

NARRATIVE

The fields below are expandable, but must **NOT exceed 2 pages**. This form must be completed using a word processing program (12 point font, single-spaced, 1" margins).

Project Director: [REDACTED]

Objectives

The overall goal of this study is to advance the understanding of the influence of technology and social media use on self-views, identity processes, and negative emotions including self-esteem, depression, and anxiety. Specifically, I am interested in examining the emotional and behavioral responses to identity verification that comes from social media interaction. To this aim, the following three specific objectives would be completed with the Summer Fellowship. The first objective for this study includes conducting a relevant literature review of existing theory and research as applicable to understanding the relationship between identity processes and social media that will be used as a framework for conducting the analysis and explaining the results of this work. Another objective of the proposed work to be conducted for the Summer Fellowship is preparation and analyses of data previously collected from students at two California State University campuses on the use of social media, identity processes, and social behavior. The third objective of the proposed study is preparation of a manuscript for submission for publication in a peer-reviewed academic journal.

Significance

The significance of the proposed study includes expanding the scope of Identity Theory (Burke 1980; Stryker 1968) by applying it to understanding the relationship between authenticity and the presentation of self through social media, a topic that is so far unexplored from this perspective. Identity Theory has been used extensively to explain how the processes of the self, such as self-esteem, identity development, and identity maintenance influence social behaviors, but has yet to explore how these processes of the self are influenced by the dramatic increase in the use of social media as a means of communication.

This work builds from my own prior work on the relationship between identity processes and social behavior. Specifically, my prior studies in this area examine how contextual factors such as incarceration, mental health, and gender influence the relationship between identity processes and social behavior (Marcussen and Asencio 2016; Asencio, Merrill, and Steiner 2014; Asencio 2011, 2013). More recently, I have revised and resubmitted a manuscript entitled "Identity Processes in Face-to-Face and Digitally Mediated Environments" to *Sociological Perspectives* (January 2018), a refereed academic journal in Sociology. This particular manuscript was made possible through the support of a Summer Fellowship in 2017 from Sonoma State's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. The proposed study will extend my prior work by allowing me to use additional, longitudinal data recently collected to examine how the context of using social media influences the relationship between identity processes, social behavior, and emotions over time.

The proposed study will provide insight about how use of technology and social media influences student's identities, emotions, and behaviors with respect to coursework, grades, and degree progress. The study will also assess how students who are able to confirm their identity as part of the campus community influences behavioral outcomes including academic performance as well as risky behaviors. Finally, the proposed work will examine whether confirming their identities via social media operates differently from confirming their identities via face-to-face interaction. The results of this study have the potential to influence policy and practice with respect to student retention an academic performance, as well as student involvement in the campus community.

Results from Previous RSCA Funding

As mentioned above, the Summer Fellowship I received in 2017 allowed me to work on the manuscript that was recently revised and resubmitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal in Sociology. The work done under the 2017 fellowship also resulted in two conference presentations, the details of which are documented in the qualifications section of this application. I also received a Winter Fellowship in 2016 for a different project examining the relationship between foreclosure and youth homicide. That funding has also produced a manuscript that is currently under review at *Social Science Research*, which is another peer-reviewed journal in Sociology. I also presented at Sonoma State's Research Symposium on the foreclosure and youth homicide project in Spring 2016. If I receive the Summer Fellowship in 2018, I will be able to build on last year's work by incorporating a longitudinal approach to examining identity processes in digitally mediated environments. This is an important extension of this line of research that has also been suggested by the reviewers of the current manuscript which uses only cross-sectional data. The manuscript that was produced using the 2017 fellowship focuses on how identities and interaction partners influence people's choice of face-to-face or digitally mediated interaction settings. With the help and support of a Summer Fellowship in 2018, I will be able to continue to build this data and expand the scope of the study on identity and social media use to examine the emotional outcomes of identity processes in digitally mediated interaction settings.

Plan of Work

The first phase of work for the proposed study is to conduct an extensive literature review on the relationship between identity and technology/social media use. To date, there is very little work on this topic. However, it is important to understand how existing literature focused on each component of this study can be integrated in order to generate formal expectations and hypotheses about the relationships between them, as well as to explain the results.

Data collection for this study is ongoing since Fall 2016. The plan of work for the Summer Fellowship is to integrate the newly collected longitudinal data with data used in the previously prepared manuscript currently under review at *Sociological Perspectives* to generate the relevant scales including the Stets and Burke (2014) Self-Esteem and Authenticity Scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1979), and the Pearlin Mastery Scale (1978). In addition to this data preparation, other variables will be recoded and created as needed to accurately assess the impact of technology and social media use on identity processes and social behavior.

Once the data is prepared, a combination of analyses techniques will be applied to discover whether there are significant relationships between use of technology and social media, and identity processes. I plan to use multivariate regression as well as structural equation modeling to analyze the data.

After the analysis is complete, I will begin integrating the literature review with the analysis and results of the data to generate a manuscript draft which will be presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, or the Pacific Sociological Association, and submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed academic journal. The projected timeline for completing this project follows:

Phase I: Literature Review	May 2018 – June 2018
Phase II: Data Preparation & Analyses	June 2018 – August 2018
Phase III: Manuscript Preparation	September 2018 - November 2018

Student Involvement

There is no plan for a student involvement component of the proposed study. However, I do plan to incorporate my research findings with my course curriculum as I generally do with any research I conduct.

References: