



SECOND INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS IN THE NEGOTIATION OF GENDER PERFORMATIVITY OF GEN Z MALES

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

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Instagram,
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Performativity Negotiation,
Second Account.

This study examines how Generation Z males use second accounts to negotiate gender performativity on Instagram, positioning the platform as a space for interaction, image construction, self-expression, and adaptation to dominant norms of masculinity. The study employed a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to explore participants' experiences and meanings in using first and second accounts. Data were analysed through the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, while validity was ensured through source triangulation based on interviews with 10 informants and expert triangulation. The findings show that first accounts are generally used as spaces of public representation to maintain image, fulfil standards of propriety, and present a safer self before wider audiences. Second accounts function as more intimate spaces for expressing personal, emotional, daily, and hobby-related dimensions of the self. The discussion confirms that dual-account use reflects an ongoing negotiation of masculinity in contemporary digital space today.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Generation Z uses Instagram intensively as a space for interaction and self-presentation. Many users do not rely on only one account, but also have a second account to manage the difference between public image and personal expression. The presence of a second account shows that the use of Instagram involves strategies of identity management that are situational in nature. The main account is usually used by adolescents to maintain their self-presentation in front of many people on Instagram. The second account is used to share more personal things and can only be seen by close friends or people they personally choose [1]. Research by Fatiani [2], shows that the use of second accounts among university students is very dominant, with an ownership rate reaching 96 percent, and is used for a longer duration than the main account, indicating that there are differences in the function and meaning of the two accounts.

This popularity places Instagram at the centre of everyday digital life. Instagram has become one of the most popular social media platforms and has been widely used by various groups in recent years. The ease of internet access has made this platform increasingly close to users' daily activities, so Instagram is no longer understood merely as an application for sharing photos and videos, but also as a strong space of social interaction in digital life. This popularity shows that Instagram has an important position in shaping communication patterns, ways of relating, and the way individuals present themselves in front of others [3]. This is related to the culture of masculinity, namely the values that shape the image of how men should look, behave, and act. This culture does not emerge naturally, but is formed through a long social process and passed down through family, environment,

media, and various practices of everyday life, so that men are often directed to appear strong, firm, independent, and able to control themselves in front of others [4].

This situation becomes more complex when young men manage more than one account. The management of the main account and the second account cannot be separated from social standards regarding how men should present themselves in digital public spaces. Men are generally expected to appear strong, stable, not easily complain, not show sadness, and not display their vulnerable side openly. Such expectations make emotional expression often positioned as something less appropriate to the image of men, so many men feel the need to sort out their spaces of self-presentation [5]. The main account then tends to be used to maintain an image that is safer and more publicly acceptable, while the second account becomes a space that allows self-expression that is more personal, freer, and more honest. The emergence of male figures referred to as performative males also shows that male emotional expression on social media is not always understood as a form of self-honesty, but is sometimes read as a performance deliberately displayed to build a certain image, for example through captions about emotion and love, romantic poetry quotes, or an appearance that seems sensitive but is not necessarily accompanied by consistent real attitudes [6].

This issue becomes more relevant when seen from the scale of Instagram use among young users. Instagram does not only function as a medium of visual entertainment, but has also developed into an important space for building identity, establishing social relations, and presenting oneself before digital audiences. The intensity of the use of this platform among Generation Z in Indonesia appears to be very high, with the number of active users reaching 103 million in 2025, while Instagram's global advertising audience reach has surpassed 1.7 billion users. These data show that Instagram has a very strong position as an arena of self-representation in digital spaces [7], [8]. This condition becomes even more relevant when data on Instagram advertising audience profiles in February 2025 show that the number of male users is slightly higher than female users, with the greatest dominance in the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups.

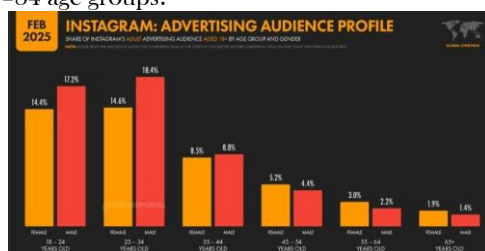


Figure 1. Age and Gender Profile of Instagram Users in 2025

A similar pattern can also be seen in public figures. The phenomenon of second account use can be seen concretely in public figures such as Drake, who is known to have an alternative Instagram account separate from his main account. Drake's main account displays a well-organized, professional public persona and reaches a very broad audience, while the alternative account is used to share content that differs from his official image, such as humor, certain reposts, and more relaxed responses to the dynamics of the music industry. This practice shows that separating accounts is not merely a technical strategy, but also a form of digital role management that allows a male figure to distinguish between the space of public persona and the space of personal expression. Drake's case shows that amid the strong demands of masculine image in digital spaces, a second account can function as a medium for showing aspects of the self that are not fully aligned with the formal identity built on the main account, so that the boundary between public persona and personal persona becomes more flexible and more negotiated [9].

The view of Ridgway and Clayton emphasizes that adolescents' self-confidence on social media is strongly influenced by the social responses they receive from online audiences. Activities such as uploading photos or selfies do not only function as a means of expression, but also become a mechanism of self-evaluation through social indicators such as the number of likes and comments. When the responses received match expectations, self-confidence can be strengthened, but when those responses are low or unbalanced, individuals can experience a decline in their self-evaluation. This explanation is in line with Bailey's view, which states that self-image is an individual's subjective perception that includes physical, personality, and emotional aspects, so it is very easily influenced by the social environment. This opinion shows that the practice of self-presentation cannot be separated from the dynamics of social acceptance, because the way a person sees themselves is closely related to how they are read, judged, and responded to by others in digital spaces [10].

Susan Pitt's model of masculinity helps clarify this tension. A New Theory on Masculinity, is used in this study because it helps explain that masculinity does not always appear in one fixed form. The way men present themselves can change depending on the situation, place, and the people who observe them. Orthodox is the form of masculinity that is closest to general standards of men, for example being strong, firm, rational, not easily crying, and not showing a vulnerable side too much. Heterodox is a form of masculinity that is still considered masculine, but is more flexible because men begin to show emotional or personal sides without feeling that they are losing their identity as men. Cacodox is a form of masculinity that is considered to move away from common

male standards because it is too closely associated with traits often attached to women, so it often gives rise to ridicule or negative judgments [11]. This model is suitable for research on second Instagram accounts because from the beginning men live under social pressure that demands they appear strong, stable, and not show emotions openly. This condition makes men often differentiate their spaces of self-presentation, which one is used to maintain image in front of the public and which one is used to show a more personal side of themselves. In that context, Pitt's model helps explain that men's behavior on social media is actually closely related to standards of masculinity that continue to be maintained, negotiated, or shifted in everyday life.

Such conditions make this study important to examine. Identity in new media is shaped through the way individuals present themselves in digital spaces, including through the use of main accounts and second accounts on Instagram as part of image management, self-expression, and adjustment to social norms. This study began with a review of scientific literature using Publish or Perish and was visualized through VOSviewer to map the development of topics related to digital identity, gender performativity, and the use of multiple accounts, so that the research focus could be formulated more clearly and in a more directed manner.

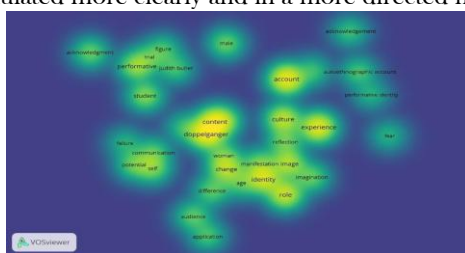


Figure 2. Density Visualization

The density visualization shows that the greatest scholarly attention is concentrated on the concepts of identity, account, role, content, experience, and culture, thus confirming that digital identity is very closely related to account use practices on social media. The connection of the concepts of men, performativity, Judith Butler's thought, fear, and reflection also shows that multiple accounts are related to emotional experiences, self-reflection, and efforts to manage the demands of gender norms under public scrutiny. This pattern indicates that a second account is not merely a technical solution, but also a symbolic way of negotiating masculinity in digital spaces, while at the same time strengthening the urgency of this study because Instagram has become an important space for Generation Z males to divide their public image and personal expression.

Previous studies have mainly examined second accounts in terms of self-disclosure, privacy management, and identity curation. Prihantoro and Damintana [12], show that second accounts are often used as safer spaces for self-disclosure, Putri and Nurjanah [13], emphasize their role in communication privacy management through selective control over audiences, and Nag [14], explains Instagram as a space of self-curation where identity is shaped through visual and linguistic performance. These studies are important because they show that second accounts are not merely technical features, but part of how users manage expression and identity on social media. The limitation of these studies, however, is that they have not specifically examined how first and second accounts become spaces where Generation Z males negotiate different expectations of masculinity. This study extends that discussion by showing that first accounts are commonly used to present a safer, more proper, and more publicly acceptable masculine self, while second accounts allow more personal, emotional, intimate, and everyday forms of expression. The findings also reveal that young men do not respond to masculine norms in the same way: some largely maintain socially accepted masculine appearances, some begin to loosen those expectations while still preserving a public image, and some present themselves more openly beyond common masculine standards. This study moves beyond privacy, self-disclosure, by positioning dual-account use as a gendered negotiation of masculinity in digital space.

The urgency of this study arises from the increasingly central role of Instagram as a space where Generation Z males not only interact socially, but also construct, display, and negotiate their identities before digital audiences. The separation between the main account and the second account is not merely a technical choice, but is closely related to the way young men respond to different social demands in online life. The first account is often shaped by public expectations of propriety, control, and social acceptability, while the second account provides a narrower space for showing aspects of the self that are more personal, emotional, and difficult to display openly. This study is important because it addresses a contemporary condition in which social media has become one of the main arenas for the formation of masculine identity, while the pressures to appear strong, stable, and publicly acceptable remain highly influential. It also becomes important because previous discussions of second accounts have largely focused on privacy, self-disclosure, and impression management, without fully explaining how these accounts reflect the tension between public image and personal expression among Generation Z males. This condition shows that the use of first and second accounts is part of an ongoing process of managing self-expression under the pressure of masculine norms and social judgment in digital spaces.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach to understand the experiences, meanings, and social processes underlying the use of second Instagram accounts by Generation Z males [15]. The approach used is phenomenology because this study seeks to explore the subjective experiences of Generation Z males in interpreting their first account and second account as part of their everyday social media practices [16]. Phenomenology is considered appropriate since the research does not only examine what they do on Instagram, but also how they make sense of those accounts as spaces for negotiating identity, self-presentation, and gendered expectations. This study therefore focuses on how subjects interpret their main account and second account in relation to feelings of safety, comfort, social acceptance, and self-adjustment to norms of masculinity in digital spaces.

The data sources in this study consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with informants selected purposively, namely Generation Z males aged around 18-27 years who actively use Instagram and have and use a second account as part of their digital identity management practices. The informants in this study are as follows:

Table 1. Research Informants

No	Informants	Description
1	AAGN	22 Years old
2	MAH	20 Years old
3	EPW	23 Years old
4	JR	19 Years old
5	KRSN	22 Years old
6	BS	21 Years old
7	AGL	21 Years old
8	GN	21 Years old
9	MRH	21 Years old
10	MAAL	23 Years old
11	Maulana Andinata Dalimunthe	Triangulator

The informants were selected purposively based on their suitability with the focus of the study, namely Generation Z males who actively use Instagram and have both a first account and a second account. They were identified through direct contact with individuals who matched these criteria. The ten informants were considered sufficient because the interviews had already shown recurring patterns and provided enough depth to answer the research focus. This study also involved one expert triangulator, Maulana Andinata Dalimunthe, an academic in new media and cultural studies as well as a Communication Science lecturer at a state university in North Sumatra. Secondary data were obtained from books, scientific articles, and journals relevant to digital identity, gender performativity, dramaturgy, and the use of multiple accounts on social media.

The data collection technique was carried out through in-depth semi-structured interviews as the main method to explore the experiences and meanings of informants related to the use of second Instagram accounts. The study was conducted over four weeks, with each informant interviewed for approximately 10 minutes and the expert triangulator for around 25 minutes. Ten interviews were conducted offline, while one was conducted online. Data collection was complemented by non-participant observation focusing on patterns of account use, types of content shared, and differences in self-presentation between the first account and the second account, as well as documentation in the form of field notes and relevant digital archives. This combination of techniques was used to maintain focus, allow reflective explanation from informants, and strengthen the credibility and transparency of the research process.

The data analysis technique uses the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña [17], which includes data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The interview data were coded and visualised using NVivo to identify recurring statements, organise key patterns, and map relationships among meanings found in the informants' narratives. The coding process was carried out by selecting important expressions from the interviews related to first account, second account, self-presentation, emotional expression, public image, and personal space. These codes were then grouped into broader categories and themes such as public representation, intimate self-expression, and the negotiation of masculinity in digital spaces. The interpretation of these themes was linked to the concepts of gender performativity and masculinity to explain how Generation Z males manage and display different versions of themselves through their two Instagram accounts. The validity of the data was strengthened through source triangulation and expert triangulation, with Maulana Andinata Dalimunthe involved in reviewing the coding, thematic grouping, and interpretation so that the findings were more consistent and accountable [18].

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

First Account as a Space of Public Representation for Generation Z Males

In this study, the first account is understood as a space of self-presentation that is closest to the public sphere, namely a space where Generation Z males manage how they want to be seen by a wider audience. The main account does not only function as a place to upload photos or activities, but also as a medium to form impressions, choose how to present themselves, and adjust their appearance to social norms that apply in digital spaces. The position of the first account becomes important because it is there that identity is not only displayed, but also managed through considerations of image, propriety, openness, and the possibility of being judged by others [19], [20].

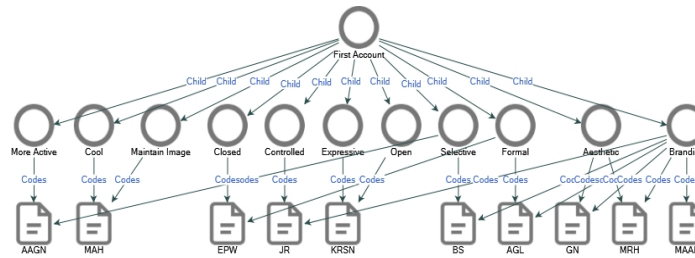


Figure 3. Map of Interview Results on First Account

The map of interview results shows that the first account is used in different ways by the informants, but all of them point to a more public form of self-presentation. AAGN is connected to more active, showing that his first account is the main space for visible activity. MAH is connected to cool and maintain image, which indicates that his first account is used to present a more controlled and well-maintained impression. EPW is connected to closed, showing that his main account is used more selectively and with greater distance from the audience. A different tendency appears in JR and KRSN. JR is connected to controlled and expressive, showing that his first account still allows expression, but only within clear limits. KRSN is connected to open, indicating that his first account is relatively more open than those of several other informants. These two cases show that the first account is not identical for all users, although it still remains the account that is more directed toward public visibility.

The tendency to manage visibility also appears in BS, AGL, GN, MRH, and MAAL. BS is connected to selective, AGL to formal, GN and MRH to aesthetic, and MAAL to branding. These codes show that the first account is often used to filter what can be shown, present a neat and socially appropriate appearance, display visual order, and build a recognisable impression before others. The table of dominant words strengthens these findings. The words space, image, audience, masculinity, and public show that the first account is closely related to self-presentation, visibility, and the presence of others as viewers and judges. This suggests that the main account is not simply a place to upload content, but a social space where image and public readability matter.

These findings can be interpreted through gender performativity because the first account tends to function as a space where users adjust themselves to wider expectations. Codes such as cool, maintain image, selective, formal, controlled, aesthetic, and branding indicate that the first account is used to present a proper, acceptable, and socially readable version of the self. In this sense, masculinity appears not only in what is shown, but also in how expression is managed and limited.

Table 2. Dominant Words from First Account Interview Results

No.	Dominant Word	Meaning in the Context of First Account
1	space	Shows the first account as a social space for self-presentation
2	image	Shows the importance of the image and impression that one wants to build
3	audience	Shows attention to other people as viewers and judges
4	masculinity	Shows the connection between the main account and standards of masculinity
5	public	Shows that the first account is related to a more open and broader space

The dominance of the word space shows that the first account is understood as a space for presenting the self in front of others. The main account is not only used to upload photos or activities, but also becomes a place where Generation Z males manage how they want to be seen. The presence of the words image and audience clarifies that the first account is always related to self-image and to other people as viewers or judges.

The presence of the words masculinity and public shows that the first account cannot be separated from standards of how men are supposed to appear in digital public spaces. The main account tends to be used to maintain an impression that is neat, safe, proper, and still controlled. This position makes the first account a space that encourages men to restrain sides of themselves that are too vulnerable, too emotional, or too personal in order to remain acceptable to a wider audience. The combination of these five dominant words shows that the first account works as a space of public representation. This account is not only used to share activities, but also to build an image, manage openness, and adjust to social demands in digital media.

The placement of each informant was based on clear indicators from the interview data and supported by account observation. AAGN was linked to more active because his first account appeared as his main space for visible activity. MAH was connected to cool and maintain image because he consistently showed an effort to preserve a managed impression. EPW was linked to closed because his first account was more restricted, while JR was placed under controlled and expressive because he still allowed expression within clear limits. KRSN was connected to open because he showed greater openness, BS to selective because he filtered what could be shown, AGL to formal because his account reflected a neater appearance, GN and MRH to aesthetic because they emphasized visual order, and MAAL to branding because his first account was used to build a recognizable impression. These indicators show that the coding was grounded in repeated patterns across the data rather than personal interpretation.

Maulana as the triangulator considers that the first account can be read not only as a space of self-presentation before the public, but also as a sign that users are still dealing with themselves. The desire to look cool, maintain impressions, and limit certain sides on the main account shows that men have not fully resolved the question of what kind of self they want to present. The choice to hold back emotions, filter posts, and adjust image on the first account shows the presence of an intrapersonal communication process, because what is being managed is not only the relationship with the audience, but also the relationship with the self. This position makes the first account a space where men try to calm their anxiety about public judgment while continuing to construct the version of themselves that is considered safest to display.

Second Account as a More Intimate Space for Self-Expression

In this study, the second account is understood as a space of self-presentation that is closer to the personal needs of Generation Z males. This space is used not only to manage what they want to show, but also to determine to whom certain sides of the self can be shared. The position of the second account is not merely a complement to the main account, but becomes part of the way users present forms of expression that are more intimate, more contextual, and more in line with their own experiences. The second account can therefore be read as a space where men present sides of themselves that do not always appear on the first account, especially within a more limited and closer audience circle [21], [22].

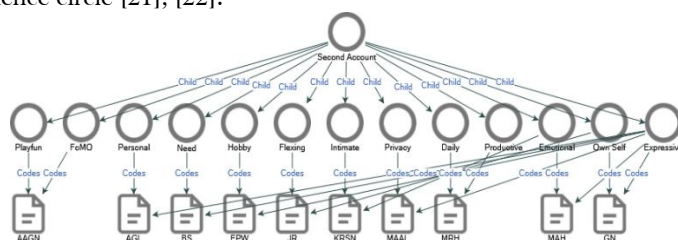


Figure 4. Map of Interview Results on the Second Account

The map of interview results shows that the second account is used in different ways, but all of them point to a more personal form of self-presentation. AAGN is connected to the codes playful and FoMO, indicating that his second account is used in a more relaxed and playful way and is also influenced by the habit of following other users. AGL is connected to personal, while BS is connected to need, showing that the second account is used either to present a more private side of the self or to accommodate forms of expression that are not fully provided by the main account. A more specific pattern appears in EPW and JR. EPW is connected to hobby, which shows that his second account is used to present personal interests and aspects of everyday life that do not always appear on the first account. JR is connected to flexing, indicating that his second account is more strongly used to display confidence, achievement, and forms of self-presentation that he considers too striking for the main account. These findings show that the second account is not only a place for emotion, but also a space for interests and bolder forms of expression.

A deeper personal tendency can be seen in KRSN and MAAL. KRSN is connected to intimate, showing that his second account is directed toward emotional closeness and more trusted relationships. MAAL is connected to privacy, which indicates that his second account functions as a more protected space, where personal expression is separated from wider public visibility. These codes show that the second account often works as a narrower space with stronger control over who can access personal content. The second account also accommodates everyday rhythm and emotional openness. MRH is connected to daily and productive, showing that his second account is used to document routine life and productive activities. MAH is connected to emotional, which indicates that his second account is more strongly used to channel feelings and more vulnerable sides of the self. GN is connected to own self and expressive, showing that his second account is the space closest to his personal sense of authenticity and freer expression. Taken together, these findings show that the second account moves away from the public orientation of the first account and closer to more personal expression.

These findings can be interpreted through gender performativity because the second account allows users to present forms of self-expression that are less tied to broader public expectations. Codes such as personal,

intimate, privacy, emotional, own self, and expressive indicate that the second account is used to show parts of the self that are not always considered suitable for wider visibility. In this sense, the second account becomes a space where masculinity is not presented only through control and public readability, but also through emotional openness, personal closeness, and more flexible self-expression.

This pattern also shows that masculinity is not performed in one fixed way across both accounts. The first account tends to be linked with public propriety, while the second account allows the appearance of sides that are more intimate, emotional, and closely tied to everyday experience. The second account therefore becomes important not simply as an additional account, but as a space where Generation Z males adjust how they present themselves in relation to personal needs, trusted audiences, and the pressure of masculine expectations in digital life.

Table 3. Dominant Words from the Second Account Interview Results

No.	Dominant Word	Meaning in the Context of Second Account
1	emotional	Shows that the second account is closely related to feelings and emotions
2	self	Shows that the second account is used to present a more personal self
3	closer	Shows closeness to a more limited and more trusted circle
4	expressions	Shows that the second account becomes a place to channel self-expression
5	life	Shows that the second account is close to the user's daily life and life experiences

The word emotional shows that the second account is often used to show feelings. The second account is closer to a side of the self that is personal, more honest, and more comfortable to use for showing things that are felt in everyday life. The word self also confirms that this space is related to a more personal self.

The word closer shows that the second account is not directed to everyone, but is closer to a limited and more trusted circle. This account is used to share things that are not always comfortable to display on the main account, so users feel safer and freer when showing their side of themselves. The words expressions and life show that the second account becomes a place to channel self-expression that is closer to everyday life. The second account is used to share things that are more spontaneous, more personal, and more familiar with the user's life experiences. These five dominant words show that the second account is a space that is more personal, more emotional, and closer to the everyday life of its users.

The placement of each informant was based on clear indicators from the interview data and account observation. AAGN was linked to playful and FoMO because his second account was used in a relaxed way and was influenced by following others; AGL to personal because it was used to show a more private side of himself; BS to need because the second account accommodated forms of expression not fully possible on the main account; EPW to hobby because it highlighted personal interests; JR to flexing because it was used to display confidence, achievement, and bolder self-presentation; KRSN to intimate because it was directed toward emotional closeness with trusted people; MAAL to privacy because it functioned as a more protected space; MRH to daily and productive because it documented routine life and productive activities; MAH to emotional because it was used to channel feelings and vulnerability; and GN to own self and expressive because it reflected the self he considered most authentic and freely expressed. These indicators show that the coding was grounded in repeated patterns across the data rather than personal judgment alone.

Maulana views the second account not as a truly private safe space, but as a space that is only considered safe by its users. He argues that second account users still begin from the belief that certain sides of the self are better displayed within a limited circle, even though digital space is basically still public in nature and always has the potential to become the consumption of others. In his view, the use of a second account shows that men have not completely finished dealing with themselves, because what is taking place is not only an effort to limit the audience, but also an intrapersonal process to determine which sides are brave enough to be shown and which sides are still hidden. In this position, the second account becomes a sign that users still see social media as a place of escape or a safe place for emotional expression, even though the main issue actually lies in the unresolved process of understanding themselves in digital space.

Negotiating Male Performativity through the Difference between First Account and Second Account

The comparison between first account and second account is needed to understand how Generation Z males divide the functions of their accounts, manage their self-presentation, and adjust forms of expression to different audiences. These two accounts not only show differences in the types of content uploaded, but also show differences in the way image is built, personal sides are revealed, and boundaries are set between public space and more personal space. First account and second account therefore become two interconnected spaces in the formation of digital identity, so comparing the two is important in order to see how male performativity is carried out differently on the same platform [23] [24].

Table 4. Comparison between the Two Accounts of the Informants

Informant	First Account	Second Account	Final Performance
AAGN	selective, more active	playful, FOMO	heterodox
AGL	branding, formal	expressive, personal	heterodox
MAH	cool, maintaining image	expressive, emotional	heterodox toward cacodox
BS	selective, branding	need, self-expression	heterodox
EPW	formal, closed	hobby, personal expression	orthodox
GN	aesthetic, branding	personal expression, own self	heterodox
JR	branding, controlled	flexing, self-representation	heterodox
KRSN	expressive, open	emotional, intimate	cacodox
MAAL	branding, aesthetic	privacy, self-expression	heterodox
MRH	aesthetic, branding	daily life, productive	heterodox

The table above shows that the performance of Generation Z males on Instagram is not formed through a single space, but through the difference in function between the first account and the second account. The first account is generally filled with tendencies such as selective, branding, formal, aesthetic, closed, cool, and controlled, which shows that the main account is more often used to present a self that is considered proper, safe, and in line with the image that one wants to maintain in front of the public. The second account moves in a different direction with the emergence of words such as personal, emotional, intimate, self-expression, need, daily life, playful, and flexing. This difference shows that the second account is used to present sides of the self that are closer to personal experience, whether in the form of emotions, friendships, daily routines, or forms of self-presentation that are freer than those on the main account.

The dominance of heterodox as the final performance among most informants shows that they do not fully submit to normative masculinity, but also do not fully leave behind the generally accepted framework of masculinity. AAGN, AGL, BS, GN, JR, MAAL, and MRH are in this position because their first accounts are still managed with a controlled logic of representation, while their second accounts are used to open a freer space for personal expression. AAGN shows a first account that is selective and more active, but a second account that is playful and shaped by the drive of FOMO, so his masculinity is not rigid, but flexible and follows the context. AGL, BS, GN, MAAL, and MRH also show a similar pattern, namely a clear difference between public image on the main account and the need to present a more personal self on the second account. JR is still appropriately read as heterodox, although with a different nuance, because his second account emphasizes flexing and a bolder self-representation, not primarily emotional expression.

MAH is in a position of heterodox toward cacodox because his main account is still built on a cool image and maintaining impression, while his second account moves strongly in a more emotional and expressive direction. EPW becomes the only informant who tends to end in an orthodox position because his first account remains dominant in a formal and closed form, while his second account only moves within the area of hobbies and personal expression that is relatively limited. KRSN becomes the informant who is most clearly in the cacodox position because his first account is already quite expressive and open, while his second account increasingly emphasizes emotional and intimate sides. This position shows that the expression of feelings, vulnerability, and emotional closeness in KRSN has already been placed as an important part of the way he presents himself. This pattern confirms that the greater the distance between the public image of the main account and the intimate expression of the second account, the stronger the shift in performance from orthodox to heterodox, and even to cacodox.

The view of the expert triangulator strengthens the reading that the negotiation of male performativity does not primarily occur between the user and followers or external audiences, but occurs within the self. The difference between first account and second account shows that men still separate the side of themselves they want to show in public from the side of themselves they only dare to show in a more limited space. The statements “Yes, for them that is negotiation. Negotiation with whom? With themselves,” and “that is actually... negotiation with themselves that is not yet clear” confirm that the division into two accounts is not only related to communication strategy on social media, but also related to a person’s process of understanding, accepting, and presenting themselves as a whole. This reading makes the use of multiple accounts go beyond merely technical matters or social media style, and instead shows an ongoing intrapersonal process in the negotiation of male identity in digital spaces.

Analysis

The first account is more often used to present a self that is proper, safe, and easily accepted by a broad audience, while the second account is used to present a side of the self that is more personal, closer to everyday experience, and freer in expression. This pattern shows that male digital identity is not formed in a singular way, but through a separation between public image and personal expression. In this position, the first account functions as a space of public representation to build an impression that is neat, orderly, and in line with social expectations. Codes such as more active, cool, maintain image, closed, controlled, selective, formal, aesthetic,

and branding confirm that the main account is used to manage how the self wants to be seen by others. This account does not become a completely free space, but rather a space that demands consideration of image, propriety, and social acceptance, so that the first account is ultimately used to fulfill public standards that expect men to appear proper, controlled, not too open about their vulnerable side, not quick to show sadness, and still maintain an impression that can be accepted by a broad audience [25].

The second account as a more intimate space of self-expression shows that the second account functions as a space that is closer to personal needs. Codes such as playful, FoMO, personal, need, hobby, flexing, intimate, privacy, daily, productive, emotional, own self, and expressive show that the second account is used to present sides of the self that are not always shown on the main account. This space accommodates emotions, everyday life, personal interests, friendship closeness, and forms of expression that feel more honest and more comfortable to share with a limited circle. In the findings of this study, the second account does not only mean a place to vent or a private space, but also becomes a space that allows young men to show themselves more fully, whether in relaxed, emotional, or spontaneous forms [23].

The difference between first account and second account shows that the negotiation of male performativity takes place through the conscious division of the functions of the two accounts. The first account is used to maintain one's position in front of the public, while the second account is used to adjust to the need for more personal expression. This difference shows that Generation Z males do not present their masculinity in one fixed form. They adjust the degree of openness, image, emotion, and style of self-presentation according to the audience they face. Self-performance on Instagram becomes the result of an ongoing negotiation between the need to appear proper in public and the need to show a more honest side of the self in a more limited space.

Previous studies have mainly examined second accounts through self-disclosure, privacy management, impression management, and identity curation. This study extends that discussion by showing that first and second accounts are also shaped by masculine norms and gender expectations. The findings further show that the male subject who appears most settled is not the one who carefully maintains a safe and proper public image, but the one who is more reconciled with himself and no longer sharply separates his public and personal sides. more open display of emotional, intimate, and personal expression points to a stronger intrapersonal communication process, because self-presentation is no longer driven mainly by the need to meet public expectations of masculinity. Masculinity is therefore understood not simply as control, restraint, and public approval, but also as the capacity to present the self more honestly, consciously, and fully.

Susan Pitt's framework shows that the final performances of the informants do not occupy the same position. AAGN, AGL, BS, GN, JR, MAAL, and MRH are in a heterodox position because their first accounts are still used to maintain a neat and proper appearance in line with other people's expectations, while their second accounts are used to show sides of themselves that are more personal, freer, and closer to their everyday selves. MAH is in a position of heterodox toward cacodox because his main account is still used to maintain a cool impression and self-image, but his second account has already moved strongly in a more expressive and emotional direction. EPW is in an orthodox position because his first account remains dominant in a formal and closed form, while his second account is only used in a limited way for hobbies and personal expression that have not greatly changed his image in front of others. KRSN becomes the informant who is most clearly in the cacodox position because his first account is already quite open and expressive, while his second account increasingly emphasizes emotional and intimate sides. This pattern shows that the difference between first account and second account is not only about different upload content, but also shows how far their performance of masculinity moves from a form that is still commonly accepted to a form that is farther from general male standards.

Maulana shows that the second account cannot be understood as a truly safe private space, but rather as a space that is considered safe by its users. He argues that second account users still begin from the assumption that certain sides of the self are more comfortable to display to a more limited circle, even though digital space basically remains public in nature and can always be seen by others. This perspective makes the second account not only a place for expression, but also shows that users still distinguish between the self they want to show in front of many people and the self they only dare to show in a narrower space. In that context, Maulana sees that this study still fits with Susan Pitt's framework because the concepts of orthodox, heterodox, and cacodox are sufficiently able to explain the way men present themselves differently on social media.

Maulana's view becomes clearer when discussing KRSN, who is placed in the cacodox position. He sees KRSN as the clearest informant because he is already more comfortable with himself and more willing to present himself as he is in digital spaces. The cacodox position in KRSN is read not only because his second account is more emotional and more intimate, but also because he appears more ready to accept sides of himself. This explanation is different from other informants, who still appear more careful in separating which sides of the self are worthy of appearing in public and which are shown only to certain people. Maulana sees this condition as a sign that KRSN is relatively more settled with himself, while other informants, especially those in the heterodox position, are still in the process of understanding and arranging themselves on social media.

The novelty of this study lies in the way it reads first account and second account not merely as two different accounts, but as two spaces that reveal social pressure on men on Instagram. The first account shows that men are still encouraged to appear neat, strong, safe, and in line with what is considered proper by the public. The second account shows a need to move beyond those demands by presenting sides that are more personal, more emotional, and closer to everyday life. This study is important because it does not stop at discussing privacy, self-disclosure, or impression management, but shows that the use of two accounts is a form of masculinity negotiation in digital spaces. Its main novelty lies in the finding that Gen Z males are not only adjusting themselves to the judgments of others, but are also confronting themselves when deciding which sides are worthy of being shown in public and which sides they only dare to reveal in more limited spaces.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the use of first and second accounts among Gen Z males on Instagram is not merely a matter of having two different accounts, but a way of dividing self-presentation across different social demands. The first account is mainly used to maintain a proper, safe, and publicly acceptable image, while the second account is used to express more personal, emotional, and everyday sides of the self. The study therefore answers its main objective by showing that multiple accounts function not only as a privacy strategy, but also as a mechanism for negotiating masculinity and dividing versions of the self in digital space. The findings also indicate that this separation reflects an unfinished process within the self, because what is managed is not only visibility before others, but also which version of the self is allowed to appear and which remains restrained. Susan Pitt's framework strengthens this interpretation by showing that male self-presentation moves across different degrees of conformity, openness, and personal expression rather than remaining fixed in one stable form.

The study is limited by the small number of informants, its focus on Instagram only, and its reliance on participants' experiences within a specific period of time. These limits mean that the findings cannot fully represent the experiences of all Gen Z males across different social settings. Even so, the study contributes a clearer understanding of how young men manage public image and personal expression through multiple accounts, and how this practice reflects broader tensions between masculine expectations, self-acceptance, and digital identity.

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