

Assignment 3: Author Insights Table

Discipline	Author Insights
Psychology	Vogel et al. (2014) explain that viewing idealized posts on social media leads young adults to make “upward social comparisons,” which in turn lowers self-esteem (p. 206). The authors argue that social platforms create an environment where users constantly measure themselves against others, and this repeated comparison process reduces satisfaction with one’s own life (Vogel et al., 2014). They also note that self-esteem drops most among individuals who already engage heavily in social comparison behaviors. This provides strong psychological evidence that identity online is shaped internally through emotional reactions to others’ posts.
Media & Cultural Studies	Marwick and Boyd (2011) describe identity on Twitter as performance, stating that users engage in “celebrity practices” to maintain visibility (p. 140). They argue that Twitter encourages people to behave like micro-celebrities by curating content and addressing an imagined audience. The authors note that online identity is deliberate rather than accidental because users choose posts that reinforce a desired image (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). Their research suggests that social media shapes identity through public performance and constant visibility.
Sociology	Pillow et al. (2024) find that social media enables individuals to negotiate multiple identities, revealing some traits while masking others depending on audience and platform norms. They write that users actively shift between “different selves across contexts” as part of digital identity work (Pillow et al., 2024). Their interviews show that identity on social media is flexible and shaped through social interaction rather than fixed.
Developmental Psychology	Manago et al. (2012) argue that Facebook use reinforces social identity because larger online friendship networks are linked with higher perceived social support (p. 375). They explain that young adults use social media to strengthen belonging and community ties, both of which are key parts of identity formation during emerging adulthood. Their quantitative analysis shows that online environments contribute to developmental processes by validating social roles (Manago et al., 2012).

Zhao et al. (2008) found that young adults present “idealized but authentic identities anchored in offline relationships” (p. 1817). Their content analysis shows that users selectively enhance aspects of the self while still grounding their identity in their real social roles. The authors argue that identity on social media does not replace offline identity but extends it, showing how digital platforms support self-presentation and empowerment (Zhao et al., 2008).

References:

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