

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA SELF-PERFORMANCE ON PROFESSIONAL ACTING SKILLS: A STUDY OF DIGITAL SELF-PRESENTATION AND ACTOR DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract—The rise of social media platforms has transformed the way individuals perform, communicate, and construct identities in the digital age. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook encourage users to present curated versions of themselves through videos, photographs, livestreams, and short-form content. This phenomenon, often referred to as self-performance, has become particularly relevant to actors, who increasingly use social media as a space for self-promotion, audience engagement, and creative expression. This research paper examines the impact of social media self-performance on professional acting skills. By analyzing concepts from performance studies, media theory, psychology, and actor training, the study investigates both the positive and negative influences of digital self-presentation on acting abilities. The findings suggest that while social media can enhance confidence, camera awareness, improvisation, and audience engagement, excessive reliance on self-performance may encourage superficial characterization, reduced emotional depth, and the prioritization of personal branding over artistic development.

Index Terms—Social Media, Self-Performance, Acting Skills, Digital Identity, Actor Training, Performance Studies, Influencer Culture, Screen Acting

I. Introduction

The digital revolution has significantly altered the nature of performance. Historically, acting occurred primarily within theatrical spaces, film productions, and television broadcasts. Today, social media platforms have created new forms of performance where individuals continuously present themselves before online audiences.

Actors are among the most active users of social media because these platforms provide opportunities for networking, self-promotion, portfolio development, and audience building. At the same time, social media encourages users to perform versions of their everyday selves through carefully constructed images, videos, and narratives.

This phenomenon raises important questions regarding the relationship between digital self-performance and professional acting. Does frequent social media performance strengthen acting abilities, or does it create habits that interfere with professional training? This study explores the influence of social media self-performance on the development and practice of professional acting skills.

II. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- To examine the concept of self-performance on social media platforms.
- To analyze the relationship between digital self-presentation and acting.
- To investigate the positive effects of social media performance on acting skills.
- To identify challenges and limitations associated with social media self-performance.
- To evaluate how social media influences professional actor development.

III. Research Questions

- What is social media self-performance?
- How does self-performance influence professional acting skills?
- What benefits do actors gain from social media participation?
- What challenges arise when digital self-presentation becomes dominant?
- How can actors balance personal branding with artistic growth?

IV. Literature Review

4.1 Performance Theory

The concept of performance extends beyond theatre and film. Sociologist and performance theorist Erving Goffman argued that social interaction itself can be understood as performance. Individuals present themselves differently depending on their audience and social context.

Social media amplifies this process by providing a constant stage where users perform identity through digital content.

4.2 Digital Identity

Digital identity refers to how individuals represent themselves online. Through photographs, videos, captions, and stories, users construct versions of themselves intended for public consumption.

Actors often use these tools to establish professional visibility and marketability.

4.3 Self-Performance and Influencer Culture

Contemporary social media encourages continuous self-performance. Influencers, content creators, and actors engage in regular digital storytelling that blurs the distinction between personal identity and performance.

This environment has created new opportunities for performers while also introducing new pressures related to visibility and audience engagement.

V. Theoretical Framework

This study is informed by three theoretical perspectives:

5.1 Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory

Goffman proposed that social life resembles theatrical performance, where individuals manage impressions before audiences.

5.2 Self-Presentation Theory

This theory suggests that people actively shape how others perceive them through communication and behavior.

5.3 Performance Studies Theory

Performance studies examines performance across cultural, social, and artistic contexts, including digital environments.

Together, these theories provide a framework for understanding social media behavior as a form of performance.

VI. Understanding Social Media Self-Performance

Social media self-performance refers to the deliberate presentation of one's personality, lifestyle, emotions, and experiences for an online audience.

Common forms include:

- Reels and short-form videos
- Vlogs
- Livestreams
- Personal storytelling
- Lifestyle content
- Fashion and beauty content
- Acting and performance clips

Unlike traditional acting, self-performance generally involves presenting a version of oneself rather than portraying a fictional character.

VII. Positive Impact on Professional Acting Skills

7.1 Increased Camera Confidence

Regular content creation familiarizes performers with camera presence.

Benefits include:

- Reduced camera anxiety

- Improved screen awareness
- Better understanding of framing
- Enhanced confidence during auditions

Actors who frequently create content often become more comfortable performing before cameras.

7.2 Development of Improvisational Skills

Social media content frequently requires spontaneous speaking and quick creative decisions.

As a result, performers may develop:

- Faster thinking
- Improved adaptability
- Enhanced creativity
- Stronger improvisational abilities

These skills are valuable in auditions and screen performances.

7.3 Audience Awareness

Social media provides immediate audience feedback through comments, likes, and shares.

This interaction helps performers understand:

- Audience engagement
- Communication effectiveness
- Emotional impact
- Content reception

Such awareness can improve performance choices.

7.4 Consistent Performance Practice

Unlike traditional acting opportunities, social media allows performers to practice regularly.

Frequent content creation develops:

- Performance discipline
- Presentation skills
- Vocal confidence
- On-screen comfort

Regular practice may accelerate performer growth.

7.5 Personal Branding and Career Visibility

Social media has become an important professional tool.

Actors use digital platforms to:

- Showcase talent
- Build audiences
- Connect with industry professionals
- Promote projects

Successful online presence can create career opportunities beyond traditional casting channels.

VIII. Negative Impact on Professional Acting Skills

8.1 Repetition of Personal Identity

Professional acting requires transformation into diverse characters.

However, social media often rewards consistency of personality and image.

This can encourage:

- Limited character exploration
- Repetitive performance styles
- Dependence on personal identity

Actors may become known for playing versions of themselves rather than creating complex characters.

8.2 Superficial Emotional Expression

Many social media platforms prioritize short-form content designed for immediate engagement.

As a result:

- Emotional depth may be reduced
- Nuance may be sacrificed
- Complex character development may be neglected

Professional acting often demands emotional layers that extend beyond social media performance conventions.

8.3 Validation Dependency

The constant pursuit of likes, views, and engagement can influence artistic choices.

Potential consequences include:

- Reduced creative risk-taking
- Preference for popular trends
- Anxiety regarding audience approval

Such pressures may interfere with authentic artistic exploration.

8.4 Reduced Concentration and Attention Span

Short-form content encourages rapid consumption and production.

Actors may develop habits that conflict with:

- Long rehearsals
- Script analysis
- Character research
- Extended performance preparation

Professional acting often requires sustained focus and patience.

8.5 Blurring of Personal and Professional Boundaries

Continuous self-performance can make it difficult to separate:

- Personal identity
- Public persona
- Professional character work

This blurring may create challenges for performers seeking emotional and psychological balance.

IX. Comparative Analysis

Professional Acting	Social Media Self-Performance
Character-focused	Self-focused
Script-driven	Content-driven
Long-term preparation	Immediate production
Emotional complexity	Quick emotional impact
Ensemble collaboration	Individual presentation
Artistic transformation	Personal branding

The comparison demonstrates that although both involve performance, their goals and methods differ significantly.

X. Case Studies

Case Study 1: Actors Who Built Careers Through Social Media

Many contemporary performers first gained visibility through digital platforms before transitioning into film, television, and advertising.

Social media helped them develop:

- Camera confidence
- Audience engagement skills
- Industry exposure

Case Study 2: Influencer-to-Actor Transition

Influencers entering professional acting often possess strong screen presence but may require additional training in:

- Character development
- Emotional authenticity
- Script analysis
- Ensemble performance

Case Study 3: Professional Actors Maintaining Digital Presence

Established actors frequently use social media strategically without allowing it to replace traditional training and artistic practice.

This balance appears to support both career growth and artistic development.

XI. Findings

The study identifies the following findings:

- Social media self-performance can strengthen camera confidence and audience awareness.
- Frequent content creation improves improvisational and communication skills.
- Social media offers valuable opportunities for visibility and career promotion.
- Excessive focus on self-branding may limit character transformation abilities.
- Short-form content can encourage superficial emotional expression.
- Professional acting requires skills that extend beyond digital self-presentation.
- Actors benefit most when social media is used as a supplement rather than a substitute for formal training.

XII. Conclusion

Social media has become an influential performance space that shapes contemporary acting practices. Through self-performance, actors gain opportunities to develop confidence, creativity, visibility, and audience engagement. These advantages can contribute positively to professional growth and career development.

However, social media performance differs fundamentally from professional acting. While acting demands transformation, character embodiment, and emotional complexity, social media often rewards consistency, self-branding, and rapid content production. Consequently, overreliance on digital self-performance may limit the development of deeper acting skills.

The study concludes that social media can be a valuable tool for actors when integrated with formal training, rehearsal practices, and character-based performance techniques. A balanced approach allows performers to benefit from digital opportunities while maintaining artistic depth and professional excellence.

Future research may explore the relationship between influencer culture, digital celebrity, and contemporary actor training in greater detail.

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