

Reconfiguring Digital Practices: Habitus, Capital, and the Second-Account Field among Generation Z

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Abstract

This study examines how digital practices are reconfigured through the use of second Instagram accounts among Generation Z, focusing on the interplay of habitus, capital, and field. The phenomenon of second-account usage reflects not only a strategy of identity negotiation, but also a structured response to the pressures of visibility, self-presentation, and symbolic evaluation within the main account. Grounded in Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice, this research employs a qualitative phenomenological approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation, enabling an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of Gen Z users. The findings show that digital habitus, formed through family environments, peer interactions, and routine engagement with social media, shapes how users perceive and navigate online spaces. Cultural capital, in the form of digital competence, and social capital, particularly strong and selective networks, are strategically mobilized to manage visibility and control access. The study further reveals that second accounts constitute a differentiated digital field, where the dominant logic of symbolic capital in the main account is partially reconfigured. Within this space, users negotiate power, redefine value, and develop practices that prioritize intimacy, trust, and controlled self-expression.

Keywords: *Second Account, Habitus, Capital, Field, Generation Z, Instagram*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana praktik digital direkonfigurasi melalui penggunaan akun kedua Instagram di kalangan Generasi Z dengan menitikberatkan pada interaksi antara habitus, modal, dan ranah. Fenomena penggunaan akun kedua tidak hanya merefleksikan strategi negosiasi identitas, tetapi juga merupakan respons yang terstruktur terhadap tekanan visibilitas, presentasi diri, dan evaluasi simbolik yang berlangsung pada akun utama. Berlandaskan teori praktik sosial Pierre Bourdieu, penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi non-partisipan, dan dokumentasi, sehingga memungkinkan pemahaman yang mendalam terhadap pengalaman hidup pengguna Generasi Z. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa habitus digital, yang terbentuk melalui lingkungan keluarga, interaksi dengan teman sebaya, serta keterlibatan rutin dengan media sosial, membentuk cara pengguna dalam memaknai dan menavigasi ruang digital. Modal kultural, dalam bentuk kompetensi digital, serta modal sosial, khususnya jaringan yang kuat dan selektif, dimobilisasi secara strategis untuk mengelola visibilitas dan mengontrol akses. Penelitian ini juga mengungkap bahwa akun kedua membentuk suatu ranah digital yang terdiferensiasi, di mana logika dominan modal simbolik pada akun utama mengalami rekonfigurasi secara parsial. Dalam ruang ini, pengguna menegosiasikan relasi kekuasaan, mendefinisikan ulang nilai, serta mengembangkan praktik yang mengutamakan keintiman, kepercayaan, dan ekspresi diri yang terkontrol.

Kata Kunci: *Second Account, Habitus, Modal, Ranah, Generasi Z, Instagram*

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Introduction

Instagram has become one of the leading social media platforms that plays a key role in facilitating social interaction and enabling people to express themselves online (Bilqis et al., 2024). Its high popularity indicates that many people are interested in this platform and recognize its value for communication and self-expression. Among various social media platforms, Instagram stands out as one of the most widely used. In Indonesia, it became the second most popular platform in 2023, with 86.5% of the population using it, according to data from We Are Social. Initially functioning as a photo-sharing application, Instagram has evolved by incorporating features such as video uploads, photo carousels, Instagram Stories, IGTV, and direct messages (Aryani & Murtiariyati, 2022), enabling users to share content with broader audiences and engage in diverse forms of interaction.

However, the increasing use of Instagram is not only associated with opportunities for self-expression, but also with the emergence of new social pressures. Users are often required to present themselves in ways that align with socially desirable standards, particularly in relation to visual aesthetics and public perception.

Generation Z is the group born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, known as a digital-native generation that is highly familiar with technology and social media (Sair, Aribowo, Kusman, & Ladiqi, 2025). From an early age, they have been continuously exposed to digital environments, which significantly shape their patterns of interaction and self-presentation. According to Merdeka.com (2024), based on a survey by Invinyix and Jakpat, Instagram is the most frequently accessed platform among Gen Z, with 94% usage. Previous studies show that Gen Z actively uses Instagram to construct a positive public image through carefully curated content (Novianti & Agustrijanto, 2022), indicating that social media functions not only as a communication tool but also as a medium of self-representation.

At the same time, the demand to maintain a positive and idealized image creates pressure for users to carefully manage how they appear online (Pangestuti, 2022). This condition often limits users' freedom of expression and may lead

to tension between authenticity and social expectations. In some cases, users experience discomfort and self-monitoring when sharing content, reflecting the presence of implicit norms that regulate behavior within digital spaces.

In response to these pressures, many users create and utilize second Instagram accounts. A second account is typically used to share content that differs from the main account, often involving closer interaction with selected audiences (Ardiesty et al., 2022). This is supported by the multi-account feature, which allows users to manage more than one account on a single device. Second accounts are generally characterized by greater privacy, selective audiences, and more flexible forms of expression. Previous studies have shown that second accounts are used for self-disclosure, privacy management, and identity exploration (Bilqis et al., 2024; Ardiesty et al., 2022).

While existing research has primarily focused on the motives and patterns of second-account usage, limited attention has been given to the underlying social structures that shape these practices. In this context, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice provides a relevant analytical framework. Through the concepts of habitus, capital, and field, Bourdieu enables an understanding of how individual practices are shaped by internalized dispositions, available resources, and structured social environments (Hisyam et al., 2024; Alicia & Wicandra, 2018).

Habitus refers to a system of dispositions formed through past experiences that guide how individuals perceive and act. Capital encompasses various forms of resources, including social, cultural, economic, and symbolic capital. Field is understood as a structured social space where individuals interact and compete according to specific rules and forms of capital. Within this framework, second Instagram accounts can be understood not merely as additional accounts, but as a differentiated field within the broader social media environment, with its own logic, norms, and forms of value.

This study aims to fill this gap by analysing second-account practices among Generation Z through a Bourdieusian perspective. By focusing on the interplay between habitus, capital, and field, this research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how digital practices are

socially structured and how users actively navigate these structures.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

- (1) How are second Instagram account practices among Generation Z shaped by habitus, capital, and field?
- (2) How do these practices reflect the reconfiguration of social relations and forms of capital within the digital environment?

Method

This study utilises qualitative research and employs a phenomenological qualitative research approach to examine the use of social media, namely Instagram, as a social phenomenon. The data collection techniques used in this study on the use of second accounts among Generation Z: a study of habitus, capital, and arena according to Pierre Bourdieu's perspective, include observation, interviews, and documentation. The informant selection technique in this study used purposive sampling. The research informants consisted of 10 second account users, who were selected based on informant criteria. The research informants consisted of 10 second account users, who were selected based on informant criteria. The relatively limited number of informants is consistent with the qualitative and phenomenological approach employed in this study, which prioritizes depth of understanding over statistical generalization (Hasanah, 2017).

Rather than aiming for representativeness, this study seeks to achieve analytical generalization by exploring participants' lived experiences in detail. The selection of informants was conducted purposively to ensure that all participants actively used second Instagram accounts and were able to provide rich and relevant insights into the phenomenon under study.

The data obtained from the interviews also show recurring patterns across informants, particularly in relation to self-expression, privacy management, and the use of selective social networks. This indicates that thematic saturation was achieved, where no substantially new themes emerged from additional data collection.

Accordingly, the strength of this study lies not in the number of participants, but in the depth

of analysis and its ability to uncover underlying social mechanisms shaping second-account practices among Generation Z (Harker et al., 2009).

Results and Discussion

Second account usage within the Instagram social field

Instead of merely describing how second accounts are used, this section examines how such practices are structured within the Instagram social field. The distinction between first and second accounts reflects different logics of practice, where users navigate varying expectations, forms of capital, and modes of self-presentation (Bourdieu, 2020; Harker et al., 2009).

Based on observations and interviews with 10 informants, two dominant practices of second account use emerge: self-expression and privacy management. Rather than being purely individual motives, these practices reflect how Generation Z users negotiate visibility, social expectations, and access within the Instagram field (Bourdieu, 2020; Harker et al., 2009).

1. Self-expression and symbolic domination in the Instagram field

The use of second Instagram accounts as spaces for self-expression cannot be reduced to individual preference alone. It is more appropriately understood as a response to the structural pressures embedded within the Instagram field. From a Bourdieusian perspective, the main account operates as a social arena governed by the logic of symbolic capital, where visibility, aesthetic presentation, and public recognition become dominant forms of value (Bourdieu, 2020; Harker et al., 2009).

This condition is reflected in the experiences of the informants. One informant, Setia, stated:

"I am interested in using a second account because sometimes there are things I want to share without feeling judged. A second account provides more freedom, where I can be more myself without having to think about how I appear on my main account."

Another informant, Rahmi, expressed a similar experience:

“To be able to express myself more freely, I also created this second account to store any photos or videos... If I upload something to my first account, I always think twice about whether I want to upload a photo, like whether it's good or not. To post on my first account, I'm not very confident, but if I upload it to my second account, I don't think about whether it's good or not, I just upload it.”

These narratives suggest that the main account is not a neutral space, but one structured by implicit expectations and continuous evaluation. The tendency to carefully select content and anticipate judgment indicates that these norms have been internalized into the informants' habitus. In Bourdieu's terms, habitus functions as a system of dispositions that guide perception and practice, often unconsciously reproducing existing social structures (Harker et al., 2009; Mustikasari et al., 2023). What appears as personal hesitation is therefore better understood as a socially structured disposition shaped by the dominance of symbolic capital within the Instagram field.

The second account, in contrast, operates with a different logic of practice. Informants describe it as a space where they feel more at ease and able to present themselves without the pressure of aesthetic or social expectations. This finding is consistent with previous studies that highlight second accounts as spaces for self-disclosure and more authentic expression (Bilqis et al., 2024; Ardiesty et al., 2022). At the same time, this study shows that such practices are not merely expressive, but are closely related to the structural conditions of the digital field in which users are embedded.

This space, however, is not without structure. The second account reflects a reconfiguration of capital rather than its absence. Social capital—especially trust, familiarity, and emotional closeness—becomes more central than symbolic capital (Harker et al., 2009). Informants actively regulate access to their accounts, indicating an awareness of how to maintain a controlled and meaningful social environment.

The use of second accounts can be understood as a form of strategic positioning within overlapping fields. Generation Z users

move between different logics of practice within the same platform, adjusting their behavior according to distinct expectations. This pattern reflects what Bourdieu conceptualizes as practical sense (*sens pratique*), where individuals navigate social structures through embodied and often tacit knowledge (Bourdieu, 2020).

The forms of self-expression practiced by Generation Z through second Instagram accounts further illustrate how digital practices are shaped by the interplay between habitus, capital, and field. These practices are not merely individual acts of expression, but are embedded in a specific logic of the second-account field, where the criteria of value differ from those governing the main account (Bourdieu, 2020; Harker et al., 2009). Previous studies have also shown that second accounts function as spaces for alternative self-presentation and self-disclosure (Bilqis et al., 2024; Ardiesty et al., 2022). Based on interviews and observations conducted with 10 informants, several dominant forms of expression can be identified:

- a. Everyday practices and the redefinition of symbolic value

The majority of informants used their second accounts to share everyday and seemingly trivial activities. Unlike the main account, where content is curated and carefully selected, the second account allows for more spontaneous and unfiltered postings. This shift reflects a transformation in the logic of practice, where the emphasis moves away from aesthetic value and public recognition toward immediacy and authenticity (Bourdieu, 2020).

“I use my second account very often, almost every day I open my second account and post my daily activities or random things on my second account, such as waking up, sweeping the house, gathering with family, just random things” (Interview with informant Setia Hasanah Zuhdi).

Setia's account shows how everyday practices that would normally be considered insignificant within the dominant logic of the main account become acceptable and meaningful within the second account. A similar pattern appears in the experience of Roabi:

“Almost every day, something is posted on the second account, like daily activities, for

example, when I'm bored on my second account, it's like a second diary on the second account" (Interview with informant Roabi Agustin).

These practices indicate that the second account functions as a space where the pressure of symbolic evaluation is reduced. Activities that do not carry high symbolic value in the main field are redefined as legitimate forms of expression. This finding aligns with previous research that identifies second accounts as spaces for more spontaneous and personal content sharing (Bilqis et al., 2024). In this sense, the second account enables a reorientation of value, where authenticity and routine experience become more important than performance, reflecting a shift in the dominant form of capital (Harker et al., 2009).

b. Intimacy, trust, and the reconfiguration of social capital

Another prominent form of self-expression is the strengthening of close social relationships. Informants emphasized that their second accounts are intentionally limited to trusted individuals, allowing them to share more personal and emotional content. This reflects a shift in the dominant form of capital within the second account, from symbolic capital (visibility and recognition) to social capital (trust and emotional closeness) (Harker et al., 2009; Haerussaleh & Huda, 2021).

Roabi, for example, used her second account to express personal feelings and received emotional support from her close friends. This indicates that the second account operates as a relational space where interactions are more intimate and meaningful. Similarly, Risma noted that interactions on second accounts are more active and engaging, particularly through comments and direct responses among close peers.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, this practice demonstrates how agents strategically mobilize social capital within a more restricted network. The limitation of followers is not a constraint, but a deliberate strategy to maintain the quality of social relations. This finding is consistent with studies that highlight the role of trust and strong ties in shaping online interaction patterns among close networks (Ardiesty et al., 2022).

c. Digital archiving and reflexive self-documentation

In addition to expression and interaction, second accounts also function as personal archives. Several informants described their second accounts as spaces to store photos and videos that hold personal meaning, rather than public value.

"...I also use this second account to store photos or videos as mementos" (Interview with Rahmi Fadlina).

This practice indicates that second accounts also serve as a form of reflexive self-documentation. Unlike the main account, where content is oriented toward audience perception, the second account allows users to preserve personal memories without the pressure of external judgment. This finding supports previous research that identifies second accounts as spaces for more private and controlled self-presentation (Bilqis et al., 2024).

From a theoretical standpoint, this can be understood as part of the broader transformation of digital habitus, where individuals develop routine practices of documenting and curating their lives in digital environments (Bourdieu, 2020; Mustikasari et al., 2023). At the same time, the selective nature of what is stored and shared suggests an awareness of different audiences and fields, reinforcing the idea that users actively differentiate between public and private modes of self-representation.

2. Privacy, boundary-making, and control over access

Privacy is not merely an individual concern, but a socially structured practice that reflects how users negotiate boundaries within the Instagram field. The use of second accounts allows Generation Z users to actively control access to their content, indicating that privacy is closely related to the management of social relations and the distribution of visibility. In this sense, privacy can be understood as a form of boundary-making, where users distinguish between those who are allowed to enter a particular social space and those who are excluded (Bourdieu, 2020; Harker et al., 2009).

This practice is evident in the experience of informant Rina, who deliberately limits her followers on her second account:

“As for the second account, it's probably because I feel I have more privacy on the second account. On the first account, there are many people following me, both people I know and people I don't know. That's why I created a second account, so I can filter the people closest to me, and only they can see my content, posts, or stories” (Interview with Rina Sofiana).

Rina's statement illustrates that privacy is not simply about hiding information, but about actively selecting an audience. The ability to “filter” followers reflects a form of control over access, where users determine who is entitled to participate in their digital social space. From a Bourdieusian perspective, this can be interpreted as a practice of exercising power within a specific field, where inclusion and exclusion are strategically managed.

The characteristics of second accounts—being private, often anonymous or pseudonymous, and limited in the number of followers—further reinforce this boundary-making process. Previous studies have also identified second accounts as spaces that prioritize controlled visibility and selective interaction (Mawarsari, 2022). However, this study suggests that such practices are not only about seeking comfort, but also about restructuring social relations within digital environments.

Within the second-account field, social capital becomes the dominant form of value, particularly in the form of trust, familiarity, and emotional closeness (Harker et al., 2009). By restricting access to close friends, users create a network characterized by strong ties rather than broad connections. This selective inclusion indicates that exclusivity is not a limitation, but a strategy to maintain the quality and reliability of social interactions.

At the same time, this controlled privacy can also be understood as a response to the symbolic pressures present in the main account. When the main account is experienced as a space of surveillance and potential judgment, the second account provides a more regulated environment where users can manage visibility on their own terms. This reflects a shift from being objects of observation to becoming subjects who actively regulate how they are seen.

Habitus and the formation of digital dispositions in second-account practices

The use of second Instagram accounts among Generation Z cannot be separated from the formation of habitus, understood as a system of durable and transposable dispositions shaped through past experiences and socialization processes (Bourdieu, 2020; Harker et al., 2009). In the context of digital life, habitus is not merely a set of habits, but a structuring structure that guides how individuals perceive, evaluate, and act within social media environments (Mustikasari et al., 2023).

The findings of this study indicate that the habitus underlying second-account practices is formed through continuous exposure to digital technologies, family environments, and peer interactions. These experiences contribute to what can be described as a digital habitus, where engagement with social media becomes an ordinary and taken-for-granted part of everyday life (Rahma et al., 2024; Wandira, 2024; Khasanah et al., 2025). Within this context, the use of second accounts emerges as a practical response shaped by these internalized dispositions.

1. Family environment and early digital socialization

One important aspect in the formation of habitus is the process of inheriting values, habits, and dispositions from the immediate environment, especially the family. The informant explained that both of his parents actively used mobile phones to access social media in their daily activities. The digital practices carried out by his parents since he was in primary school have shaped his views on the use of social media and digital devices in general. The mother actively uses Facebook to interact with friends and access cooking recipe groups and others, while the father regularly watches videos or listens to music on YouTube every morning. This experience gives an informant unique understanding of the appropriateness of mobile phone use by adults.

This statement shows how the digital practices of parents have become part of the social structure internalized by the informant and subsequently shaped their digital habitus. Within Bourdieu's theoretical framework, habitus is not merely a habit, but a system of dispositions that unconsciously guides individuals in their actions,

thoughts, and feelings (Mustikasari et al., 2023; Harker et al., 2009).

A survey conducted by Common Sense Media (2016) found that parents spend an average of 9 hours and 22 minutes per day in front of screens, with approximately 7 hours and 43 minutes used for personal purposes such as browsing social media, and only 90 minutes for work. This indicates that digital engagement has become deeply embedded in everyday family life. Research also shows that parents' excessive use of gadgets can be a strong reason for gadget dependence in children. Children tend to imitate their parents' behavior, and parents' dependence on digital devices, especially mothers, significantly influences children's dependence on similar devices (Li et al., 2022).

From a Bourdieusian perspective, these findings highlight that the family functions as an initial site of habitus formation, where digital dispositions are gradually internalized through repeated exposure and observation. The normalization of digital practices within the household contributes to shaping how individuals later perceive and engage with social media. In this sense, the use of second Instagram accounts is not simply an individual innovation, but is rooted in earlier processes of socialization that make intensive digital engagement appear natural and self-evident.

2. Social media environment and the internalization of symbolic standards

Generation Z is a generation that was born and raised alongside the internet, smartphones, and social media (Rahma et al., 2023). As a generation that grew up in the digital age, Generation Z has habits that are heavily influenced by technology and social media (Wandira, 2024). Seven out of ten research informants described how habitus or habits in the digital world are formed early on in Generation Z individuals through repeated social experiences in the use of social media. The informants have been accustomed to using social media since primary school, and routinely open applications such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok every day.

"I've been using social media since primary school. Back then, Facebook was all the rage, then in secondary school I started using Instagram, which I still use today, and now I'm also on TikTok. Every

day, I always open my phone and scroll through TikTok and Instagram. It seems like there's not a day that goes by without me opening my phone. When I was little, I used to play on my phone every day and my mum would often scold me, but I still did it anyway. If I don't have my phone, it feels like something is missing, even though I mostly just scroll through other people's posts, which aren't really important, like using Google to study for secondary school or high school lessons." (Interview with Roabi Agustin).

The use of social media for informants is not only a means of entertainment but also shapes their outlook on life and personal identity. The influence of social media involvement on life and identity is the emergence of a tendency to compare oneself with social standards set by peers and public figures, such as influencers. These standards include aspects such as physical appearance, lifestyle, and aesthetic presentation of content displayed through carefully edited photos and videos, as well as the number of likes received (Suharnanik, & Sholahudin, 2023).

Another informant also explained that he had a tendency to compare himself with posts he saw on his Instagram account, which made him worry about how people who saw them would judge him. According to the informant, social media provided a place for him to express himself, but the process of sharing was not entirely free, as it was limited by unwritten norms about what was considered appropriate to display on social media.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, these conditions can be understood as the internalization of symbolic standards within the digital field. The repeated exposure to idealized representations and metrics of recognition—such as likes, comments, and followers—forms a system of symbolic capital that structures how individuals evaluate themselves and others (Bourdieu, 2020; Harker et al., 2009). As these standards become taken for granted, they are incorporated into the habitus of users, shaping their perceptions and practices in ways that appear natural but are socially structured.

This process also helps explain why informants experience hesitation, anxiety, and self-monitoring when using their main accounts.

Previous research has shown that intensive social media use can lead to increased comparison, dissatisfaction, and psychological pressure among Generation Z users (Sharma et al., 2023). Within this context, the emergence of second accounts can be understood as a practical response to these pressures, allowing users to adjust their practices while still remaining within the broader structure of the digital field.

3. Peer-group and the normalization of second-account practices

The informant explained that he became interested in using a second Instagram account because he observed that many of his friends already had and were using them.

“I was more interested in seeing my friends, many of whom have second accounts, so initially I was interested in that. I thought, oh, now it's trendy to have a second Instagram account.” (Interview with informant Risma Aprilia).

By observing that many of his peers were using second accounts, the informant indirectly internalized that this action was part of everyday digital habits. The informant's statement shows that the initial motivation for using a second Instagram account did not solely stem from personal needs, but also emerged from an interest in the practices of his peer group. This indicates the presence of an observational social process, in which individuals adopt patterns of behavior that are considered popular or widely accepted within their immediate social environment.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, this process can be understood as part of the formation and reproduction of habitus through social interaction. Peer groups function as an important arena where dispositions are reinforced, negotiated, and normalized (Harker et al., 2009). Practices that are repeatedly observed within a social circle gradually become taken for granted, forming a shared sense of what is considered appropriate or desirable behavior.

In this context, the use of second accounts can be seen as a socially legitimized practice within the peer group. What initially appears as a “trend” reflects a broader process of normalization, where certain digital practices gain recognition and acceptance within a particular social field. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that peer

environments play a significant role in shaping digital behavior among Generation Z (Rahma et al., 2024; Wandira, 2024).

At the same time, this process does not eliminate individual agency. Instead, it provides a framework within which individuals develop their own strategies. The adoption of second accounts can therefore be understood as both socially conditioned and strategically enacted, reflecting the dynamic relationship between habitus and practice. In this sense, Generation Z users are not merely following trends, but are actively positioning themselves within a social field where certain practices carry social and symbolic value.

Cultural and social capital in the second-account field

According to Bourdieu, capital refers to resources that individuals can mobilize to gain advantage, position, or recognition within a particular field (Harker et al., 2009; Bourdieu, 2020). In the context of second Instagram accounts, the findings show that users rely primarily on cultural capital and social capital to manage their presence and interactions within this more restricted digital space.

Rather than functioning as a space free from structure, the second account constitutes a field with its own logic of practice, where different forms of capital are valued and strategically mobilized. The analysis of informants' experiences indicates that the use of second accounts is closely related to how individuals accumulate, deploy, and convert these forms of capital within specific social contexts.

1. Cultural capital and digital competence

Informants in this study demonstrated various forms of digital competence in managing their second Instagram accounts, particularly in relation to privacy settings, audience selection, and content regulation. These practices include the ability to set accounts as private, to selectively accept followers, and to differentiate between content shared on first and second accounts.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, these competencies can be understood as a form of cultural capital, particularly embodied cultural capital, which consists of skills, knowledge, and dispositions acquired through experience

(Harker et al., 2009; Bourdieu, 2020). In digital contexts, this includes the ability to understand platform features, interpret social expectations, and adjust self-presentation accordingly.

The findings presented in earlier sections—such as the differentiation between first and second accounts, the selective sharing of content, and the control over visibility—indicate that users possess a practical understanding of the “rules of the game” within the Instagram field. These competencies are not formally learned, but are developed through continuous engagement with digital environments.

This is consistent with previous research showing that digital literacy and platform familiarity shape how individuals navigate online interactions (Mustikasari et al., 2023). In this sense, cultural capital is not only a resource for participation but also a means through which individuals structure their position within the field.

At the same time, this digital competence reflects a form of power. The ability to manage account settings, regulate audiences, and differentiate between multiple social contexts allows users to actively shape their digital environment. Rather than passively adapting to platform structures, they engage in strategic practices that enable them to navigate and negotiate the constraints of the digital field.

2. Social capital and selective networks

Meanwhile, informants explained that they carefully select who is allowed to follow their second Instagram accounts, limiting access to close friends, family members, and trusted individuals. These networks are characterized by familiarity, emotional closeness, and mutual trust, rather than broad or anonymous connections.

“Yes, that's right, because I only have about 30 followers, so they are people who are really close to me, which is why I dare to invite them to be friends on my second account. If they were just ordinary friends, I wouldn't accept their friend requests on my second account” (Interview with informant Risma).

“The followers on my second account are just my close friends. My family is there, but only those who have Instagram. because I feel like I can only be comfortable uploading random posts to my

close friends. I trust them because we've known each other for a long time, I know their personalities, and they also know what kind of person I am, so I just feel relaxed” (Interview with informant Salsa).

These statements indicate that the use of second Instagram accounts is closely tied to the accumulation and management of social capital. In Bourdieu's framework, social capital refers to resources derived from networks of relationships characterized by trust, recognition, and mutual support (Harker et al., 2009; Haerussaleh & Huda, 2021).

Unlike the main account, where broader visibility may be valued, the second account prioritizes strong ties over weak ties. The limited number of followers is not a disadvantage, but a deliberate strategy to maintain a network characterized by trust and emotional closeness. This reflects a shift in the logic of value within the field, where intimacy and reliability become more important than reach and popularity.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, this selective inclusion also reflects a form of boundary-making, where individuals actively define who belongs within their social space and who does not. This process shows that second accounts are socially structured environments where inclusion, exclusion, and trust are continuously negotiated.

The findings indicate that cultural capital and social capital play a central role in shaping second-account practices among Generation Z. Through digital competence, users are able to manage visibility and control access, while through selective networks, they maintain trust and intimacy within their social environment. These practices show that second accounts are not merely private spaces, but structured social fields where different forms of capital are mobilized and reconfigured.

The second-account field as a space of differentiated logics and negotiated practices

Within Bourdieu's framework, a field is understood as a structured social space in which actors interact, compete, and position themselves according to specific rules and forms of capital (Bourdieu, 2020; Harker et al., 2009). The findings of this study indicate that Instagram cannot be treated as a single, homogeneous field.

Instead, it consists of multiple overlapping fields, particularly reflected in the distinction between first and second accounts.

1. The main account as a field of symbolic visibility

On their first accounts, informants described them as open and publicly oriented spaces. Their first accounts included a wide range of followers, such as school friends, family members, acquaintances, and even unknown users. In this field, informants tended to be more cautious and selective in their practices.

Erika, for example, rarely posted on her first account and primarily used it to observe others. Based on the researcher's observation over three months, she did not upload any posts, either in the form of Instagram Stories, Reels, or feed content. Meanwhile, Sulffia remained active, but her posts were carefully curated, involving editing processes and consideration of aesthetic presentation.

These practices indicate that the main account operates under a logic of symbolic visibility, where recognition is closely tied to aesthetic value, audience perception, and social approval. Users are required to manage their self-presentation in ways that align with dominant norms within the field. From a Bourdieusian perspective, this reflects a form of symbolic domination, where individuals internalize expectations about how they should appear and behave in order to gain recognition.

The careful selection of content, the use of filters, and the concern with audience judgment demonstrate that practices in this field are shaped by the pursuit of symbolic capital, such as likes, comments, and positive impressions. As a result, the main account becomes a space of regulation, where self-expression is constrained by the need to conform to socially accepted standards.

2. The second account as a counter-field of controlled intimacy

In contrast, the second account operates with a different logic of practice. Informants described it as a more private and intimate space, often compared to a "family room" or a small gathering place where they could interact with close friends. This account typically contains a limited number of followers who are emotionally close and trusted.

Within this space, informants felt less pressure to conform to dominant expectations.

They were able to post content that would be considered inappropriate, uninteresting, or unaesthetic in the main account, such as random thoughts, personal confessions, or everyday experiences.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, the second account can be understood as a counter-field—not in the sense of being completely outside the dominant structure, but as a differentiated space where the dominant logic is reconfigured. The emphasis shifts from symbolic capital (visibility and recognition) to social capital (trust, intimacy, and emotional support).

However, this counter-field is not free from structure or power relations. Informants actively regulate access, carefully selecting who is allowed to enter this space. The limited number of followers reflects not exclusion in a negative sense, but a strategic form of boundary-making, where inclusion is based on trust and relational closeness.

The practices observed in this space—such as posting unfiltered content, sharing personal experiences, and engaging in informal interaction—indicate that the "rules of the game" differ significantly from those of the main account. Here, authenticity is more highly valued than aesthetic performance, and emotional expression is prioritized over public recognition. However, the second account should not be understood as a space that is entirely free from domination. From a Bourdieusian perspective, it is more appropriate to interpret it as a site where power relations are reconfigured rather than eliminated (Bourdieu, 2020; Harker et al., 2009). While the main account is structured by broader norms of visibility, public recognition, and symbolic capital, the second account allows users to exercise greater control over access, audience selection, and self-presentation.

This shift reflects a form of micro-level struggle within the digital field. Users do not fully escape the dominant logic of the platform, but instead negotiate their position by creating a more controlled and selective environment. In this sense, the second account operates as a counter-field in which the dominant criteria of value are partially suspended and replaced by alternative forms of capital, particularly those rooted in trust, intimacy, and relational closeness (Bourdieu, 2020).

At the same time, this counter-field remains structured by its own internal logic. Inclusion and exclusion are actively managed, and access is carefully regulated, indicating that power continues to operate, albeit in a more localized and relational form. This suggests that second accounts are not spaces outside power, but arenas where power is redistributed and negotiated in everyday digital practices (Harker et al., 2009).

3. Navigating multiple field of symbolic visibility

The coexistence of first and second accounts shows that Generation Z users are not simply participants in a single digital space, but actors who navigate multiple fields with different logics. They demonstrate an ability to shift between these fields, adjusting their practices according to the expectations and forms of capital that dominate each space.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, this reflects what is often referred to as practical sense (*sens pratique*), an embodied capacity to understand and respond to the specific rules of different fields (Bourdieu, 2020). Users intuitively know when to present a curated and socially acceptable self, and when they can engage in more spontaneous and personal forms of expression.

This also indicates that digital practices are not uniform, but differentiated and context-dependent. The same individual can perform different identities, mobilize different forms of capital, and adopt different strategies depending on the field in which they are positioned.

The findings show that second Instagram accounts are not merely additional accounts, but constitute a distinct social field with its own logic, forms of capital, and power relations. At the same time, this field remains connected to the broader structure of Instagram, creating a dynamic space in which users continuously negotiate between conformity and autonomy. This reinforces the relevance of Bourdieu's framework in understanding how digital actors navigate complex and layered social environments.

The dynamics of habitus, field, and capital in second-account practices

The use of second Instagram accounts among Generation Z reflects the dynamic

interaction between habitus, field, and capital, which together shape digital practices. Rather than operating as separate elements, these three dimensions are intertwined, producing patterned yet flexible forms of action within the Instagram environment (Bourdieu, 2020; Harker et al., 2009).

The findings of this study show that the main account and the second account represent two interconnected fields with different logics of practice. The main account is structured by the pursuit of symbolic capital, where visibility, aesthetic presentation, and social recognition are highly valued. Within this field, users tend to present a curated version of themselves, shaped by the internalized expectation to appear acceptable and desirable.

This expectation is closely linked to the formation of habitus. Through long-term exposure to social media norms, users develop dispositions that guide how they perceive and evaluate their own practices. The tendency to carefully select content, anticipate judgment, and maintain a certain image reflects how the logic of the field is internalized and reproduced in everyday behavior.

At the same time, the emergence of second accounts shows that users do not simply conform to these pressures. Instead, they develop strategies to navigate them. The second account operates as a differentiated field where the dominant logic of symbolic capital is partially reconfigured. In this space, social capital—particularly trust, intimacy, and emotional closeness—becomes more central.

The ability to move between these fields demonstrates how users mobilize different forms of capital according to context. Cultural capital, in the form of digital competence, enables users to manage visibility and control access, while social capital allows them to maintain meaningful relationships within a restricted network. These forms of capital are not static, but are continuously deployed and adjusted in response to the demands of each field.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, this dynamic reflects the practical sense (*sens pratique*) of social actors, where individuals intuitively navigate complex social structures without necessarily being fully conscious of them (Bourdieu, 2020). Generation Z users show an ability to balance conformity and autonomy,

shifting between performative and personal modes of self-presentation.

This indicates that second-account practices are not simply acts of escape from social pressure, but forms of strategic negotiation within a structured environment. The interaction between habitus, field, and capital produces practices that are both constrained and creative, allowing users to maintain their position within the digital field while also carving out spaces of relative autonomy.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the use of second Instagram accounts among Generation Z is not merely a matter of individual preference, but a socially structured practice shaped by the dynamic interaction between habitus, field, and capital. The findings show that digital practices cannot be understood in isolation from the broader social structures in which they are embedded.

The distinction between first and second accounts reflects the existence of differentiated fields within the same platform, each governed by its own logic of practice. The main account operates under the dominance of symbolic capital, where visibility, aesthetic presentation, and public recognition shape users' behavior. In contrast, the second account functions as a more controlled and intimate space, where social capital—particularly trust and emotional closeness—becomes more central.

The formation of digital habitus plays a key role in shaping how Generation Z navigates these fields. Through long-term exposure to family environments, social media, and peer interactions, users develop dispositions that guide their perception and practice in digital contexts. These dispositions are not fixed, but are continuously adjusted in response to the demands of different social environments.

At the same time, the findings show that Generation Z users are not passive subjects of digital structures. They actively mobilize cultural capital, in the form of digital competence, and social capital, in the form of selective networks, to manage visibility, control access, and negotiate social expectations. The use of second accounts can therefore be understood as a form of strategic practice, where users balance the

pressures of public visibility with the need for personal expression and privacy.

This study contributes to the application of Bourdieu's theoretical framework in the context of digital media by showing that contemporary social media platforms are composed of multiple overlapping fields rather than a single homogeneous space. It also highlights that digital practices involve not only adaptation to existing structures but also the creation of differentiated spaces where alternative logics of value can emerge.

These findings suggest that future research on digital identity and social media practices should pay closer attention to the relational dynamics between structure and agency, particularly in environments where users can create multiple and differentiated spaces within the same platform. By examining these dynamics, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how social actors navigate, reproduce, and transform digital social fields.

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