



EVOLUTION OF COMMUNICATION SOCIOLOGY: SOCIAL MEDIA INTERVENTION IN THE REALITY CONSTRUCTION OF SECOND ACCOUNT PHENOMENON IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL SOCIETY

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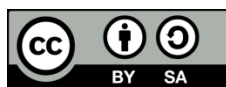
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the sociological evolution of communication in digital society by focusing on secondary accounts as strategic responses to social pressure on mainstream social media platforms. Using a qualitative methodology and a virtual ethnographic approach within a constructivist paradigm, the research explores how individuals construct and negotiate their social identities in digital spaces. Data were drawn from academic books, peer-reviewed journals, and scholarly articles, and were complemented by virtual observations and in-depth interviews with users of secondary accounts. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns related to digital identity and social interaction, while data validity was ensured through triangulation of observations, interview findings, and existing literature. The findings indicate that secondary accounts serve as important spaces for expressing authentic selves beyond the controlled personas presented on primary accounts. This practice reflects both tactical management of social visibility and ongoing negotiation between personal freedom and social conformity. Overall, the study highlights the dynamic and segmented nature of digital identity within contemporary social media ecosystems.

Keywords: Social Media, Netizens, Secondary Accounts, Digital Identity.

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital era has brought significant changes in people's communication patterns, especially through the presence of social media as the main space for interaction. Based on the 2024 We Are Social report, Indonesia has more than 212.9 million active social media users, with Instagram and Twitter being the two dominant

platforms among Generation Z and millennials (Ihsan et al., 2024). In this context, the phenomenon of a second account is a unique form of adaptation that is increasingly being used to express identity and create alternative realities (Hamandia & Ajisaka, 2025; Wattimena et al., 2022).

This phenomenon is closely related to the complexity of digital society, where identity is no longer singular, but rather layered and contextual. Second accounts allow individuals to show their authentic side to a specific audience, often consisting of a smaller and more intimate circle of friends. This shows how technology can be used to build deeper emotional connections (Amelia, 2024; Bilqis et al., 2024). At the same time, the second account phenomenon also reflects the need for privacy amidst the rapid flow of information and high social expectations. In this context, social media acts as a medium to relieve the pressure that arises from the demands of a perfect self-image. Second accounts are a solution for those who want to maintain a balance between privacy and the need to socialize. From a cultural perspective, second accounts show the values of individualism that are increasingly dominant in digital society. However, the existence of these accounts not only reflects individualism, but also collaboration in creating a shared narrative among small groups. In this space, users can support each other and share experiences without fear of being judged by a wider audience (Kambunga et al., 2023; Thomas et al., 2022).

However, this phenomenon also presents challenges, particularly in terms of authenticity and identity consistency. The use of secondary accounts may cause individuals to experience a gap between the multiple personas they present, both in the online and offline worlds. This illustrates how technology can influence the ways individuals understand and respond to their own identities (Basanti & Susanto, 2020). In Indonesia, the phenomenon of secondary accounts has become part of the evolving dynamics of digital culture. This is evident in the growing number of online communities based on secondary accounts, as well as the popularity of viral content that often originates from anonymous or semi-private accounts. This phenomenon highlights the importance of understanding the role of social media in shaping patterns of communication and interaction within society (Mayasari, 2022).

The need to understand this phenomenon has become increasingly urgent alongside the growing use of social media in the digital era. As part of a society that is

becoming more technologically connected, it is important to examine how secondary accounts influence social dynamics, identity, and privacy. This study aims to explore this phenomenon more deeply and to examine its implications for communication patterns in the digital era.

2. RESEARCH METHODE

This study employs a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of secondary accounts as part of the evolution of the sociology of communication in the digital era (Bryda & Costa, 2023). A qualitative approach is chosen because it is capable of revealing the meanings, patterns, and complex social dynamics underlying the use of secondary accounts within digital society (Creswell, 2021). This method allows researchers to explore the subjective experiences of individuals who are part of this phenomenon.

The data sources in this study are derived from a literature review method involving the collection of information from various credible references, such as previous scholarly journals, academic books, and relevant scientific articles. Academic journals were selected based on publisher credibility and topical relevance to ensure that the data used are valid and scientifically accountable. The books employed are written by leading scholars in the relevant fields, thereby providing a strong theoretical foundation to support the analysis. Scientific articles from reputable platforms were also used to complement and update the information, particularly regarding recent developments related to the topic under study. This approach aims to present a comprehensive and in-depth study based on highly accurate data sources.

Data collection techniques were carried out through literature review and observation to produce rich and holistic data. The literature review involved examining scholarly journals, reference books, and reliable articles. Data searches utilized specific keywords within academic databases to ensure the credibility and relevance of sources. In addition, direct observation was conducted to obtain relevant empirical data and to complement the information obtained from the literature. All documents and observational data were evaluated based on validity, relevance, and reliability to serve as a foundation for objective and integrated analysis.

Data analysis employed techniques developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consist of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by filtering relevant information from observations and interviews. Data display involved the construction of matrices and diagrams to visualize patterns and key findings. Conclusion drawing was conducted iteratively to ensure that the analytical results accurately reflect the dynamics of the phenomenon under study (Van Aalst et al., 2022).

Data validity was tested using source triangulation. Data obtained from virtual observations, interviews, and documentation were compared to ensure the consistency and validity of the findings. This approach was applied to minimize bias and enhance the credibility of the research results. Thus, the methodology employed is expected to provide a comprehensive and in-depth portrayal of the secondary account phenomenon within the context of digital society (Kawar et al., 2024).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Dimension of Privacy and Personal Expression in the Use of Secondary Accounts

The phenomenon of secondary accounts in the context of digital society reflects individuals' urgent need to maintain privacy amid high social expectations placed on their primary accounts. These secondary accounts often serve as spaces where users can express more personal and authentic aspects of themselves that are difficult to convey through primary accounts, which tend to be closely tied to social image. From the perspective of the sociology of communication, secondary accounts can be understood as a form of adaptation to public pressure on social media, where digital identities are frequently constructed to meet prevailing social standards. The existence of secondary accounts allows individuals to control their personal narratives, minimize the risk of judgment, and create safe environments for sharing emotions and personal experiences. Thus, privacy in secondary accounts is not merely a self-protection mechanism, but also a social strategy for creating alternative realities that are more flexible and inclusive (Fitria et al., 2023).

Structurally, secondary accounts illustrate how communication technologies enable the formation of intimate spaces within a largely public digital ecosystem. Through privacy features such as restricted access settings and audience selection, users can easily filter their social circles, allowing only certain individuals to access personal content (Herna & Sari, 2023; Suhendar et al., 2023). This indicates that the dimension of privacy in secondary accounts is not solely related to anonymity, but also to the selective management of social relationships. In this context, social media is no longer merely a communication tool, but a medium that highlights the dialectic between the need for privacy and the desire to remain connected. Therefore, secondary accounts represent a manifestation of the complexity of digital society, in which privacy and personal expression operate simultaneously in the construction of digital identity (Lisa & Irma, 2025).

Table 1. Privacy and Personal Expression in the Use of Second Accounts

Aspect	Explanation	Implications in Digital Society
Privacy Needs	Second accounts provide a safer space to maintain privacy, protecting users from expectations and social pressures on the main account.	Increasing individual awareness of digital identity management in the increasingly open social media ecosystem.
Personal Expression	Through a second account, individuals can express their authentic side, including sharing emotions, opinions, and personal experiences that don't fit on the primary account.	Giving individuals the freedom to develop a more flexible and personal digital identity.
Social Adaptation	Second account as a form of adaptation to social pressure to display an "ideal" identity on public social media.	Demonstrates how technology enables individuals to create narratives that align with personal and social needs.
Social Relations Management	The privacy features on the second account allow for strict audience selection, creating an intimate space in an otherwise public digital environment.	Indicates a paradigm shift in social interactions, from public relations to selective private connections.
Social Strategy	Second accounts are used to construct alternative realities that engage a limited audience, reducing the pressure of self-image.	Promote deeper emotional connections among small and intimate social circles.
Function of Technology	Social media has become a medium that emphasizes the dialectic between the need for privacy and the desire to stay connected with others.	Shows how technology facilitates a balance between privacy and the need to socialize.

Digital Identity Paradigm	Digital identity through a second account is dynamic, allowing individuals to show different sides of their personality separately.	Demonstrates the complexity of layered and contextual digital identity in the era of digital society.
Value of Individualism	Second accounts reflect the value of individualism by allowing users to prioritize personal needs over social demands.	Strengthening the culture of individualism in digital society, but also facilitating collaboration in small groups.
Identity Anomaly	The duality of identity between the primary account and the secondary account can create a persona gap that affects an individual's understanding of themselves.	Describes the challenges of authenticity in the digital age and its impact on the consistency of social and personal identities.
The Role of Social Media	Social media facilitates private and public spaces simultaneously, allowing for contextual and selective social interactions.	Emphasizing the role of social media in shaping communication patterns and interaction dynamics in the digital society era.

Source: Researcher Observations (2025)

The table 1 above illustrates the phenomenon of secondary accounts, which reflects individuals' need to create private spaces amid the openness of social media. The need for privacy accommodated by secondary accounts provides protection from social expectations and self-image pressures that are often attached to primary accounts (Paramesti & Nurdiarti, 2022). This indicates that the existence of secondary accounts is not merely a tool for shielding oneself from public exposure, but also reflects users' awareness of the importance of managing digital identity. In the context of an increasingly open digital society, the ability to control privacy represents a strategic effort to reduce negative impacts such as social judgment or emotional pressure.

Furthermore, the aspect of personal expression in the use of secondary accounts shows that these accounts serve as important spaces for expressing users' authentic selves. Through these accounts, individuals can share emotions, opinions, and personal experiences without fear of violating the social expectations attached to their primary accounts. This phenomenon reveals that digital identity in the modern era is characterized by complex and flexible dynamics. Personal expression through secondary accounts also illustrates how social media can facilitate deeper emotional connections with selectively chosen audiences, enabling users to develop more diverse personal identities (Anggraini et al., 2022).

The dimension of social adaptation reflected in the use of secondary accounts indicates that these accounts function as adaptive responses. Social media, as a product of communication technology, has created spaces in which individuals feel compelled to align with certain social standards. However, the social pressure to present an “ideal” image on public social media platforms allows secondary accounts to serve as spaces for constructing alternative narratives that are more aligned with personal needs (Maulida et al., 2023).

Secondary Accounts as a Response to Pressure from Primary Social Media

In the digital era, social interaction has become increasingly interconnected through social media, which now dominates public life. Social media, as a new form of mass communication, is not only a space for sharing information and building social relationships, but also functions as an arena for constructing social reality. The reality formed through social media is often shaped by social norms determined by dominant groups and by platform algorithms that influence what users see and hear (Ahmad et al., 2024). In this context, the phenomenon of secondary accounts emerges as a response to the social pressure generated by primary social media, where individuals feel compelled to maintain their public image and identity in accordance with prevailing social expectations (Suri & Perkasa, 2023).

The phenomenon of secondary accounts refers to the use of an additional social media account, usually created to access a more private and freer space of expression. Primary accounts are often used to present a more controlled, idealized life that aligns with broader social values. In contrast, secondary accounts function as spaces where individuals can share more authentic experiences, often unconstrained by the norms or social pressures present on primary social media. Within the framework of the evolution of the sociology of communication, this phenomenon reflects the transition of social media from a mere communication tool into a platform for managing more complex and segmented social identities (Prihantoro et al., 2020).

From the perspective of George Herbert Mead’s symbolic interactionism, the phenomenon of secondary accounts on social media represents how individuals form, adjust, and project their self-identities based on the social interactions they

encounter. Secondary accounts enable users to create private spaces to express themselves more authentically, free from the public judgment that often dominates primary accounts. Mead's concept of "Mind" emphasizes that humans, unlike animals, engage in reflection before acting, including deciding what is appropriate to share on social media. In this context, secondary account users demonstrate reflective thinking by considering specific audiences, avoiding rigid social expectations, and facilitating the fulfillment of emotional needs. This evolution of social media not only influences interpersonal communication but also constructs new social realities, in which individuals are able to navigate their social roles more flexibly in the digital era (Nabilah & Sinduwiatmo, 2023).

Primary social media accounts require careful self-image management, often driven by dominant narratives prevailing in digital spaces. Social media users, particularly younger generations, frequently feel pressured to meet standards of beauty, professional success, or lifestyles promoted by influencers and digital celebrities. This phenomenon creates discomfort for individuals who are unable or unwilling to conform to such norms. It is in this context that secondary accounts play a role, providing spaces for individuals to express themselves more freely and with fewer constraints from these social demands (Sinaga et al., 2023).

The use of secondary accounts also reflects the increasingly prominent process of dual identity in the digital era. In the sociology of communication, dual identity refers to situations in which individuals construct and manage two different identities across two distinct social spaces (Kobayashi, 2020; Wang & Feng, 2023). The first identity, formed through the primary account, tends to be more public and carefully controlled, while the second identity, expressed through the secondary account, is often more private and less burdened by external social expectations. In this sense, social media is not merely a communication tool, but also a social space that enables identity fragmentation as a means of maintaining balance between social demands and personal freedom (Balick, 2023).

As a response to the tension between public and private identities, secondary accounts allow individuals to avoid the intense social surveillance prevalent on mainstream social media. In studies of digital social surveillance theory, mainstream

social media is often defined as a space where social interactions are monitored and filtered by platform algorithms and the social influence of networks of friends and followers. Secondary accounts enable individuals to share views or content that may be considered controversial, emotional, or deeply personal without the risk of negative social judgment from a broader audience (Jati & Rahayu, 2023).

The phenomenon of secondary accounts also illustrates how it is shaped by framing processes occurring in digital public spaces. These framing processes influence how individuals perceive themselves and how they expect to be perceived by others. In this context, secondary accounts function as tools to shift such framing and allow individuals to present more authentic aspects of themselves, which are often marginalized within dominant narratives on mainstream social media (Loupeppis & Intahchomphoo, 2025). In other words, secondary accounts serve as a form of resistance to the construction of reality on mainstream social media, which tends to promote idealized and perfect images.

On the other hand, the phenomenon of secondary accounts can also be seen as a reaction to the pressure of conformity imposed by mainstream social media. Social media platforms, through algorithms that prioritize engagement and popularity, often create homogeneous environments in which only certain voices or perspectives are amplified. In this regard, secondary accounts provide alternative spaces for expressing more critical or unconventional views that may not be accepted in mainstream social media spaces. This is one of the reasons why secondary accounts are frequently used to share more personal or even controversial opinions without fear of negative consequences for one's reputation or self-image (Bilqis et al., 2024).

However, although secondary accounts offer spaces for freedom of expression, this phenomenon also reveals the complexity of reality construction in the digital world. In the process of managing dual identities, individuals experience a constant negotiation between the desire to adapt to social norms on mainstream social media and the need to protect more intimate aspects of the self through secondary accounts. Therefore, while secondary accounts provide greater freedom, they also add layers of complexity to digital social interactions, as individuals are now required to manage two parallel realities that are distinct yet interconnected (Nabilah & Sinduwiatmo,

2023). From the perspective of the sociology of communication, the phenomenon of secondary accounts demonstrates that social media functions not only as a communication medium but also as an arena of social negotiation, where individuals must continuously balance personal freedom and social influence within digital spaces.

Overall, the phenomenon of secondary accounts within the context of the evolution of the sociology of communication indicates that social media has become more than merely a platform for sharing information. Social media has evolved into a space filled with identity negotiation, where individuals act not only as senders and receivers of messages, but also as subjects who manage their self-image, regulate exposure, and construct their social realities in accordance with prevailing demands. Within this dynamic, secondary accounts emerge as responses to such pressures and as manifestations of the complexity of social identity in an increasingly fragmented digital society.

The evolution of the sociology of communication in the digital era reveals a fundamental transformation in the ways individuals and groups construct social reality, particularly through the phenomenon of secondary accounts. Secondary accounts reflect responses to increasingly intense social pressures and expectations in digital society. This concept can be understood as a form of impression management, in which individuals create alternative realities to escape primary identities that may be constrained by norms and public judgment on social media. From the perspective of the social construction of reality, this phenomenon highlights how social media acts as an intervening factor that reproduces new social realities with more flexible and multidimensional characteristics. This aligns with deconstruction theory, which emphasizes the dismantling of singular meanings to open space for more complex identities.

Moreover, social media intervention in the context of secondary accounts reflects the dynamics of cancel culture and feelings of inferiority in online spaces. The existence of secondary accounts often represents individuals' efforts to participate in digital discourse without facing the risk of judgment. At the same time, this phenomenon embodies a contradiction: on one hand, secondary accounts function as

safe spaces for freedom of expression, while on the other, they may reinforce identity fragmentation that can deepen feelings of inferiority. The sociology of communication in the digital era therefore needs to critically evaluate this aspect, as the construction of reality through social media is not limited to virtual existence but also affects real-world social interactions. Thus, the phenomenon of secondary accounts represents an increasingly complex evolution of digital communication and calls for inclusive approaches to understanding social dynamics amid ongoing developments in communication technology (Dalimunthe et al., 2024).

4. CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of secondary accounts reflects the evolution of the sociology of communication in an increasingly interconnected digital society. Amid high social pressure on mainstream social media, secondary accounts function as alternative spaces for individuals to express their personal identities more freely, avoid intense social surveillance, and manage self-presentation without the burden of conformity. In this sense, secondary accounts serve as responses to the need for privacy, freedom of expression, and adaptation to the evolving social dynamics of digital platforms.

Within this context, secondary accounts also illustrate the complexity of dynamic and segmented digital identities, in which individuals manage multiple personas in online environments. Overall, the phenomenon of secondary accounts not only highlights shift in the ways individuals interact with social media, but also demonstrates how social media operates as a social space that enables the construction of alternative narratives. This illustrates how communication technology influences the construction of social reality and individual identity, where personal freedom and social pressure interact through continuous negotiation. Therefore, the study of secondary accounts offers deep insights into the dynamics of social identity in the digital era, as well as the challenges of maintaining a balance between privacy, authenticity, and increasingly complex social expectations.

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