individually, without knowing the others’ answers, he said that it does have an impact on his self-esteem. The types of photos and advertisements that the group viewed on a daily basis were, sports, models, food, dogs, famous people, and friends. When asked if these photos have an impact on their self-esteem, one female explained how seeing photos of skinny models and Victoria’s Secret ads make her think about her own body image. Another female brought up workout accounts that she follows, and these accounts also make her think about her own body image. A male jokingly said, “why don’t you just follow a bunch of ugly people.” This perfectly describes the dynamic of the focus group.

Research Question 3 asked about the different ways people’s self-esteem determines their Instagram use. When asked to share an experience of an image that has impacted their self-esteem, one female explained how empowering hashtags have a positive impact on her self-esteem. These hashtags often create an awareness, such as #fitnesschallenge encourages

everyone to be healthy. The males just laughed and stated that they just go on Instagram for fun and it does not really affect their self-esteem. Although one stated he gets jealous when he sees people who have nice things on Instagram, like nice cars, they all agreed that they do not put a lot of thought into Instagram. A female in the group was not buying their answer, and asked “so if you see good looking people on Instagram, that doesn’t affect your self-esteem?” The males explained that it doesn’t because they are on Instagram to look at girls not guys. The girl responded asking if they see a hot girl on Instagram that doesn’t affect their self-esteem? The males responded stating it really does not because a lot of times girls are “hotter on Instagram than in real life.” One went on to explain girls on Instagram are often trying to advertise how they look, but in person they do not look like that. Another added “we see through the fake.” Male participants explained this is disappointing to them. In addition, they admitted if they meet girl at a bar, they are inclined to look up her Instagram; however, most likely would not judge her based on her Instagram page.

Research Question 4 asked about how often users are posting selfies with the intention of showing self-representation. The males said they do not care about the amount of likes females receive on photos, they more so look at the content that the girls post. This is when the term “Finsta” was brought up. A “Finsta” is a funny Instagram account users create for themselves or their group of friends, where they only allow their close friends to follow it. In a “Finsta” no one cares about the amount of likes or looking good with the perfect filter. Photos on a “Finsta” are meant for entertainment, and the female participant elaborated it boosts her self-esteem when people comment on her “Finsta” saying her post was funny, but the likes don’t matter.

Research Question 6 asked if the impact that Instagram has on users’ self-esteem differs based on gender. The males said Instagram images have very little impact on the appreciation of

their own image. They said they never feel the desire to look like any of the other males they see on Instagram. The girls on the other hand said the images they see on Instagram impact their appreciation of their own image. For example, the girls stated they try to dress trendy like the other girls they see on Instagram.

The males in the group all agreed that Instagram images do shape their expectation of the opposite gender. They said they do not trust Instagram because a lot of girls look better on Instagram than in real life. One male explained he can tell when a girl is really trying to look good on Instagram, and to him that indicates no confidence.

The girls felt male Instagram accounts did not shape their expectation. One girl said she follows more girls on Instagram. The males started to talk about how they think it is more attractive when a girl does not care too much about her Instagram, and how this is a positive personality trait. However, then when asked if they look at a girl positively if she gets a lot of likes on her Instagram, they said they would assume she is probably “cool” and it is something they could brag about to their friends if they “hooked up” with her. Then they said if she received thousands and thousands of likes maybe she is full of herself. On the contrary, they would be a little skeptical if a girl received a very small amount of likes on Instagram if she was an active Instagram user. This seemed confusing until one said “basically if there was an extreme in either direction, I think it would sway my opinion of her.”

Everyone agreed they feel good about themselves if they get a high amount of likes. With this being said, the males made it clear they do not post a picture with the intention of getting a lot of likes, they post if they think it’s a cool picture. A female made a point that everybody has a certain baseline range for the standard amount of likes they receive on a picture, and then they

will receive more or less depending on where they are and who is in the picture. She stated, “I don’t think there are people who get 20 likes and then 400.”

The males explained that they care more about the ratio of followers to likes. Guys expect more girls to like their photos and girls expect more girls to like their photos than guys. They also explained that there are better times to post than others to ensure more likes. They all agreed they try to post at good times and show their best selves on Instagram, unless it is a “Finsta,” then they didn’t care. Some of the group stated they like their good friends pictures always, and people who they are interested in as a way of flirting, and then if there is a good picture of someone who they are not as close with they will like it. Others said they like everything unless they genuinely don’t like the picture.

When asked about the assumptions and judgments the participants make about their peers on Instagram, they mentioned how they find it dumb when people just post pictures without a reason. For example, another girl participant brought up pictures of girls against a white wall or in a bathroom, and how there is no reason for those pictures on Instagram. They all agreed they would rather see a picture at an event. On the positive end, a participant explained she makes assumptions about one’s sense of humor if that person posts a funny caption. Another participant admitted he makes assumptions about a person’s popularity based on the amount of likes that person receives on a photo. However, it also depends on if she posts with friends or by herself a lot. The participants stated they found it strange if the girl is posting by herself a lot. To them, this indicates she is probably self-centered, and brings up the questions “why is she posting by herself, and who are her friends?”

Research Question 2 asked how much media-literacy knowledge that the group possesses. The focus group then talked about if they feel the media constructs an unattainable

standard of attractiveness. A male in the focus group stated “I mean I don’t think it’s unattainable, someone has to look like that.” A girl in the group quickly refuted, “well you know it’s all edited,” and then brought up the Dove commercial and said “you would not believe the amount of editing.” At first the males stated they could usually tell if it’s edited. The females brought up the apps other females use to make themselves look skinnier. They said they can always tell because the background is morphed. The males were so confused and said they didn’t take notice to that type of editing. They said they would notice if a picture is edited, but won’t specifically know what is edited within the picture. A girl explained there is always a pressure to attain the stereotypical standard of beauty and some girls may feel embarrassed to admit this. With this being said, she explained, “it’s not like everyone loses sleep over it.” A male stated if he sees a really muscular guy on Instagram then he might feel pressure to go to the gym. A female stated she would buy clothes she saw on Instagram that are considered trendy, or go to the gym, but never do anything extreme to attain that standard.

Research Question 5 asked if users think about the sexuality of their Instagram posts. When asked, about who the participants ultimately want to see their pictures when posting them, the males did not really know who to say. They said they want everyone to see their picture. One girl stated, “everyone is scared to say it, we all know who we want to see our pictures, the opposite sex.” A male participant agreed saying he looks to see if certain girls liked his pictures. A participant said people want their exes to see their Instagram. Another girl added and said that girls also post for other girls. Everyone agreed they see sexualized photos on Instagram, but more so the guys because they follow accounts with “hot girls” such as “TFM Girls.” One male joked at work he couldn’t even open Instagram sometimes because of all of the revealing photos of girls on his Instagram newsfeed. Another male thought if a girl has her boobs pushed up in a

photo, Instagram didn't really affect her decision to do this he just assumed she is going out and pushed her boobs up. The girls informed him sometimes girls post pictures and do not even go out. The males were astonished. Everyone agreed there really are not many pictures of guys sexualizing themselves.

The focus group talked about the percentage of followers they consider themselves to be friends with. The participants said they let people who they know of or are part of the same organization as them follow them. Females let people they're not as close with follow them more so than males. At the end of the focus group everyone who initially said Instagram affects their self-esteem, and everyone who initially did not say Instagram affects their self-esteem, remained the same.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the impact Instagram has on its users in a focus group setting. Participants were asked in the beginning and end of the focus group if Instagram has some impact on their self-esteem to see if conversation brought change in participants' responses. This only held true for the all male focus group, as none of them said that Instagram affects their self-esteem initially, but all said it does at the end. The all female focus group all said Instagram affects their self-esteem in the beginning and did not change their response. In co-ed focus group the males and females did not change their responses either.

Research Question 6 asked if the impact that Instagram has on users' self-esteem differs based on gender. All of the females admitted to Instagram having an impact on their self-esteems and the males varied. A likely explanation for this could be not that females are inherently more insecure than males, but that males are just less likely to show their insecurities. Males could be more hesitant to admitting that anything affects their self-esteems because admitting this could show weakness. The dynamics between the gender-disaggregated groups was very different from the dynamic within the gender-integrated group. Overall, similarities in responses were prominent across all groups. However, with that being said, the gender-disaggregated groups seemed to be more open with their answers, while in the gender-integrated group the females seemed to pry the answers out of the males. This could be because the gender-disaggregated groups did not have any pressure to impress the opposite gender.

Research Question 1 asked if Instagram photos cause the participants to question body image and self-esteem. Groesz et al (2002) describe females are more affected by ideological standards than males. This held true within the focus groups. Overall, the correlation between Instagram and self-esteem seemed more prominent in females than males.

The power of group mentality was apparent in the focus groups. Each group was quick to criticize predominantly females for their Instagram accounts while remaining hesitant to place their own accounts and actions into those categories. Another explanation for this could be that some of the participants proved to be “low-self monitors” meaning that they did not care too much about following the typical Instagram crowd (Henderson-King & Henderson-King, 1997). For example, the participants who explained they feel a pressure to look a certain way; however, would never do anything extreme to look that way, seemed to be low-self monitors.

With this being said, the participants did describe girls who went through extreme measures to look good in an Instagram photo. One of the participant’s stories was about a girl who edits herself in photos and does not edit her friends. The participant explained she puts up pictures where her friends look bad in order to make herself look better. This story can be comparable to the *Washington Post* article about the Playboy Bunny who posted a Snapchat story making fun of a wrinkly naked older woman. It was apparent people with self-esteem issues sometimes put others down to boost their own self-esteem up. This pertains to Research Question 3, which asks about the different ways that people’s self-esteem determine their Instagram use.

Research Question 2 asked about the media-literacy knowledge these focus groups possess. Winter (2013) describes there is a fine line between reality and perception on Instagram. This is why media-literacy knowledge played a large role in the responses of the focus group.

Media-literacy knowledge focuses on how informed the user is about the media and its use of editing (Yamamiya, 2005). For the most part, the majority of the females, as well as males, seemed to have basic media-literacy knowledge in regards to Instagram accounts, with the exception some males. All of the groups touched on the extreme editing software that predominately females use on their Instagram photos. None of the females seemed to be intimidated by photos where editing was apparent regardless of how good the person looked in that photo. The females seemed to be more intimidated by photos of models. With that being said, they still seemed to have the basic knowledge the photos were edited and that those bodies were not really attainable. This was evident when one of the females stated, “sometimes I’ll look at a girl in a picture and think to myself ‘she’s so pretty she has such a nice body, but then I realize it’s edited and don’t care.”

Yamamiya’s (2005) research supports these results in regard to media-literacy knowledge, explaining people have a higher self-esteem when they believe the fault lies within the media or the models’ natural predispositions. There was less body dissatisfaction within the focus group when talking about how the pictures are essentially not real. Even with this media-literacy knowledge, the girls in the focus groups still admitted to feeling a pressure to look that way. The males on the other hand were mixed in their media-literacy knowledge. The males in the co-ed group did not recognize the extremes that girls go through to get that perfect photo. As a result those males were more attracted to the photos seen on Instagram because they did not have knowledge about edited photos. Once they realized photos are edited, their attraction level to those photos significantly decreased. The all male group found the extreme editing unattractive as well, especially when they knew the person in real life and the person does not look like that. They explained this is more disappointing if anything. It was actually a general

consensus among most male participants that it is more attractive when females do not care as much about trying to look perfect.

Throughout the focus group, it became apparent that the way the users felt about a photo depended on the person posting it. For example, users had negative feelings towards the photos of people they dislike, such as exes. Likewise, the focus group participants generally had positive feelings toward the pictures that friends posted. With this being said, the focus groups all touched on the idea of commenting and liking photos of people that users did have negative feelings towards. It seemed that users do this in order to receive “gestural responses” such as likes and comments on their own photos. Although the focus group described this behavior as “fake” it still was evident that the people participating in this felt better about themselves, when receiving these likes and comments, even if they were not genuine.

Smith and Sanderson (2015) described how athletes utilize Instagram to portray themselves in the best light possible. All focus group participants felt that most Instagram users, themselves included, do the same. Participants said that on Instagram, they promote their best selves. One stated, “when a picture looks perfect, you just assume that everything in that person’s life is perfect, and don’t take into account that everybody has down days.” In promoting the aspects of life that users want people to see, this creates an Instagram account with an ideal version of oneself. Users strive for this ideal account and overall this seemed to boost a user’s confidence. However, feeling the need to look perfect all of the time on Instagram creates a pressure in which the participants do not post everything that they want, so they look for a release. This is why many participants described Snapchat as their favorite social media platform, or even decided to create a “Finsta.” Snapchat and “Finsta” provide outlets where people can be their most authentic selves without that pressure of being their ideal selves.

Social Identity Theory seemed to play a large role in the focus groups. With Social Identity Theory, people use group comparison to manage their own identity needs (McLeod, 2008). Social Identity Theory is apparent with Instagram because photos prompt social comparison (Winter, 2013). On Instagram, there are different groups that people fall into. According to the focus groups, there are people who post trendy cool pictures that get a lot of likes seeming to be the “typical Penn State girl,” there are people who try too hard who are judged for doing so, and there are people who simply don’t care. Many Instagram users either strive to place themselves within the first group, may fall into the second by default, or choose to be in the third group. According to Tajfel and Turner (2004) different social groups will discriminate against each other to gain a positive social identity. All of the focus groups described themselves to be part of the group that does not care on Instagram, and as a result discriminated against the other two groups mentioned.

Research Question 5 asked if users think about the sexuality of their Instagram posts. Instagram users go through extremes to take on the traits of this cool and trendy Instagram group. This was evident when the one participant described a friend standing half naked on a freezing cold beach holding a flag to get that perfect photo. The likes and comments that people in this group receive are validation. Based on the Tajfel and Turner (2004) research, it is possible that people in the out-groups are trying to gain this social status by posting what they think is a trendy or sexy picture, in the hopes of receiving likes and positive comments that will propel them up the social ladder. These people are often judged for doing this. Tajfel and Turner (2004) explain people try to differentiate themselves to be a part of this elite group. With this being said, based on the focus group discussion, it seems as though everyone is trying to differentiate themselves by wearing the trendiest clothes, or taking artsy or sexy pictures. What is interesting

is the fact that many users seem to be doing the same things in an attempt to differentiate themselves. Even the people who are supposedly in this superior Instagram group are also being judged in some way or another. This raises the question of is it really worth it to be a part of this elite trendy Instagram group when mostly all of the focus group participants explained that they respected more the people who fall into the category of not caring as much. In addition, the people who do not put as much effort into their Instagram posts seemed to be talked about more positively and judged a lot less.

Research Question 4 was how often are users posting selfies with the intention of showing self-representation? According to Tajfel and Turner (2004) even people in high-ranking social groups can experience an “insecure social identity” (Tajfel & Turner, 2004 p. 22). In regards to Social Identity Theory and Instagram, do the people who are part of this trendy picture-posting group all genuinely identify with this group, or is it that they want to identify with this group so they alter themselves to do so. Girls are taught their bodies are their best attributes. Therefore, it is possible that because girls are viewing other girls on sites like “Big10Tens” positively attracting the attention of males, they want to recreate these photos to hopefully have the same effect on their male follower base. Despite this, many of the focus group participants stated it is in fact, girls that are driving other girls to look and act these ways. The people who are altering themselves to fit into this group would probably be considered high-self monitors. These people seem to have an overall lower self-esteem. From the focus group responses, the users whose self-esteems were the most affected by Instagram were the ones that were on Instagram the most frequently and seemed to be high-self monitors. This means that they follow the crowd and try to post trendy pictures that receive a lot of likes. Murray (2015) explains that people post selfies to feel empowered. This held true in the focus group discussion.

Instagram users' self-esteems were overall positively affected when they receive many likes or comments, and negatively affected when they see idealistic pictures. It was evident from the focus group there is a baseline of likes people want to receive that satisfies their confidence level, and as their follower base grows, this baseline grows. Some people may not be satisfied now with the amount of likes that they were satisfied with a year ago. People are always striving for more and better on Instagram. The effects were minimal for males and low-self monitor females.

Limitations

This research does not produce an analysis of social science media effects results. In other words, this research does not show any type of definitive cause and effect relationship between Instagram and self-esteem. The results of this research cannot be generalized to all people. However, this research is relevant towards college-age Instagram users. There was a small amount of participants in the focus group, all of which were Caucasian. The participants were not random and each focus group was a group of friends. A larger amount of participants, of different ethnicities would have created for the best results.

Future Directions

Research has shown that not only Instagram but all social media outlets have an impact on the users' self-esteems. Much research has identified evidence of the problem. However, there is not enough research on the solution to the causal relationship. Research has not yet created problem-solving proposals related to self-esteem issues found in social media engagement. Self-esteem issues have clearly been identified through various studies. Research could be conducted on healing mechanisms for people who experience self-esteem issues relating to media-effects.

Furthermore, preventative measures could be employed where self-esteem is not affected by media use.

Conclusion

This research is relevant because, in order to solve a problem, it is important to recognize that there is a problem. The dynamics between Instagram and its users create for idealistic accounts across the board. This is why many users are turning to Snapchat as an outlet. This research shows that many users feel this pressure to look a certain way on Instagram; however, it also explains that this striving to be perfectly trendy is backfiring on its users. It showed that males respect more the girls who do not strive for this and are more inclined to be attracted to natural unedited photos. In addition, although the focus group described that users care about their own amount of likes they receive, it was prominent among focus group participants that they did not care about the amount of likes that others receive on a photo. Through this research it became apparent if users stopped attempting to be their idealistic selves on Instagram and showed more of their full selves, then Instagram would be a more enjoyable and less stressful experience for all. It was unanimous among the focus groups that Instagram should be used to show unique experiences in the users' lives. This conclusion is ironic because this was the original purpose of Instagram, with a mission statement of strengthening relationships through shared experiences.

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Appendix A

Discussion Questions

- What types of photos or advertisements on Instagram are you viewing on a daily basis?
- Do you believe these photos have an impact on your self-esteem? If so, how?
- Can you share an experience of an image on Instagram that you believe has impacted your self-esteem.
- How much influence do you believe Instagram images have on your sense of appreciation of your own image?
- Do you believe that Instagram images shape your expectation of the opposite gender? If yes how so? If no why not?
- Do you feel that your self-esteem is impacted by likes? If yes, do you ever do anything to ensure you get more likes (for example, post at a particular time, post a picture that will grab peoples attention etc.)
- What assumptions and judgments do you make about your peers based on their Instagram pages?
- Do you feel that the media constructs an unattainable standard of attractiveness? Do you believe you have to attain this standard? What measures will you go through to achieve this?
- Who do you ultimately want to see your pictures when posting them?
- Have you ever seen photos on Instagram that you feel are sexualized? If so, could you describe the picture and what you thought when viewing it.
- What percentage of your followers would you consider yourself to actually be friends with? Why do you follow people with whom you aren't necessarily friends?

- Do you feel that Instagram has some type of impact on your self-esteem? (This was asked in the beginning and end of the focus group.)

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RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

LLBCo.

Public Relations Intern

Glenside, PA

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- Assisted president in the promotion of his company by implementing strategic marketing plans.
- Composed phone scripts, email scripts, and created promotional kits.
- Attended monthly trade shows, and built relationships with potential clients.
- Participated in meetings with clientele.

Sarah Cornwell Jewelry

Public Relations Intern

Doylestown, PA

May - August 2015

- Assisted owner in the promotion of launching her new bridal line.
- Created a look-book to distribute to potential buyers.
- Researched trends in relevant industries creating look-boards for media inspiration.
- Wrote press releases and pitches, as well as coordinated promotional events and photo-shoots.

Penn State Public Relations

Penn State Student Farm Campaign

University Park, PA

January - May 2016

- Created a campaign to promote the new Food Systems Minor to Penn State students.
- Performed background analysis and generated recommendations.
- Conducted primary and secondary research of target market.
- Participated in meetings with client and organized events.

Penn State Importance of Being Earnest Campaign

Head of Research

January - May 2016

- Assisted with the promotion of the Penn State webcast of the Importance of Being Earnest.
- Developed programming and evaluation protocol to increase viewership.
- Created Penn State Community analysis through research.
- Promoted the Telecommunications class that was conducting the webcast.

HONORS & AWARDS

- Member of KTA
- CITI Certified