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Abstract

The music industry has been totally disrupted by technological and digital advancements. These changes have happened at the same time as the increasing growth of the phenomenon of sharing on social media platforms. Social media have gradually recognized the subjectivity of user-generated content and acknowledged the relevance of music in self-presentation and self-expression online. Thus, they have introduced features and functions in order to creatively integrate music in online sharing. In addition, there is an urgency to recognize the value of social interactions in music-sharing, which Spotify has partially captured and included in its structure of online music platform. Therefore, the research explores the psychological drivers behind motivations for sharing music, especially self-expression and the quest for social interactions, in their interrelations with people's perception of themselves. Further, the study investigates non-sharing behaviours, in order to research the reasons that hinder people from engaging in music-sharing, and the ways through which these motivations are related to parts of their self-concept.

In order to in-depth understand and investigate these interrelations, the author has employed qualitative methods, specifically in-depth phenomenological interviews and social media content analysis, that were eventually juxtaposed in a comparative analysis. The data analysed during interviews were therefore partially integrated by findings on self-presentational motives and social interaction motives, derived from the analysis of Instagram and Spotify online profiles of active users. The analysis revealed that significant interrelations existed between music-sharing behaviours and individual self-concept, both in terms of the self-concept being a shaper of behaviour and in terms of music-sharing activities providing opportunities for self-reflection and self-definition.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Setting the scene: the development of music-sharing

It is generally true that we tend to share with others what is relevant for us (Belk, 2013) and, as a matter of fact, music seems to be essential for human beings. Even though headphones have brought the practice of listening at music on a more individual level, we still engage in activities such as turning the volume up while driving or carefully choosing the songs for a dinner with friends. Using the words of Belk (2013, p.484), "*sharing itself is not new and has arguably been around as long as humankind. But digital devices help us share more, as well as more broadly, than ever before*". As a matter of fact, social media platforms and online streaming platforms have utterly transformed the ways we share music with other people, and they have also modified the ways we listen at music, collect our music and communicate through music.

Music streaming as we know it today took its premises from the online service Pandora and exploded with the launch of Spotify (Brewster, 2017). Today, Spotify users have the opportunity to access an almost infinite music library, to create their personal playlists and share them online (Brewster, 2017), to be updated on what their network listens at, and eventually to share tracks with a wider audience on other social networks, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Skype, or to copy the link and send it to a single person through WhatsApp or Messenger.

In the context of online sharing on social media platforms, Myspace was undoubtedly the first social networking website offering a customized profile which included music, other than the opportunity for artists to emerge and for everyone to exchange recommendations and unfiltered opinions (Brewster, 2017). For many years neither Facebook nor Instagram offered substantial opportunities of music sharing (Brewster, 2017), limited to sharing music videos

through YouTube links and/or to show preferences through a “like” to an artist fan page on Facebook. The idea of integrating music to a video or a picture, and consequently to associate a personal online profile to music, has been further developed recently with the introduction of Facebook and Instagram stories. Especially on Instagram, users can integrate their stories with a wide selection of tracks provided by Spotify, or they may share in the stories a screenshot of the album, while listening at it on Spotify. Recently, thanks to the partnerships with the major record labels, Facebook has introduced several official music features, such as the option to add music to stories or the “Lip Sync Live” function.

Therefore, online music-sharing may be interpreted on two levels: one is related to sharing with a network the act itself of listening at music via online music streaming – i.e. Spotify- while the other relates to music-sharing on social network platforms under different forms and from different sources. For instance, sharing music from Spotify on Instagram stories, or music videos from YouTube to one’s Facebook wall, or a link from another music-sharing and online audio distribution platform, for example SoundCloud. Social media companies and entrepreneurs have understood the relevance that music has not only for the individual, but also at a social level. People want to share music with their peers and social media dominate today the interrelations between individuals. Moreover, social media represent a significant self-presentational tool (Belk, 2013) and the introduction of music seems to increase its role in expressing one’s identity and the creativity of it.

However, online streaming platforms and social media take into consideration the option that some individuals may not be willing to share the music they listen at with such a wide audience, and therefore offer a range of instruments for privacy concerns, such as the option to share content only with close friends, in a private message, to create private playlists or to listen at music in private session.

1.2. Delimitation

The present research is positioned in literature within online behaviour, specifically on sharing culture and the relations with the self-concept or parts of the self-concept. The author decided to focus on online sharing, rather than offline sharing, due to the increasing popularity of sharing in a virtual context (Belk, 2013) and its implications on individuals' self-concept (Belk, 2013).

The research question focuses on online behaviour on social media platforms. According to boyd (2014), the term *social media* indicates "*the sites and services that emerged during the early 2000s, including social network sites, video sharing sites, blogging and microblogging platforms, and related tools that allow participants to create and share their own content"* (boyd, 2014, p. 6). Thus, social media includes all those user-centred platforms which promotes a participatory culture and interconnections between users (van Dijck, 2013). This project is concerned with social media platforms, with a focus on social networking sites, which aim at connecting individuals online to their own offline social networks (boyd, 2014).

The project has limited its interest on music-sharing in the context of social media. On one hand, sharing mass media products on social network sites has become a widespread mode of interacting, creating a shared experience and presenting one's self (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018). On the other hand, music is an efficient self-knowledge and self-presentation tool (Amir, 2012) and is strictly connected to one's perception of self. Therefore, due to its relevance for both self-concept and online sharing, the author has decided to focus as its area of interest on online music- sharing. The research is concerned about non-commercialized music sharing, namely with the mechanisms behind users' sharing or not sharing music on social networks, extracted from online music streaming platforms.

Thus, the study is also focused on *on demand streaming* (Marshall, 2015), that offer access to the service provider's library and allow users to choose among their selected tracks (Marshall,

2015), with a specific attention for Spotify. According to Salo et al., Spotify can be labelled as social media, namely a *content community* (Salo et al., 2013). In fact, according to boyd (2014), individuals connect on an online community platform driven by a common interest, which in the case of Spotify is music. In addition, since Spotify's partnership with Facebook permit to export Facebook's network and check friends' music, the content community might be considered partially close to a social network. Due to the social nature of Spotify, listening at music on Spotify will be considered as a form itself of online sharing. Thus, Spotify will be explored as a source of digitalized music to be shared on other platforms, but also as a social media in which the interests of different individuals converge.

Eventually, according to Gong et al. (2015) there are two type of online users: active users and "*lurkers*", who are registered to social media, observe the others' content, but do not contribute to social media activity (Gong et al., 2015). This research is concerned with both categories, since the consideration of only active users might lead to misinterpretation and biased results on users' preferences and behaviours. In fact, even though "*lurkers*" do not actively contribute, they may still silently check content and may be potential active users (Gong et al., 2015).

1.3. Project motivation and purpose

This research is motivated by the increasing relevance of the sharing culture in contemporary society. Today, individuals publicly share a wide range of aspects of their lives and creatively express themselves on social media (Belk, 2013), integrating mass media like music or films (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018). Therefore, the second dominant motivation for this research is the existing, largely unexplored, relationship between sharing behaviour and individual self-concept. According to Belk (2013), the digital revolution has enormously augmented the possibility for "*self-extension*" (Belk, 2013, p. 477), by including digital possessions in one's perception of self (Belk, 2013). The question whether the self might be expressed and constructed by means of digital goods at the same level as material goods remains open.

However, Lehdonvirta (2012) has proposed that all self-concepts are indeed virtual, inasmuch as they are imaginary constructs that keep changing throughout the years (Belk, 2013).

Music-sharing figures among the most popular sharing behaviours on social media (Music Watch Study, 2018). In addition, research has proven existing connections between music and one's self (Amir, 2012), which makes interesting to explore it in the context of digital music-sharing. Prior research has investigated the reasons why people share music on social networks (Lee et al., 2011; Johnson & Ranzini, 2018) and the reasons why they opt for online music streaming. Other previous literature has focused on the relation between music and one's sense of self (Amir, 2012; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003; Greasley & Lamont, 2006). However, the discussion on the relation between motivations for music-sharing and self-concept remains largely unexplored. Therefore, the motivation for this research comes from the identification of this literature gap.

Furthermore, the interest for this research derives from the radical changes in the music industry and the implications of social media activities on artists' performances and music sales. In fact, music-sharing has been drastically transformed by social media networks and music streaming applications (Zucker, 2016) and social media buzz is proven to influence digital music sales (Zucker, 2016). These changes in the music industry made extremely interesting for the author to explore the motives behind music-sharing behaviours. Specifically, the author found interesting to investigate music-sharing in relation to individuals' self-concept since human beings tend to share content that represents or has a strong connection with themselves (Belk, 2013).

1.4. Research question

This research is guided by the intention to explore the motivational drivers in sharing and non-sharing behaviours, in the specific context of music content shared on social media, and their interrelations with one's sense of self. Therefore, the author has formulated the following research question:

"How do motivations for sharing and/or not sharing music on social media platforms interrelate with consumer's self-concept?"

The research question has an exploratory nature, allowing to investigate between the two aspects of motivations for (not) sharing and of the self-concept. In order to facilitate the understanding of the problem statement, the author has developed two sub-questions following two dominant behaviours: sharing and not sharing.

(1) How do motivations for sharing music on social media interrelate with one's sense of self?

(2) How do motivations for not sharing music on social media interrelate with one's sense of self?

1.5. Philosophy of Science

Since the aim of the research is to describe *human experience as it is lived* (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989), the author decided to employ an existential – phenomenological approach in this research. Existential - phenomenology is a paradigm which combines the philosophy of existentialism with the methods of phenomenology (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989), offering an alternative perspective on human experience. In fact, the author aims at digging into consumer behaviour without separating individuals from the current experiential context. The philosophy of existentialism has met the need of the author of putting the singularity of the individual at the very centre of the discourse (Sini, 1986), while the phenomenological approach allows to consider the singular human being as situated in an ever-changing context (Sini, 1986; Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989).

1.5.1. Ontology

The key assumption of the existential - phenomenology world view is that reality is co-created due to the interactions between the singular individual and the surrounding sociocultural framework, and only after this process it exists in one's mind as a mental construct (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1992). According to humanistic existentialism (Sartre, 1905-1980), human beings exist before they can be defined by any concept and, more important, individuals are responsible of what they are (Sini, 1986). It is interesting to point out that, in the opinion of Sartre, human beings choose for themselves, but their choices inevitably create an image of what they believe a man should be (Sini, 1986). Consequently, human beings have not only a responsibility on themselves, but also on the entire humanity (Sini, 1986). However, in Sartre's view there is still a dialectical separation between the man and the world, while other authors – such as Merleau-Ponty or Heidegger – affirm the impossibility to distinguish the individual from the reality in which is living and interacting (Sini, 1986). On the grounds of Heidegger's conception *of human-being-in-the-world* (Sini, 1986), the author wants to explore the individual situated in a certain environment, and not separate from the context (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989).

The research wants to focus on the individual situated in his environment and in order to do so, the method adopted is inspired by the philosophical approach of phenomenology. This perspective implies the abolition of any prejudice or preconception on "things", that would hinder a direct relationship with the surrounding reality as it is (Husserl, 1913 in Sini, 1986). According to Husserl's interpretation of phenomenology (1913), during phenomenological research only the knowledge directly derived from what is given to consciousness is considered functional and valid (Giorgi, Giorgi & Morley, 2017). The rest has to be bracketed, in a process which is well-known as "*epoché*" (Sini, 1986; Giorgi, Giorgi & Morley, 2017). Research has to doubt and put aside all the preconceptions on reality and attempt to describe it as it appears, and to the extent that it manifests itself (Sini, 1986). In this

research existentialism and phenomenology blends into a paradigm (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989), already presented above as existential – phenomenology, which guides the investigation of reality and the analysis of the findings.

1.5.2. Epistemology

In line with the existential – phenomenological approach, the concepts of intentionality, emergent dialogue and hermeneutic endeavour are the three key concepts of the epistemology employed in this research (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989).

The concept of intentionality implies that the process of understanding lived experience must be associated to the s*pecific lifeworld* in which it is located (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). The decision to adopt in-depth, phenomenological and narrative interviews draws on this concept. According to the concept of emergent dialogue, the method employed by the researcher needs to fit the phenomenon which he intends to investigate (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). This concept justifies the decision of conducting interviews that are open, non-judgemental conversations, with a concern on concrete examples and personal experiences. Eventually, hermeneutic endeavour regards the procedure of repetitive back-and-forth between specific parts and the totality (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). This concept has been employed in the interpretation of data collected, as it will be later explained in the methodology section.

1.6. Thesis structure

The following project is divided into six parts, which enables the reader an in-depth understanding of the research in all its parts (Figure 1).

1. **Introduction**: in order to provide an exhaustive understanding of the objects of research, the author starts presenting a brief overview of the phenomenon of music-sharing. Afterwards, the author presents the delimitation of the field of research and the motivation of the research, in order to define a framework for the project.

2. **Literature Review**: the author analyses relevant theories regarding the objects investigated. First, the main debates on self-concept(s) are presented. Then, the author analyses existing theory on motivations for sharing content online, with a focus on music-sharing, and motivations for not sharing online.
3. **Methodology**: methodological observations on the research approach are presented in order to justify the selection of research methods (in-depth interviews and content analysis), which will be in-depth analysed.
4. **Analysis**: the analysis is structured according to the 2-step process adopted. Namely, the author will first analyse data collected from in-depth interviews and present them in themes. Afterwards, the analysis focuses on data gathered from social media content analysis.
5. **Discussion:** in order to properly answer to the research question, the discussion compares the research findings with existing literature, together with a reflection on the project's limitations in order to provide suggestions for future research.
6. **Conclusions**: this section aims at presenting a summary of the main findings, together with theoretical contributions for existing literature and managerial implications for marketers.

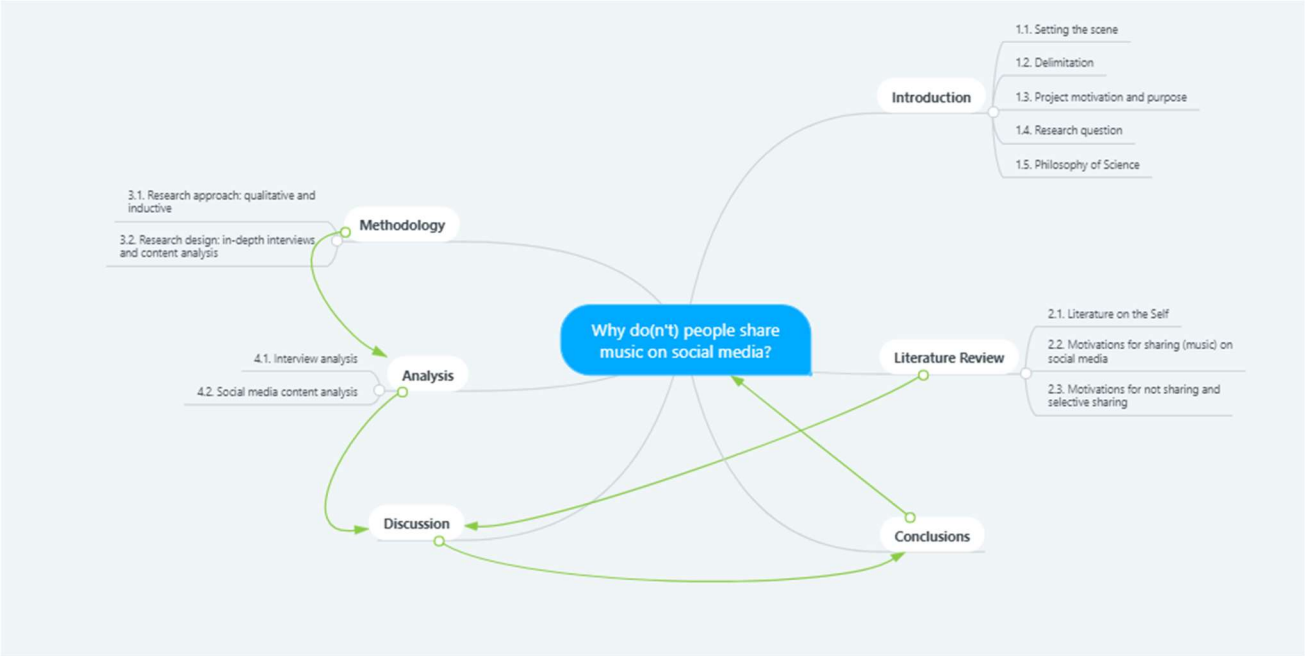

Figure 1: own production

2. Literature review

2.1. Literature on the Self

This section outlines prior literature on the conceptualization of self, self-concept and extended self, employed in the present research in order to provide a framework for the investigation of the relations with music-sharing. The first sub-section aims at presenting the conceptualization of self and self-concept employed in the investigation, on the grounds of psychological theories and mainly drawing on the review of Oyserman, Elmore & Smith (2012). The self-concept is studied from a psychological point of view, but is considered as embedded in an ever-changing context, in line with the existentialist-phenomenological approach.

Oyserman, Elmore & Smith (2012) highlight that in prior research on identity development, Erikson (1951, 1968) has employed the term *identity* as a synonym of what in this research is conceptualized as *self-concept* (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012, p. 73). This literature review employs observations from McLean & Pasupathi (2012) on a narrative approach, which again use the term *identity* to indicate *self-concept*. In order to avoid a misinterpretation of the content, the author will always utilize the term *self-concept*.

In the second sub-section, the concept of "*extended self*" is presented in its original version (Belk, 1988) and in the updated version (Belk, 2013), which takes into consideration contemporary digital changes. The concept of *extended self* provides a useful framework in order to study the interrelations between individuals and their dematerialized possessions (Belk, 2013), such as the content shared online and, in this specific case, music.

2.1.1. Setting the scene: an introduction to a contemporary conception of self-concept

In psychological and sociological literature, the definitions of self are various and different (Leary & Tangney, 2012). This paper follows the suggestion of Leary & Tangney (2012), to consider the self as the basic capacity to "*think consciously about one's self"* (Leary & Tangney, 2012, p. 6). The process of self-reflection allows individuals to reflect on experiences, determine self-conceptualization and drive individuals in regulation of their behaviours and attitudes (Leary & Tangney, 2012). Research has used the term "self" as a synonym for personality, self-reflection, self-concept, self-regulation, and even identity (Leary & Tangney, 2012; Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). However, in order to avoid confusing definitions and misinterpretations, the self will be reduced to the capability of human beings of being simultaneously subject and object of thought, which is defined as "*reflexive capacity*" (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012).

Therefore, according to Oyserman, Elmore & Smith (2012), the self is the subject "*I*" and the object "*me*" in the action "*I think about me*" (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012, p. 72). A crucial aspect of the object "*me*" are the mental constructs that compose one's idea of oneself (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). According to Oyserman, Elmore & Smith (2012), these mental constructs are labelled as *self-concepts*. Some individuals may struggle to create a coherent, unique self-concept, while others accept that multiple self-concepts function independently (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012).In any case, self-concept(s) contains the ideas and perceptions that one has on who he currently is, on who he was in the past and on who he desires to be in the future (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012, p. 72). This research is concerned with one's sense of self, that is s*elf-concept(s),* since it aims at investigating the set of cognitive, emotive and social processes that lead to a conception of one's self.

2.1.1.1. The definition of self-concept(s)

According to Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, self-concepts are "*cognitive structures that can include content, attitudes, or evaluative judgments and are used to make sense of the world, focus attention on one's goals, and protect one's sense of basic worth"* (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012, p. 72). One's self-concept(s) includes all the meaning-based knowledge that is accessible to him, that makes him unique and distinct from others (Kihlstrom, Beer & Klein, 2002) or that makes him similar with others (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). In fact, individuals might consider themselves under different perspectives, among which they might think about themselves as separate human beings or as connected to others through relationships (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). In addition, one's self-concept(s) is defined according to different time periods, that means defining one's current sense of self or one's future sense of self (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). Also, individuals think about themselves from an immersed or a distal point of view (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). This means that human beings can consider themselves from their own perspective or using the others' eyes as a mirror of themselves (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012).

Individuals know themselves through different modalities. They might know themselves by means of perceptions of their body, voice and other sensory details, and consequentially form self-images (Kihlstrom, Beer & Klein, 2002) and self-feelings. They can elaborate ideas and theories of their personality traits (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012), make evaluative judgements (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012) on themselves and develop actual, ideal and ought-to-be self-concepts (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012; Whitty, 2008). Personality traits, evaluative judgements and different types of self-concepts are fundamental factors in the expression and presentation of one's self (Whitty, 2008; Johnson & Ranzini, 2018). Evaluative judgements define one's evaluation of worth, which is measured in different levels of *self-esteem* and *self-efficacy.* Thus, self-esteem correspond to the overall evaluation of one's worth (Mehdizadeh, 2010) and general feelings of value, whereas s*elf-efficacy* is identified as "*one's perceived capability to perform actions and complete tasks"* (Oh, 2012, p. 545-546). All these parts of the self-concept(s) are of great interest for the purpose of this study.

Besides modalities through which individuals know themselves, the self is essentially *"one's memory for oneself"* (Klein, 2001 in Kihlstrom, Beer & Klein, 2002). Human beings' sense of self is essentially based on their memories (Kihlstrom, Beer & Klein, 2002; Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). According to the narrative approach (McLean & Pasupathi, 2012), one's self is developed by means of a reconstruction of the past. Therefore, individuals form their self-concept(s) on the grounds of memories and artificial reconstruction of memories, since there exist events that individuals know that happened but do not have any memory of that, such as their birth. In this process the crucial factor is represented by *autobiographical reasoning* (McLean & Pasupathi, 2012), namely an active *self-reflection* on associations between present and past selves (McLean & Pasupathi, 2012). According to the narrative approach to self-development (McLean & Pasupathi, 2012), narratives constitute a way through which individuals get to know themselves and elaborate self-concept(s).

The question whether emotions should be regarded as part of the self or as an independent system that is connected to the self is still open (Leary & Tangney, 2012). However, self-reflection is considered at the grounds of experiencing basic emotions (Leary & Tangney, 2012, p. 8) and the arousal of emotions is subject to self-related reactions (Leary & Tangney, 2012). Individuals experience emotions when they perceive that something is related to them and they subjectively create those emotions (Leary & Tangney, 2012). Thus, even though it is not clear if emotions are part of self, emotions will be considered in this research inasmuch as they have a link with one's self, which allows the elaboration of one's sense of self.

Similarly, self-reflection is fundamental for the development of motivation, specifically in terms of self-motives (Leary & Tangney, 2012). In the second section of this literature review, the author will explore self-related motives and the hidden self-related aspects of community-related motives (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014), in the context of online sharing. Specifically, esteem-related and self-efficacy needs will be explored, since they are strictly related to the evaluation and perception of one's self (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). Additionally, belongingness-related needs will be considered, to the extent that affection is proved to influence the development of one's perception of self and self-judgements (Alexander, 1951).

2.1.1.2. The construction of self-concept(s): stability and context-sensitivity

Self-concept(s) resides in one's memory, however it needs to be contextualized and considered as a social product (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). The suggestion of Oyserman, Elmore & Smith (2012) is to consider self-concept(s) as partly stable and partly open to malleability. On one hand, self-concept(s) is pictured in individuals' memory and grounded on the assumption that – at least a part of it – remains stable over time and within different situations; on the other hand, individuals develop themselves in a flexible, dynamic way, based on what is accessible and situationally cued (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). One's sense of self depends on the surrounding context inasmuch as the socio-cultural framework determines which aspects of themselves are significant (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012): for instance,

group membership may count more in one socio-cultural context than another (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). Moreover, people need other individuals "*to endorse and reinforce one's selfhood*" (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012, p. 76). In fact, individuals tend to allow others to approve their self-concept concerns and in consequence they *"change their behaviour to get others to view them as they view themselves*" (Oyserman, 2007, 2009a, 2009b in Oysermann, Elmore & Smith, 2012, p. 76).

The feeling of stability justifies the conceptualization of self-concept(s) as a driver for action and supporter of certain mindsets (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). In fact, self-concept(s) is not only modified by specific situations, but also contributes to shape actions and mindsets in those contexts (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). As an example, everyday decisions - such as which drink should I order at the bar – are considered influenced by the feeling that one's knows himself (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). However, the self-concepts that come to mind in that specific moment are dynamically co-created within each situation and its actors (Oyserman, 2011).

Individuals may recognize the co-existence of multiple self-concepts (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). Prior research (First & Venkatesh, 1995 in Ahuvia, 2005) has highlighted a lack of coherence and unity in the elaboration of a sense of self, due to the perception of multiple, diverse, even contradictory self-concepts. This may emerge in life periods in which individuals have to make choices, define their tastes, and communicate their identity to themselves and to the world (Ahuvia, 2005). However, many individuals attempt to cope with this fragmentation creating a storyline of their lives, connecting the dots from different time periods and giving meaning to their existence through a narrative (Ahuvia, 2005; Shankar, Elliott & Gouilding, 2001; Gergen & Gergen, 1988). According to Belk (2013) the elaboration of a consistent narrative represents the attempt to create a unified core self, which – in contrast with Belk (1988) – is considered an illusion of power and control. However, the willingness of using the self as a meaning-making tool and the process itself represent an element of stability

(Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012), to which the individual may be anchored in the endless flow of self-concepts derived from socio-cultural, relational and situational changes.

2.1.1.3. The communication of self-concept(s): self-presentation

As mentioned above, a fundamental aspect of one's sense of self is the others' approval or the presence of negative feedbacks (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). Other people are fundamental in the definition of oneself (Gergen & Gergen, 1988) and that justifies the communication of self-concepts. According to the narrative approach, narratives of self-concepts are constructed in presence of an audience and by means of interactions with other human beings (Gergen & Gergen, 1988). Thus, narratives remain sensitive to others' reactions and meanings are subject to social negotiation (Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Czarniawska, 2004). Public interactions have a significant impact on self-concept change (Tice, 1992). Causal processes involve individuals' tendency to satisfy others' expectations and the powerful impact of public interactions concerns on private scanning of self-concepts (Tice, 1992). These processes might support self-concepts change in consequence to public exposure of behaviours and thoughts (Tice, 1992).

Since self-concepts may be perceived in different aspects (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012), individuals present different perceptions of themselves. This research is concerned with the differentiation of actual and ideal self-concepts. According to Whitty (2008), the "*actual self*"" indicates how "*you or another actually believes you are*" (Whitty, 2008); the "*ideal self*" represents an idealized and desired version of self which is created by yourself or by another. Here, again, the term "self" is used to indicate what in this research is interpreted as self-concept. Johnson & Ranzini (2018), highlight that the ideal self-concept might be own-oriented or other-oriented. This means that the construction of a desired self may derive from internal criteria or from external criteria settled by the others (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018). The selection of different self-concepts affects the way individuals present themselves, specifically online (Belk, 2013; Johnson & Ranzini, 2018). In fact, self-presentation is

considered one of the dominant motivations for sharing content on social media (Belk, 2013; Johnson & Ranzini, 2018), which is inherently related to the idea of interpersonal relations. For the purpose of this research, it is interesting to consider that in some cases public interactions may hinder the expression of self-concepts, instead of facilitating it (Tice, 1992). In fact, individuals may be reluctant or intimidated for several reasons, which will be later discussed.

2.1.2. Self-concept and possessions: the extended self

This section aims at reviewing prior research on the conception of extended self. Once again, the term "self" indicates "self-concept", since the "self" essentially indicates the capacity of consciously think about one's self. In order to be consistent with Belk's terminology, in this section the terms self and self-concept will be used as synonyms.

The assumption "*that we are what we have… is perhaps the most basic and powerful fact of consumer behaviour*" (Belk, 1988, p. 139), led to Belk's theory of self-extension, which is fundamental to this research, to the extent that possessions are not conceptually limited to tangible, physical objects. According to Belk (1988), possessions are whatever the individuals feels attached to, which may include places, other individuals, experiences, memories, different kinds of activities.

In his seminal paper, Belk (1988) extended the traditional conception of self. In his opinion, the modes of existence being, having and doing are interrelated – to use his words "*having, doing and being are integrally related"* (Belk, 1988, p. 146). It means that one's possessions participate in the formation of a sense of self to the extent that they add value to individuals' capabilities for *doing and being* (Belk, 1988). In fact, Belk considered to be part of the self also "*body, internal processes, ideas, and experiences, and those persons, places, and things to which one feels attached*" (Belk, 2013, p.477-478).

In his re-elaboration of the extended self, Belk (2013) emphasizes the de-materialized nature of contemporary, digital possessions and the role of sharing as a process of self-extension and incorporation of digital possessions. Being centred on an intangible possession, such as music, the latter elaboration of self-extension (Belk, 2013) is particularly relevant to this thesis. The incorporation of possessions within the self provides metaphorical or actual meanings and allows the individual to act in a certain way, which contributes to the formation of a sense of self (Belk, 1988).

2.1.2.1. The extended self in a digital context

The concept of "extended self" has been updated by Belk (2013) in the light of the current fast-changing technological environment. Belk (2013) identifies five digital-related factors influencing the definition of self within a digital world: dematerialization, re-embodiment, sharing, co-construction of self, distributed memory. Appendix 4 recapitulates the major changes and the associated consequences on individuals' sense of self and on the relationship with one's possessions. According to Belk (2013), these factors inevitably affect the way in which individuals perceive and communicate themselves. The metaphor of the core self (Belk, 1988) is again challenged in this updated version of the extended self, in fact the opportunity to create one or multiple virtual self-concepts online has an impact on the definition of what constitutes someone's sense of self and even questions the existence of a single self (Belk, 2013).

Belk (2013) highlights that digitalized interactions among individuals have an impact on the dynamics of building one's sense of self. Social media interactions, text messages, blog comments support self-affirmation seeking in a co-construction process by means of reciprocal reassurances and feedbacks (Belk, 2013). On a more aggregate level, digital interactions form a "*shared understanding of what is a good look, a terrible movie, or "our kind" of music*" (Belk, 2013, p. 488). In fact, they play a fundamental role in shaping a shared

taste and an even more shared sense of self. According to Belk (2013), more emphasis should be put on the aggregate level of self, compared to his previous work: the self is "*a joint project resulting in an aggregate self that belongs as much to the others who have helped to form it as it does to oneself*" (Belk, 2013, p.488).

In addition to these observations, Belk (2013) notices that the digital world exerts influence on how the self is communicated to the others. In his opinion, digital media allow the individual to share an enormous quantity of information, rendering public what once was private or expressed to a few significant others. Therefore, he argues that digital instruments today play a key role in self-presentation and expression. Belk mentions the "disinhibition effect" (Ridley 2012; Suler 2004 in Belk, 2013), according to which individuals are willing to disclose more personal information and feel like they can express their "real self" online due to the union of absence of face-to-face encounters and "*feelings of anonymity and invisibility*"(Belk, 2013). The result is an autobiographical narrative of the self, where the depth of self-disclosure is progressively increasing (Belk, 2013).

Eventually, digitalization modifies the way the self is "stored" (Belk, 2013). The self can be said to be "*memory of one's self*" (Kihlstrom, Beer & Klein, 2002; Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012), but memories are today recorded and archived in a digital form on people's devices (Belk, 2013). Photo and video-sharing, social media archives, blog posts etc… creates a sort of extended archive and an outsourced memory, which may be considered an enhancement of the selfhood (Belk, 2013) or a diminishment of the selfhood (Hochschild, 2012 in Belk, 2013). When storing autobiographical memory (Belk, 2013), individuals may look at their past self in order to provide a *"sense of continuity of the self*" (Belk, 2013, p. 488; Bluck, 2003), to create and enhance social connections by means of shared stories and emotions (Belk, 2013; Bluck, 2003), and eventually in order to elaborate future directions on the grounds of past actions, thoughts and beliefs (Belk, 2013; Bluck, 2003). Generalizing the argument, according to Ahuvia (2005), possessions may be incorporated and support the

narration of the self, in order to establish a sense of self-continuity throughout the years. Possessions may constitute an efficient way to create an attachment to past selves (Belk, 1988; Ahuvia, 2005), to refuse past selves by dispossess old items or deleting old content online (Kleine, Kleine & Allen, 1995), to present a current actual, ideal or ought to be self (Whitty, 2008) or to approach a future desired identity (Markus & Wurf, 1987).

Due to the extended potential of sharing content online, individual's memory is co-constructed online (Belk, 2013). As a matter of facts, one's digital memories are constituted also by others thanks to social media tags, comments and photo-sharing (Belk, 2013). In addition, Belk (2013) argues that digital memories not only contribute to individual sense of past, but also to a collective sense of past. Collective memory is in fact "*shaped by individual memory*" (Belk, 2013, p. 490). The opportunity to collect, refine and share pieces of memories may push individuals to elaborate a continuous narrative of themselves (Belk, 2013). Shared online memories may be carefully modified and posted in order to feel appropriate for the current sense of self (Belk, 2013). In addition to the enhancement of selfhood, online memories may contribute to the elaboration of a self-presentation for the other users (Belk, 2013).

2.1.2.2. Implications of sharing on the extended self

It can be argued that to some extent every post shared by an individual is part of his self-extension (Belk, 2013) and therefore participates to the formation of one's sense of self (Belk, 2013). As observed by Belk (2013), digital possessions -such as personal photos, videos, music that are collected and shared online - are included in an extended conception of self. "*As more . . . photos, . . . movies, and e-mail messages are created, the entire collection becomes a fuller reflection of you*" (Carroll and Romano 2011, in Belk, 2013, p. 477). According to Schwarz, (2010 in Belk, 2013 p. 484) "*we have entered an unprecedented era of self-portraiture*", which coupled with blogs, personal webpages, Facebook profiles, etc…

(Belk, 2013) drive the individual to a "*greater self-reflection as well as more digital bits of the extended self to represent us, sometimes with multiple daily updates"* (Belk, 2013 p. 484).

In congruence with the conception of narrative self-concept (Gergen & Gergen, 1988), the association of past self-concepts with current self-concepts supports self-concept construction. Therefore, it can be argued that online activities facilitate the expansion of individual autobiographical memory and enhances one's sense of self (Belk, 2013). As the self is essentially constituted by memory, self-presentation is highly linked to the creation of a sense of past (Belk, 1991 in Belk, 2013): Facebook's Timeline – but we argue also Instagram feed or stories archive, Spotify playlists - helps people in creating a storyline of their lives. Individuals may want to provide a sense of continuity in the ongoing narrative of themselves (Belk, 2013). Belk (2013) suggests that it may derive from the attempt to cope with the fragmentation of the self and the co-existence of multiple self-concepts. In a sort of online diary where the individual may collect and configure different ways of understanding himself (Sorapure, 2003 in Belk, 2013).

Since, according to Belk (2013) individual self-concept is extended to virtual possessions, including content shared on social media throughout the years, sharing practices enhance self-reflection and help defining one's sense of self. Belk (2013) adds that self-concept is also developed by means of external feedbacks and social interactions. Belk (2013) proposes that on one hand, individuals seek for confirmation of their self-perceptions through online activity; on the other hand, that their online self is contaminated by tags and comments. Therefore, it can be argued that the outsourced memory of social media is partially co-constructed by others' online activities (Belk, 2013). Since self-concept resides in memory, one's self-concept(s) is expected to modify and be modified by online sharing behaviours.

2.1.3. Music and one's self-concept

Prior research has identified music as an efficient metaphor for one's perception of self, in terms of traits and characteristics (Amir, 2012; Aldridge, 1996). According to Amir (2012),

music is a powerful tool for self-knowledge, self-expression and self-presentation. Also, Schwartz & Fouts (2003) suggest that music listeners select their music in order to mirror their traits and characteristics, their problems and their desires (Schwartz & Fouts, 2003). In a similar way to other media, music might be a way for pursuing a desired conception of self, both in terms of own-ideal and other-ideal aspects (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018). For instance, music that is associated to expertise and field knowledge might constitute a tool for improving one's reputation (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018). In any case, a crucial aspect of people's involvement in music listening is constituted by the *subjectivity* of music (Greasley & Lamont, 2006). In fact, individuals like music that they associate to themselves or to feelings that they want to relate to. In particular, the association of music with moments, and consequently memories, enhances self-extension and one's sense of self (Greasley & Lamont, 2006).

Technological and digital changes have revolutionized the interrelations between one's perception of self and music, in terms of attachment and the way preferences are shaped (Greasley & Lamont, 2006). According to Belk (2013), dematerialized goods have inevitably modified the relationship that individuals have with their possessions. The virtual nature of possessions may diminish their participation to one's sense of self (Belk, 2013), due to their intangibility and their ease of being reproduced. As highlighted in Belk (2013), "*digital music is perceived as having less emotional and monetary value than its physical counterparts on CD or vinyl"* (Belk, 2013, p. 481). Thus, some individuals may feel less attached to digitalized music and less likely to consider it as part of their extended self-concept (Belk, 2013). Yet, Belk (2013) points out that digitalized music provides new opportunities for discovering, collecting and archiving music. Specifically, younger individuals and digital enthusiasts may present significant attachment behaviours (Belk, 2013) and difficulty in dispossessing digitalized music (Belk, 2013).

In addition, digitalized music (Belk, 2013) and streaming services offer access to almost an infinite quantity of music, enhanced archiving opportunities and the possibility of checking preferences before buying music (Greasley & Lamont, 2006). These processes have inevitably changed the way individuals perceive and buy music, but also the way individuals develop their taste (Greasley & Lamont, 2006). A significant aspect of these processes is that they are increasingly social (Belk, 2013). Enthusiasm is often shared and is shared with an enlarged audience (Belk, 2013), which allow the formation of shared tastes and the enhancement of individual tastes (Belk, 2013). Digitalization has also accelerated and transformed the ways in which individuals "*represent (themselves), get to know other people, and interact"* (Belk, 2013, p. 479), and music is one of the key elements for self-representation and social interaction (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018).

Music preferences, self-presentation and interactions with other individuals are inevitably interrelated, inasmuch as adolescents and young adults actively select and engage in debates with peers on mass media topics (Steele & Brown, 1995; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003). In addition, they expect music to be central in the definition and expression of who they are (Steele & Brown, 1995). Schwartz and Fouts (2003) highlight that adolescents and young adults use music in order to fulfil "*social, emotional, and developmental needs*" (Schwartz & Fouts, 2003, p. 205). Schwartz & Fouts (2003) investigate the relationships between heavy music, light music and eclectic music with personality traits, and found correspondence between specific traits, contextual situations and music preferences. Thus, different kinds of music may satisfy needs and desires, but also reflect a desired image to which a certain kind of music is associated (Schwartz & Fouts, 2003).

2.2. Motivations for sharing (music) on social media

In this research the focus is on a psychological perspective, therefore motivations for sharing are considered to derive from psychological needs and related constructs, such as emotion and mood (2.2.1.). In order to contextualize the discourse on motivations for sharing on social

media, in the second section (2.2.2.) the author presents existing literature on the specific case of music-sharing.

2.2.1. Motivations for sharing content on social media

In the present research, motivations for sharing online are studied under a psychological point of view, since the aim of the project is to investigate the relation with one's sense of self. Thus, psychological needs are considered at the grounds of motivations for sharing content on social media, together with associated constructs, namely emotions and mood.

Munar & Jacobsen (2014) divided motivations for sharing online in *self-related* motivations and *community-related* motivations. Self-related motivations are centred on the user and his individual motivations, which range from the desire to maintain social connections, gain social recognition to more intrinsic (Ryan & Deci, 2000) personal-related motivations (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014), such as self-enjoyment or the desire of learning (Oh, 2012). Whereas, *community-related* motivations are driven by altruism and the desire to contribute to a certain community.

The research is naturally concerned on the *self-related* category of motivations. However, community-related motivations are considered and analysed, to the extent that sharing content with an altruistic purpose may provide to the user a *sense of efficacy* or may enhance his social status within an online community (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Therefore, *community-related* motivations may hide and be driven by *self-related* motivations (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). This categorization of motivations, which comes from the sociological literature, has been employed in order to highlight the s*ocial desirability bias* (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). In fact, many individuals may claim altruistic purpose as their sharing intentions, while they may be willing to fulfil psychological motives. Thus, the author did not want to preliminary exclude from the investigation altruistic and community-driven intentions behind sharing on social media.

2.2.1.1. A psychological exploration of motivations for sharing

According to Dholakia et al. (2004), individual psychological needs are at the basis of the decision of sharing content on social media platforms. The very first motivation and human needs theory elaborated by Maslow (McLeod, 2018) outlines among psychological needs the two categories of *belongingness and love needs* and *esteem needs* (Maslow, 1943; McLeod, 2018). Since basic human needs generally constitute a trigger for motivation (Maslow, 1943), psychological needs will be considered the underlying drivers for engaging in online sharing. Seidman (2013) identifies *belongingness-related* and *esteem-related needs* as the needs at the bottom of intentions of sharing on social media. The author decided to include also *emotional disclosure* as deriving from self-expression and feedback needs, *and self-efficacy needs.*

2.2.1.1.1. Belongingness-related motives

Prior research has identified *belongingness and love needs* as crucial drivers in the intentions of sharing on social media (Seidman, 2013; Nadkarni, Hofmann, 2012). *Belongingness and love needs* relate to the human need for being loved and engaging in intimate relationships with other human beings (Maslow, 1943; McLeod, 2018). They also include feelings of affiliation and group belonging (McLeod, 2018).

In the context of online sharing, belongingness-related behaviours are basically motivated by acceptance seeking and the need to connect with or support others (Seidman, 2013, p.5). Seidman (2013) highlights two major belongingness-related behaviours, that are the tendency to seek information about other individuals and the acts of interaction with others. Also, Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar (2016) pinpoint that individuals are moved by a desire to keep up with their network or the world in general. In the first case, people may be driven by a sense of *affinity* (Salo et al., 2013) with other social media users, but also may be seeking *group identity* (Belk, 2013) reinforcement (Salo et al., 2013) by means of engaging in social media activities, such as sharing comments and opinions. In the second case, the desire to keep up

with the world in general may justify the decision of sharing independently from the content shared and the need of constantly viewing content shared by others (Belk, 2013; Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar, 2016).

It is true that the sense of belongingness may enhance community interests (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014) and may push towards altruistic behaviours in favour of a certain community. In fact, community interests may derive from a sense of belongingness and identification within a certain community (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014), or to a significant degree of empathy – that is the ability to understand others' feelings (Oh, 2012). However, community-related motives may be also moved by social recognition and reputation (Lee et al., 2011), which may bias the nature of belongingness-related motives. Furthermore, many self-related motives are linked to the creation, augmentation and preservation of social capital, in the form of "*social interaction, trust identification, and reciprocity*" (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014, p. 48). Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar (2016) suggest that sharing is essentially "*driven by social needs*" (2016, p. 624). Sharing, in fact, significantly involves the relational aspect, in terms of forming new relationships and maintaining existing relationships, and a broader desire to reach out a wider audience, which often constitute fundamental motivational drivers (Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar, 2016).

2.2.1.1.2. Self-presentational needs

Existing literature has highlighted that a key factor impacting social media sharing is *self-presentation* (Seidman, 2013; Nadkarni, Hofmann, 2012). *Self-presentational motivations* reside in the desire of seeking others' attention and/or to present different aspects of the self-concept – actual, other-ideal, own-ideal… (Seidman, 2013; Whitty, 2008). These dimensions of the self-concept are part of the communication process of one's perception of self, which today highly involves online activity (Belk, 2013; Mehdizadeh, 2010).

The most evident difference in online self-presentation is the opportunity to better control the image and to communicate an ideal self, which facilitates to create impressions that may

diverge from actual traits, characteristics and lifestyle (Mehdizadeh, 2010; Belk, 2013). However, in contrast to virtual gaming and other experiences of virtual re-embodiment, social media are not an anonymous form of self-exploration (Belk, 2013). The "*nonymous online settings*" (Mehdizadeh, 2010) of social media platforms present a higher number of constraints and allow individuals to emphasize a "*realistic socially desirable identity*" (Mehdizadeh, 2010), which is more likely to encounter a positive endorsement from the public.

According to a study from Mehdizadeh (2010) certain offline personality traits – in relation to self-esteem - are likely to influence the engagement in self-presentation online activities. Mehdizadeh (2010) suggests that narcissists and low self-esteem individuals are more likely to engage in online self-presentation and self-promotion activities. Narcissism is an "*exaggerated sense of self-importance"* (Mehdizadeh, 2010, p. 358) and represents a common personality trait that pushes individuals in self-presentation. Due to the tendency of narcissists to create emotionally detached and superficial relationships, the online dimension often offers opportunities to collect many empty virtual friendships, serving the purpose of appearing successful instead of genuinely interacting (Mehdizadeh, 2010). In addition, social media offer more control on self-presentation (Belk, 2013) which empower narcissists over their online image (Mehdizadeh, 2010).

In contrast, individuals presenting low levels of self-esteem are also found to be correlated with high amount of social media activity (Mehdizadeh, 2010). Self-presentations are constrained by *nonymous online settings* (Mehdizadeh, 2010), and therefore may be blocked by the discrepancy between actual and ideal selves (Mehdizadeh, 2010). However, the ease of disinhibition in online settings support the idea that in that context some individuals may be more able to express their authentic self rather than in their offline world (Belk, 2013). Thus, certain low self-esteem individuals may use self-promotion tools on social media and pursue a socially desirable identity. Eventually, low collective self-esteem may also prompt individuals

in taking distances from a certain offline network and seek social compensation and social identity gratification within online communities (Barker, 2009).

Self-presentational needs take the form of general self-disclosure and emotional self-disclosure (Seidman, 2013), generating not only the possibility of presenting one's self, but also the opportunity to reflect on one's self (Belk, 2013). General and emotional self-disclosure motivational drivers and modalities highly depend on their audiences (Choi & Bazarova, 2015). As a matter of facts, people set up their online communication on the base of *imagined audiences* (Marwick & boyd, 2011 in Choi & Bazarova, 2015), since they create a mental image of who follows their online activity and act based on that intuition. The images formed in the minds of individuals differ from social media to social media, and even within a single platform: for instance, on Instagram one may communicate by means of private message and directed to a single person or may post on his profile, which entails a wider audience (Choi & Bazarova, 2015). In the former case, the individual may depict a mental image of a certain person to whom the message is directed; in the latter, the conceptualization of the audience takes more general features (Choi & Bazarova, 2015). Therefore, their decision of sharing self-related content is highly dependent on the platform and on who they imagine will receive it.

In any case, online profiles represent today the most widespread self-presentational tool (Belk, 2013; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Seidman, 2013) and their audiences are increasingly wider. Online profiles have disclosed an entire new world of self-presentation (Mehdizadeh, 2010), sometimes resulting in phenomena such as "oversharing", lack of privacy, compulsive and obsessive content updating in order to appear active and socially appealing (Belk, 2013).

2.2.1.1.3. Emotion regulation: self-expression and feedbacks

Social media platforms provide new modalities for sharing and regulate emotions (Vermeulen et al., 2018). There are two needs that prompt individuals in sharing their emotions, that are the need for expressing themselves and the need to receive feedbacks from other people (Choi

& Toma, 2014; Vermeulen et al., 2018). The first one indicates the need for reliving the event that caused the emotion, whereas the second one mirrors the desire to receive support, attention or sympathy (Vermeulen et al., 2018, p. 212).

Individuals share emotions on different social media platforms (Vermeulen et al., 2018; Choi & Bazarova, 2015). Vermeulen et al. (2018) highlight that the selection of the platform for sharing one's emotions depends on the type of audience addressed and on the level of privacy (Vermeulen et al., 2018; Choi & Bazarova, 2015). Other relevant factors in choosing the most appropriate platform are message features, especially the level of instantaneity and audio-visual features, and the accessibility of a platform in terms of time and place (Vermeulen et al., 2018). Eventually, social norms thoroughly influence the intensity of emotions and the modalities through which they are shared, that are socially acceptable (Vermeulen et al., 2018). Group-pressure in young individuals might play a crucial role, inasmuch as they may feel forced to express certain feelings in order to adapt to social norms (Vermeulen et al., 2018, p. 213).

2.2.1.1.4. Sense of self-efficacy

A sense of self-efficacy defines "*one's perceived capability to perform actions and complete tasks"* (Oh, 2012, p. 545-546), as already mentioned in the self-concept literature section. According to Munar & Jacobsen (2014), it may represent the underlying motivation to many altruistic purposes. Oh (2012) suggests a strong relationship between self-efficacy and a sense of enjoyment, inasmuch as individuals may enjoy sharing content since it provides them a significant sense of self-efficacy (Oh, 2012). Self-efficacy is a strictly self-related motivations, which may be at the heart of many altruistic purposes (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

2.2.2. Sharing music online

Over the recent few years the music industry has been profoundly modified by the digitalization of music and consequently behavioural changes. Music has become accessible

rather than bought (Geoff, 2016), due to online streaming platforms such as Spotify. Spotify is an on-demand streaming service (Marshall, 2015), based on an algorithm which allows high personalization of music listening and endless exploration thanks to an almost infinite music library. Favourite or significant tracks may be collected by users in personal playlists, that are highly associated to rites, moments, people, feelings, events etc… (Hagen, 2015, p. 634). In this case, playlists become extremely personalized and unique, and the level of attachment is expected to be high (Belk, 2013) and may assume a strong symbolic value (McCourt, 2005; Kibby, 2009; Belk, 2013). In addition, the partnerships with social network platforms have enhanced the interactive and social aspect. The partnership with Facebook allows users to connect with their friends and check their music, whereas the partnership with Instagram permit to share tracks on users' stories with their followers. Moreover, users may extract links from Spotify and send them to a specific user via Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp.

2.2.2.1. Motivations for sharing music on social networks

According to the model developed by Lee et. al. (2011), music sharing on social network sites is influenced by personal motivations, social motivations and service characteristics (Lee et. al., 2011, p. 728). The model highlights the crucial role of self-expression motives and interactivity in the decision of sharing music on social networks (Lee et. al., 2011). For the purpose of this research, only personal and social motivations will be taken into considerations, even though Lee et al. (2011) found evidence that interactivity – i.e. the responsiveness and level of personalization of the service – and the perceived ease of use are significant in music-sharing intentions (Lee et al., 2011).). Lee et al. (2011) identify in their hypothetical model, three personal factors influencing music sharing on social networks: *self-expression, ingratiation and altruism* (Lee et al., 2011, p. 717).

Self-expression indicates the pervasive presence of human beings in the online world, that mirrors their individual characteristics, style, intellectual approach, emotions (Lee et al., 2011,

p. 721). *Ingratiation* (Lee et al., 2011) indicates a strategic presentation of one's self (Dominick, 1999 in Lee et al., 2011) that aims at achieving respect, approval and affection from the others (Lee et al., 2011). In these terms, individuals seek social desirability by means of showing modesty, humour, positive considerations on others (Lee et al., 2011). Ingratiation has a strong peer-orientation inasmuch as personal efforts are oriented towards others' feedback, therefore Lee et al. (2011) contrast it to self-serving motives such as self-expression. However, Munar & Jacobsen (2014) point out that many others-oriented activities have an underlying self-related motivation. In this research, ingratiation is considered peer-oriented, but inherently self-related, since the final aim is to be socially admired and liked (Lee et al., 2011; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Eventually, *altruism* identifies motivations that are guided by peer-oriented purposes, feelings of belongingness or affinity, empathy and similar (Lee et al., 2011; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). It is generally associated to community interests, intimacy and affinity with a certain group (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Lee et al. (2011) suggest that altruism might have a connection with some *psychosocial rewards* (Lee et al., 2011, p. 722), namely social recognition and reputation.

In conclusion, according to the model elaborated by Lee et al. (2011), the primary personal factor in music-sharing intention is *self-expression*. This is in contrast with the model developed for photo-sharing by Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar (2016), in which the social aspect is dominant and even antecedent to self-expression and self-presentation. However, according to Johnson & Ranzini (2018), the practice of sharing mass media content, including music sharing, essentially aims at interacting with "*personal networks, smaller interpersonal groups, or specific individuals"* (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018, p. 148), in order to produce shared experiences and fulfil self-presentational needs (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018). This vision integrates both self-expression/self-presentational motives and the desire to connect with other individuals. Johnson & Ranzini (2018) suggest that "*displaying one's tastes in entertainment can earn social rewards by connecting others with shared affinities*" (J. Lee &

Choi, 2017 in Johnson & Ranzini, 2017, p. 148) "*and by cultivating a self-image*" (Chan, Berger & Van Boven in Johnson & Ranzini, 2017, p. 148).

In line with the theory of possible self-concepts (Whitty, 2008) and the "extended self" theory (Belk, 2013), Johnson & Ranzini (2018) propose that individuals attempt to manage others' impressions and their relationships (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018, p. 150) by means of "*holding attitudes about media content"* (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018, p. 150). Thus, activities such as music listening or book reading (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018) are perceived by individuals as modalities to generally express themselves, consciously present themselves and an opportunity to connect with other people (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018). Moreover, through the sharing of mass media content, individuals might communicate their belongingness to a specific group or, in contrast, their distinctiveness and unique self-concept (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018). In some cases, users employ an ideal self in order to be associated to a group, which is elaborated on the base of others' expectations (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018).

2.3. Motivations for not sharing online

This section aims at reviewing prior research on the motivations behind non-sharing behaviours, with a focus on a psychological perspective.

As observed by Munar & Jacobsen, "*not all people are willing to share their experiences online*" (2014, p. 48), and many people do not feel comfortable in sharing a part of their experiences (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018). *Lurkers* are individuals who are not willing to share content or who rarely contributes (Gong, Lim & Zhu, 2015), but still observe the others' content (Preece, Nonnecke & Andrews, 2004). In social networks, lurkers correspond to profiles that are registered on social media but do not contribute or rarely contributes with posts or comments (Gong et al., 2015).

Lurking may derive from many and different motivations. The most evident reason is that some individuals do not feel the need to post content online (Preece et al., 2004). Some

lurkers are simply selfish and/or not sociable individuals (Preece et al., 2004, p. 203). As an example, in online communities, lurkers may be willing to learn and access to content without providing any contribute nor explicitly asking for it (Preece et. al., 2004). In these terms, lurkers' motivations are highly self-related. Other self-related motives for any type of social media may be privacy concerns and computer anxiety (Osatuyi, 2015), or self-disclosure intimacy derived from personality traits (Choi & Bazarova, 2015; Quercia et al., 2012).

2.3.1. Privacy concerns – data security

A fundamental aspect of not sharing online is constituted by the personal willingness to self-disclosure (Choi & Bazarova, 2015), as today most of what used to be private is becoming increasingly public (Belk, 2013). Privacy concerns are significantly present in social network sites, since users create personal profiles with information that identify them (Raad & Chbeir, 2013) and connect with other users, that are generally part also of their offline social network (Raad & Chbeir, 2013). The increased accessibility to private data lead to significant risks for exposure and security breaches (Raad & Chbeir, 2013), therefore many individuals may be sceptical in sharing personal data online. In this context, *lurking* might be employed as an individual strategy in order to protect their privacy, but still feel connected to an online community or a social network (Osatuyi, 2015).

2.3.2. Privacy concerns – personality traits and self-esteem

The different decisions in relation to sharing personal information and emotions may derive also from personality traits (Quercia et al., 2011). For instance, very extroverted individuals are found to prefer offline relationships and therefore limit personal information online (Quercia et al., 2011). In addition, Gogolinski (2010) found evidence that *self-monitored individuals* – namely, individuals who are aware of how they are perceived from others and that tend to adjust themselves to different situations – are less likely to disclose personal information. Another relevant personality trait might be shyness (Preece et al., 2004), which hinder many individuals in expose themselves and engage in social interactions, as well as in

offline interactions (Preece et al., 2004). Lurking might also derive from low self-esteem, inasmuch as some lurkers are convinced that others' content is more valuable (Preece et al., 2004). Therefore, sometimes lurkers would probably like to post, but they do not feel comfortable for a wide variety of reasons and individual characteristics (Preece et al., 2004).

2.3.3. Privacy concerns – audiences and self-disclosure

The structure itself of a certain social media platform highly impacts self-disclosure and privacy (Choi & Bazarova, 2015, 482). Individuals have the option to modify the privacy settings on their online profiles (Choi & Bazarova, 2015) and therefore may hide some content or share it only with a few others.

Self-disclosure and privacy boundaries depend on individuals' representations of their audience (Choi & Bazarova, 2015). Prior research presents contradictory results on the link between self-disclosure intimacy and audience size. According to Vitak (2012), larger and diverse publics correspond to low levels of personal disclosure. Similarly, Choi & Bazarova (2015) demonstrate that on Facebook the size of audiences is positively related to self-disclosure intimacy ; whereas, other studies (Young & Quan-Haase, 2009; Kivran-Swaine & Naaman, 2011) argue that individuals are more likely to share personal information and emotions on social media when audiences are larger.

Social norms may also influence the self-disclosure behaviours, for example group-pressures may block individuals in sharing emotions that are not socially acceptable in online contexts (Vermeulen et al., 2018). According to Choi & Bazarova (2015), self-disclosure is often related to social validation goals, therefore the decision to share or not share is significantly influenced by individual's considerations on the social context and social groups.

2.3.4. Altruistic reasons for not-sharing

Some individuals may feel like they have nothing to share (Preece et al., 2004). In this case they may be essentially driven by altruistic purposes, inasmuch as they believe to benefit their

network or a community in general by not posting and waiting for having something useful to share (Preece et al., 2004). As already mentioned, the feeling of having nothing valuable to share (Preece et al., 2004) may hide self-related motivations, such as low individual self-esteem and/or feelings of not fitting in a certain group (Preece et al., 2004).

3. Methodology

In this chapter dedicated to methodology, the methods and the approaches adopted are discussed. The selection was guided by the ontological and epistemological assumptions (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989) outlined in the introductory chapter and by the nature of the research question.

3.1. Research approach

The current research adopts an inductive approach, in line with the philosophy of science and the nature of the research. In fact, an inductive approach is based on a generalization of findings that emerge from data collection, analysis of relevant data and reflection in comparison with prior literature (Bell et al., 2018). According to the existential – phenomenological philosophy, emergent reality should be observed as it is and afterwards reflected upon in relation to existing conceptions (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). In the context of this project, an inductive approach facilitates an in-depth investigation of the motives behind music-sharing intentions. The investigation begins from qualitative data, rather than existing literature.

Furthermore, considered the exploratory nature and the interpretivist philosophy of science, the author has decided to employ a qualitative research design. Interpretivism is concerned with the understanding and interpretation of phenomena (Astalin, 2013) and the author's aim is to in-depth understand motives behind music-sharing and the relations with self-concepts. Thus, a qualitative approach to research enables to recognize the complexity, malleability of research methods and context-sensitivity both in research and in data analysis (Astalin, 2013).

In fact, a qualitative approach to analysis consists into organizing data into categories and finding patterns within data, that emerge from a holistic context (Astalin, 2013).

3.2. Research Design

This section concerns the research implementation and describes the research design adopted. The author decided to implement an exploratory study, which aims at gaining insights into a certain phenomenon, that in this case is music-sharing. In the following sub-section, the author will present the research methods adopted, namely in-depth, phenomenological interview and qualitative content analysis. First, the author will explain the reasons behind the choice of employing those methods and their contribution to the investigation. Afterwards, the author will accurately explain how data collection and data analysis were conducted. Eventually, the reliability and validity of collected data are demonstrated.

3.2.1. Research Methods

The present study employs two research methods: in-depth, phenomenological interviews and social media content analysis. This section aims at explaining the reasons behind the adoption of these methods and the modalities through which they were conducted.

The nature of the research question and the existential-phenomenological approach guided the author in the decision of employing phenomenological, in-depth interviews. In fact, the phenomenological in-depth interview enables an "*in-depth understanding of another person's experience*" (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989, p. 138), by means of a first-person narration of specific experiences (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). This responds to the existential-phenomenological focus on the individual's experience with a first-person perspective (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). Moreover, it fits the research goal to explore the motivations behind sharing and not sharing, and to understand the interrelations with respondents' self-perceptions.

According to the existential – phenomenological approach, reality does not exist before it is interpreted and reflected upon by the individual (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). Therefore, the author was interested into investigating the respondents' lifeworld, avoiding any theoretical standpoint or rationalization of experience (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989).

In addition, the author decided to include a modified version of the ZMET method (Coulter, Zaltman, 1994) in order to introduce the dialogue. The author decided to employ this method since nonverbal cues, mental constructs and metaphors are dominant in understanding individuals' behaviours towards a certain brand or topic (Coulter, Zaltman, 1994). The acronym stays for Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (Coulter, Zaltman, 1994), and "*employs qualitative methods to elicit the metaphors, constructs and mental models that drive customers' thinking and behaviour"* (Coulter, Zaltman, 1994, p. 501).

The method is grounded on visual images, which guides the respondent in the development of a mental map containing relevant mental constructs in relation to a specific topic or brand (Coulter, Zaltman, 1994). Metaphors and mental constructs help the interviewer in better understand the respondent's behaviour, thoughts and feelings (Coulter, Zaltman, 1994). However, the author decided to include only some steps from the ZMET method, since not all of them are relevant for the purpose of this research. The partial implementation of the ZMET method will be explained later.

According to Zaltman (2003) memory, metaphors and storytelling "*influence consumer's consumption experiences and behaviours*" (Zaltman, 2003, p. 15). Thus, the author of the research considered the ZMET method to be efficient to start exploring how motivations behind sharing behaviours interrelates with significant memories and other self-related issues. Both the ZMET Method (Coulter, Zaltman, 1994; Zaltman, 2003) and the in-depth, phenomenological interview aim at deep dive into the respondent's feelings and thoughts, in order to understand the underlying meanings behind certain behaviours.

In-depth, phenomenological interviews and the ZMET method significantly contributed to the research, inasmuch as they provided insights to the author on explicit and hidden motives behind music-sharing behaviours. In particular, the ZMET method supported the in-depth understanding of the respondent's relationship with music, whereas in-depth, phenomenological interviews contributed in shedding light on motives behind sharing and not sharing, and on the links with the respondent's perception of self.

Eventually, the author decided to include a qualitative content analysis, in order to provide a reference point and integrate data to interviews' findings. Content analysis was selected due to its systematic and objective way to describe phenomena (Elo & Kyngas, 2007). In addition, it has already been applied in the context of content sharing on social media (Shelton & Skalski, 2014; Lai & To, 2015). In this project, the author found relevant to include a content analysis as it supported findings on motivations for sharing, music-sharing practices and music-listening practices.

3.2.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The collection of data was conducted through a two-step process. In the first place, the author decided to conduct in-depth, phenomenological interviews in line with the philosophical approach (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). Afterwards, the author conducted a complementary collection of data by means of a content analysis on social media profiles of the interviewed. The analyses of interviews and social media content were conducted in a separate and sequential way, which will be later in-depth explored. Eventually, the results of both analyses were compared in order to validate or contrast the interview's results.

Elo & Kyngas (2008) suggest that the sample of data mirror the universe that is investigated. Since young adults represent the age group with higher likelihood of engagement in online sharing (The Pew Research Study, 2015), the author thought it made sense to analyse a sample of young adults, music enthusiasts. The in-depth nature of interviews limited the number of interviewed to seven individuals, in order to conduct them in an appropriate and

efficient way. The same sample was employed in the content analysis, except for those individuals who do not engage in online music sharing.

3.2.2.1. In-depth, phenomenological interviews and the ZMET method

For the purpose of the research the author conducted seven in-depth, phenomenological interviews mixed with a partial version of the ZMET method. Since the aim of the interview is to deep dive into one's experiences, the author ensured the anonymity of all the respondents (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989) and carefully explained the purpose of the research. In addition, Thompson, Locander & Pollio (1989) suggest that the respondent should feel comfortable in order to freely narrate his point of view. Thus, at the beginning of the interview the author pinpointed the equal positions of the interviewed and the interviewer. In the present research, the respondent is considered the only expert on the facts that he describes and the thoughts that he explains (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). Each of the seven respondents was previously informed on the topic of the research and asked to prepare some images representing the relationship with music, in order to empower him in the course of the dialogue.

The sample of respondents included seven Italian young adults, between 23 and 25 years old. All the interviews lasted around 1 hour/1 hour and a half, introduced by a brief explanation of the research project. The author decided to collect relevant data among a close network of peers, that in the most of cases are music enthusiasts. In order to ensure anonymity and due to the in-depth nature of interviews, the respondents were labelled as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, Respondent 3, Respondent 4, Respondent 5, Respondent 6 and Respondent 7.

In the present research the ZMET method is employed only in the first steps of its implementation, as the rest of the steps were considered by the author not useful in the specific case of this research question. Five days before the interview, the interviewer asked the respondents to collect from four to six pictures representing their relationship with music

(Coulter, Zaltman, 1994). The respondent-generated stimuli are considered by Coulter & Zaltman (1994) particularly efficient as they highlight issues and topics that otherwise may have not been considered. The interviewer decided to employ this first step of the ZMET method in order to kickstart the interview with visual stimuli, which were considered relevant by the respondent himself.

In congruence with the first steps of the ZMET method (Coulter, Zaltman, 1994) each of the seven interviews began with a description of the selected images from the respondent. Afterwards, the respondent was asked to inform the interviewer whether he was not able to bring other relevant pictures, in order to increase the likelihood of covering all the relevant and interesting issues (Coulter, Zaltman, 1994). The respondent was also asked to indicate "*opposite images*" (Coulter, Zaltman, 1994), which in this specific case meant to identify "*what is not music for me*" using images and mental constructs. Eventually, the respondent was encouraged to pinpoint the most relevant mental constructs and guided by the interviewer in creating a mental map (Coulter, Zaltman, 1994). The mental map included the most significant constructs associated to the respondent's relationship with music and was used by the interviewer as a starting point for a conversation on the more specific topic of online music sharing.

The goal of each interview was to allow patterns to emerge in the discourse and to let the respondent reflect upon his experience (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). The interviewer tried to attain spontaneous descriptions of the respondents' experiences (or the lack of experiences) with online sharing and focused the attention on concrete examples and very specific experiences (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). Thus, each dialogue started with questions formulated to prompt the conversation and that were generally broad and open-ended (Bevan, 2014). In some cases, the author allowed respondents to support their answers with concrete examples from their online Instagram profiles, Facebook profiles

and/or Spotify profiles. This was supposed to support the elaboration of additional examples and elicit further reflection.

In each case, after the initial construct elicitation and mental map construction, in congruence with some steps of the ZMET method (Coulter, Zaltman, 1994), the author conducted a semi-structured in-depth, phenomenological interview. The author selected a semi-structured interview, instead of an un-structured interview, in order to cover the core topics keeping a significant degree of flexibility (Saunders et al., 2009). In addition, the author preferred the semi-structured interview in order to be able to easily compare the different interviews. Thus, the author prepared in advance some topics and questions that she was willing to cover, which may slightly change among the different interviews (Saunders et. al., 2009). The framework of questions contained open questions which were often re-phrased using the respondents' words, derived from the pictures' descriptions (Appendix 5).

3.2.2.2. Interviews data analysis

In order to gather all the valuable data and in congruence with the research aims, the author has recorded and consequently transcribed the seven in-depth interviews. Afterwards, data were explored in order to identify the dominant and most relevant themes. According to Blair (2015), there exist many data coding techniques to classify, analyse and interpret data. Researchers should select the more efficient coding technique according to the aim of their project (Blair, 2015). Coding is based on the creation of labels, that are employed in the elaboration of significant categories in order to efficiently explore and interpret data (Blair, 2015, p. 16). Two main approaches are outlined by Blair (2015): the elaboration of codes before approaching the text or interview transcript and the creation of codes emerging from collected data (Blair, 2015, p. 16). The author opted for emergent codes, in line with the existential-phenomenological approach. In fact, according to Thompson, Locander & Pollio (1989), reality emerges and only afterwards is reflected upon.

Open coding is the adoption of an open mind in identifying emergent codes (Blair, 2015). The author tried to avoid a priori codes and to impose personal codes (Blair, 2015). Even though, Blair (2015) argues that any coding attempt is inevitably influenced by one's individual perspective. The open coding process started with the identification of concepts (Blair, 2015) and the colouration of them in different tints. Coloured parts of the interviews were condensed into concepts that were preliminary to the formation of the four categories. In fact, the preliminary phase of open coding implied the identification of key words and afterwards the formation of core categories.

In this project, the author identified four major categories (*motivations for sharing, motivations for not sharing, music-listening practices, self-concept and other self-related constructs*), according to patterns in the six interviews. The process continued with axial coding (Blair, 2015) which entailed the division of major categories into sub-categories (Blair, 2015). The separation of sub-categories from categories was conducted by the identification of patterns and meanings among the codes present in each category. The process of axial coding enabled the author to divide these categories in the following sub-categories:

Table 1: own production

Motivations for sharing	Motivations for not sharing	Music-listening/sharing practices	Self-concept & self-related constructs
Self-expression (self-presentation, emotional and mood disclosure)	Privacy concerns	Playlists	Self-reflection and sense of past
Social interactions	Intimate listening	Collaborative playlists	Actual and ideal self-concepts
Altruistic purposes	"Reception" concerns	Concerts	Self-esteem

		Exploration	

Afterwards, the author employs selective coding (Blair, 2015) and thus transforms categories into *themes* (Blair, 2015, p. 18; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). According to Blair (2015), this passage is conducted in an intuitive rather than systematic way). *Themes* are supposed to communicate data on an interpretive level (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017, p. 94) in order to highlight the latent meanings of categories and sub-categories (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). In this research, the author has identified two themes, which mirrors the two behavioural aspects of online sharing and their relation to self-concepts and other self-related constructs. The themes are the following: *the interrelations between motivations for sharing music on social media and one's self-concept; the interrelations between motivations for not sharing music on social media and one's self-concept.* Each of the two themes has been divided in sub-themes, according to the main patterns highlighted during the analysis. The themes and sub-themes are in-depth discussed in the analysis.

The analysis of data was conducted in congruence with the existential-phenomenological objective to provide themes and repeated patterns of experience (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). The interpretation of data employed hermeneutical principles (Thompson, 1997 in Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). Firstly, the author always tried to connect single examples with the lifeworld of the individual (Thompson, 1997 in Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). In addition, the interpretation followed a continuous *part-to-whole* process (Thompson, 1997 in Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989), on two levels: the first level included single parts of individual's transcripts, the second level regarded the comparison between different respondents. These hermeneutical principles guided the 3-step (open coding, axial coding, selective coding) coding process, towards the elaboration of global explanatory concepts, that are themes.

3.2.2.3. Social media content analysis – data collection and data analysis

The second step of data collection and analysis is constituted by an inductive qualitative content analysis. In line with the setting of the research, content analysis was conducted on social media platforms. Namely, the author analysed content on Instagram and Spotify profiles, since the respondents mainly discussed about those platforms. The author decided to conduct two parallel, separate analyses for content published on the online profile in the past six months- i.e. content analysis of playlists content and text/visual content on the feed – and for content that was daily published on the platforms during the month following the interview – i.e. daily listening activities on Spotify and Instagram stories content.

The qualitative content analysis was conducted on Spotify following this process: first, the author looked for each respondent's profile on Spotify and followed them – if existing. Second, the author investigated separately public playlists and listening activities. Public playlists were analysed by the immersion in the analysis of public and collaborative playlists, in order to find relevant elements and common patterns among the respondents. Listening activities were daily monitored for a time length of one month after the interview, as the author was daily taking notes of interesting elements – if present. The author employed a priori codes (Smith & Sanderson, 2015), emerged during the interview analysis, on the gathered notes. Afterwards, the author elaborated categories by grouping similar aspects and meanings and eventually abstracted them into themes.

Qualitative content analysis on Instagram was conducted in the following way: first, the author checked the presence of all the respondents on Instagram and followed them. Second, the author analysed separately personal feed's content posted during the past six months and daily activities on Instagram stories for the month following the interview. Both processes included writing notes on significant aspects from data and the elaboration of preliminary categories (Smith & Sanderson, 2015). In the first case, the author dedicated a significant amount of time in analysing the relevant Instagram profiles of the respondents, screening both

the visual and textual content. The amount of content analysed depended according to the respondents' level of social media activity. For instance, in the case of Respondent 3 the author has analysed 126 posts, while 52 posts were analysed for Respondent 7. In the second case, the author daily checked Instagram stories of relevant profiles and took notes of interesting behaviours. Both Respondents 3 and 7 published on average 7 stories per day. After collecting data in the form of notes, the author applying a priori codes from the interviews, afterwards elaborated categories and then themes.

An ordinary content analysis should include open coding, creating categories and abstraction (Elo & Kyngas, 2007). However, in the present research the author employed content analysis as complementary to the interview analysis. Thus, the process skipped the stage of open coding and employed the codes emerged during the interview coding. Yet there was a willingness to be open to a certain degree of flexibility, in order to allow modifications to prior emergent codes. The codes emerged during the interview were employed, and in some cases slightly modified, in order to elaborate generic categories (Elo & Kyngas, 2007): *self-presentation, interactions with friends and music-sharing/music-listening practices*. The generic categories afterwards were abstracted in main concepts (Blair, 2015): *how music-sharing/music-listening practices relate to self-presentation and how music-sharing/music-practices relate to social interactions*. The process was partially close to the interview analysis (Blair, 2015). The findings from social media content analysis are presented in the analysis section.

Content analysis of social media profiles (Instagram, Spotify) contributed to the research to the extent that it provided insights on the main practices and their relations to motivations for music-sharing, that were already mentioned during the interview. Namely, self-presentational motives and social interactions. In fact, the resulting concepts from both interview analysis and social media content analysis were eventually juxtaposed in a comparative analysis.

According to Pickvance (2005), the aim of comparative analysis is to provide an in-depth understanding of a process or phenomenon, obtaining additional *explanatory variables* and highlighting the existence of novel relationships (Pickvance, 2005). Thus, the comparative analysis in this research contributed in order to juxtapose findings from two separate analysis and provide additional insights on some themes. The author compared findings from interview analysis and social media content analysis to the extent that content analysis enabled to explore music-sharing motives and practices, such as self-presentation, social interaction, and the practices of playlists' creation, stories highlights of favourite music and concert-sharing. Eventually, findings on music-sharing intentions from the interviews were integrated, and slightly modified, with findings from social media content analysis. The final findings are presented in the analysis section.

3.2.3. Reliability and Validity

According to Noble & Smith (2015), credibility of qualitative findings is assessed by minimising personal biases, sampling biases and by recording data meticulously in order to ensure consistent and transparent data (Noble & Smith, 2015, p. 2). Moreover, authors employing a qualitative research method should carefully and thoroughly explain and clarify processes within the analysis, in order to justify the interpretation of data and the elaboration of findings (Noble & Smith, 2015).

The author made any possible effort to avoid personal biases, by adopting a non-intrusive position and conducting the interview session in a non-directive way (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). However, in order to avoid taking an exaggerated distance from the key concepts of the research, the author prepared a semi-structured interview guideline. The reader might consult the interview guidelines in the appendix section. The author attempted to minimise respondents' biases and tried to equally introduce the project to each respondent. The author always allowed respondents to freely answer in a comfortable environment. In

order to collect reliable and acceptable data, the interviews have been recorded and accurately transcribed straight after the interview session. In order to ensure the validity of data, the author constantly monitored that questions aimed at answering the research question, while slightly adjusting them if needed.

Concerning interviews content analysis and social media content analysis, the assessment of trustworthiness is associated to each phase of content analysis: from selecting the unit of analysis to the reporting phase (Elo et al., 2014). In order to improve trustworthiness, the author provides accurate details on data collection and data analysis. Each step of the process is described in the methodology section, in order to enhance validity and reliability of the research. Furthermore, the thorough description of the analysis processes aims at providing external validity to the project. Even though the findings of qualitative research are not necessarily generalizable to other studies (Saunders et al., 2009), the author believes that by accurately describing the process of data collection and data analysis, it may be repeatable and applicable in other fields.

4. Analysis

This chapter highlights the relevant findings gained after the collection of data from in-depth interviews and content analysis.

4.1. Interviews analysis

The analysis of data gathered during the in-depth interviews are presented in this sub-section, divided in two major themes that mirror the two sub-questions: interrelations between motivations for sharing music on social media and the self-concept; interrelations between motivations for not sharing music on social media and the self-concept.

4.1.1. Interrelations between motives for sharing music on social media and one's self-concept

This first part of the analysis aims at understanding "*how motivations for sharing music on social media interrelate with one's sense of self*?". In this section, the author will mainly provide insights from Respondents 1, 3 and 7, since they declared to engage daily in online music sharing – on Instagram and Spotify. Some additional insights derive from Respondents 4 and 6, who occasionally engage in online music sharing – respectively on Spotify and on Instagram and Facebook.

4.1.1.1. Self-expression & one's sense of self: self-presentation in terms of general and emotional/mood self-disclosure

Each interview started with a discussion on the pictures brought by the respondents themselves, in line with the ZMET method. Besides the purpose of kickstarting the conversation, the photo-elicitation process represented an efficient tool for understanding each respondent's relationship with music. Some respondents associated music with the conception of sharing already in the first answers, should it be offline or online sharing. For instance, the first image brought by Respondent 3 was the Spotify logo: she explained that her personal relationship with music is strictly tied with the concept of online sharing, "*Spotify changed my entire concept of music-listening and the way I share music, for me a great part of listening at music is sharing it on Instagram, for instance".* Respondent 7 selected some screenshots pictures from tracks shared on his Instagram stories, and he pinpoints *"most of the pictures come from my Instagram, from content that I have shared on my stories".* Since audiences are strictly related to individual self-disclosure, the interview questions aimed at depicting answers to this matter. Respondents' self-disclosure ranged from accessible to everyone to close friends. Most of the respondents highlighted the willingness of expressing one's self

while sharing music on social network platforms, in terms of *general self-presentation and mood or emotional self-disclosure*.

Intentional *self-presentation* was recognized as a motive for sharing music online, inasmuch as most of the respondents acknowledged music as a mirror of themselves. According to Respondent 7, music is extremely self-representative and thus linked to individual personality traits, thoughts and beliefs. In fact, he stated "*Music is a mirror of myself, because I have always linked this kind of things to my personality".* In addition, Respondent 3 affirmed "*If there is a song that I really love, I share it. Not only because I want other people to listen at it but because I want the others to see that I am listening at it. Because I think it represents me and what I listen at",* showing the intentionality of sharing self-representative music and highlighting the strong link between musical tastes and self-concept.

The respondents provided additional insights on which type of self-concept they were willing to disclose: actual, own-ideal or other-ideal (Whitty, 2008; Johnson & Ranzini, 2018). The results highlighted a preference for presenting an authentic, actual self through music on social media. Respondent 7 claimed the authenticity of the self that is presented through music by highlighting the obstacle of self-discrepancies between an offline actual self and an online desired self. In fact, he said "*I consider music a form of self-presentation only if it is consistent with who you are in your offline life. If you are a nerd trying to impress people by posting some trap music, I don't believe you".* On the other hand, Respondent 3 admits that her online self-presentation is closer to an "*augmented actual self*", that means that it is close to her authentic self but more curated and consistent. She argues that the self-concepts that she shows in general on social media "*might be a bit ideal, but not 100%. I would say that it is an augmented version of me, a bit more consistent than in real life. There's a bit of "construction" in the character that I show online, but it's me and my personality is evident".* Thus, also the music shared by Respondent 3 seems to be a bridge between the actual self and some ideal aspects of identity. All the respondents that daily engage in online music sharing

(Respondent 3, Respondent 7) did not associate themselves to a specific genre of music. They present a very eclectic music listening, associated to an eclectic and fragmented perception of themselves.

The findings show that personality traits and self-esteem influence music-sharing intentions. In fact, *narcissistic* thoughts, such as "*I am very arrogant on music and I think that people can only learn from what I share"*- deriving from an *exaggerated sense of self* (Mehdizadeh, 2010) - and a *high self-esteem*, push individuals in engaging in online self-presentation and that they often do it through online music sharing. As an example, Respondent 7 created a highlight of stories on his Instagram profile gathering all the tracks published by him on Instagram stories. Thus, Respondent 7 not only engages in online self-presentation through music, but also does it so "*people that are interested in the content that I share on stories, can look for it in the highlights"* assuming that individuals are deeply interested into content shared by him and into further understand his personality, mood and emotions, as he said *"I like that people understand things about me from the music I listen at".*

Mood sharing and emotional disclosure were found to be significant in motivating music-sharing. Respondent 7 declared that most of the tracks shared on Instagram stories represents an instant mood, whereas content published in his feed is more coherent and intentionally self-representative. He claimed to be "*pushed by an impulse while sharing music on Instagram stories, a mood that is connected to that moment and needs to be shared. Whereas, I share music-related content on the feed such as pictures of groups or artists because I like the artist (...) or because it is associated to a lifestyle. People go through my feed and can associate those images to me."* Furthermore, Respondent 7 argues that his willingness to share intimate music or a mood with everyone is explained by the fact that it would not be fully understood by everyone. Therefore, sharing personal and emotional music does not raise feelings of vulnerability, since only intimate friends or people involved would be able to deeply understand and interpret the meaning of those songs. His claim is: "*Why wouldn't you*

share it with everyone? Not everyone understands, therefore you are not sharing it with everyone". Moreover, according to Respondent 7, "*People may look at your story, see the track you have shared and skip it, or if they know your situation they might think twice about your emotions and might understand a lot from the music mood and feelings. If you don't know anything about me, you don't understand it".* Similarly, Respondent 1 justifies emotion and mood sharing on Spotify's playlists with meanings that would be fully understood only by close friends. Respondent 3 adds that publicly sharing intimate songs may be a means to communicate with a significant one, especially when private communication is not an option – such as after a break-up or a quarrel.

According to the findings, Spotify itself presents opportunities for *self-expression.* Respondent 1 declared to engage in the creation of individual or collaborative playlists, instead of sharing on social network platforms, in order to creatively express herself and her feelings. From the results of this investigation, the dominant self-related drivers pushing individuals in creating public playlists on Spotify are the following: *self-presentation, mood regulation, emotional disclosure.* Respondent 3 mentioned the presence of a Spotify's link in her Instagram biography and she added "*I think I was trying to describe myself"*. Therefore, the intent was to connect the bio to a self-representative playlist, containing a mix of genres that she appreciates. Respondent 1 described some of her playlists as being associated to a specific mood, "*such as "happy" or "take it easy",* and created for the purpose of regulating her mood, whereas others are explicitly connected to periods of her life and represent a vehicle for disclosing emotions. For instance, she explained that: "*I have a playlist that I have done during my Exchange programme in Paris, when I listen at it, I think about Paris and I have a lot of memories. I would say that my playlists are close to a diary. A musical diary. (...) it's like looking at the phases of my life."*

Eventually, also collaborative playlists are frequently mentioned as means for sharing self-representative songs, songs associated to memories or to significant emotions. In fact,

Respondent 5 highlighted self-presentation and memory collection as relevant drivers for sharing songs on a collaborative playlist. According to Respondent 5, the dominant motivation is to "*share something that is representative of me"*, should it be associated to current or past selves, "*or something relevant for some periods of my life",* with the two friends with whom she has created the collaborative playlist. In addition, both Respondent 1 and Respondent 3 mentioned the use of collaborative playlist in order to share emotions, communicate feelings and collect memories together with a significant person. Respondent 1 had created a collaborative playlist with her ex-boyfriend where "*after the break-up I used to share my emotions through that playlist… I was using the lyrics and the songs in general to share my feelings, to communicate by means of subliminal messages".* Thus, music-sharing is significantly driven by emotion and feelings-sharing, which are strictly related to who one is, specifically in terms of self-disclosure. In fact, also Respondent 3 mentioned the creation of a collaborative playlist with a significant person, with the "*double function of collecting memories and exchanging recommendations",* but she also added that her extremely personal song would never be included in any existing playlist, due to the discretion that she attributes to herself.

4.1.1.2. Self-reflection, Distributed memory & one's sense of self

The author found evidence that the expression of one's self on social network platforms and on Spotify pushed individuals to *self-reflection*. In fact, all the respondents that make use of online music-sharing recognized a function of representation of their past selves. There is evidence that tracks, albums and/or playlists are associated by the respondents to significant memories, people and phases of life. For instance, Respondent 6 mentioned that memory-related songs are used on purpose to arise emotions: "*It is very common that I listen at music in order to remember. I have an album for each travel that I have made, some music that I associate to significant people and very often I listen at those tracks in order to lose myself in memories. I feel some nostalgia, but I am happy that I have lived those moments".* He added

that sometimes these tracks functioned as reminders for forgotten musical periods and triggered curiosity, significantly influencing his current musical preferences. Thus, songs from the past might influence the present self-concept in terms of musical tastes. In fact, he argued that "*storing digital music in my iTunes playlists help me in finding what I used to listen at, and then I can dig deep into that genre… and re-discover it".*

The findings highlight the use of social media in order to collect and archive digital music for *self-reflection* and *distributed memory purposes* (Belk, 2013). Respondent 1 pinpointed the relevance of playlists in this process of emotional memories arousal, defining her collection of public playlists as a *"musical diary".* Furthermore, Respondent 3 articulated the relationship between memory-related songs and self-reflection: "*I love to associate some songs to situations and people. I often scroll my Spotify profile and I love to look at my playlists, the titles that are representative of some periods and phases of my life. But I also like to see the content of those playlists, what I used to listen at. Only the titles of songs, even without listening at them. I do it very often".* Thus, according to Respondent 3, personal playlists allow reflection on past selves and enhance acknowledgement of one's sense of self, through the creation of a narrative of her life. Eventually, Respondent 7 pinpointed the importance of Instagram stories highlights for memory-elicitation, and the possibility of reminding one's self about forgotten situations, emotions or tastes. Therefore, respondents confirmed the practice of *looking at themselves through music*, reflecting on their past extended selves both in terms of associated memories and in terms of past musical tastes. In the specific case of collaborative playlists, it can be argued that individual memories are partially co-constructed.

The findings in relation to sharing and consequently storing memories of live music events outline controversial results: on one hand, some respondents pinpointed that distributed memory enhances their memory capacities and their selfhood, on the other hand, other respondents recognized the superiority of lived experiences and avoided sharing them on social media. In fact, most of the respondents declared to prefer the lived experience and feel

more attached to their own memories. For instance, Respondent 3 spoke briefly about a concert at which she did not have her smartphone with her, "*, but then I remember it as one of the best concerts ever. I think it was also because I could not share any picture or video. There was only me, the artist and music".* Also, Respondent 4 stated that live concerts sharing is often very time consuming and useless. He argued: "*from my own experience, I know it's useless to record and share concerts on the Instagram stories. I'll never look at them again".* Respondent 5 confirmed the preference for the lived experience, by stating that she "*would totally survive without a smartphone at a concert".* Respondent 4, 5 and 6 revealed that they rarely share live music events on their Instagram stories, exclusively in order to *"let the other know I am there".* However, Respondent 3 admitted her controversial behaviour and that she partially relies on social media archives in order to remember parts of her life, including concerts and other musical live events. She revealed "*sometimes I record live events or things in general because I am afraid to forget them (...) the consequential step is to share them, but it has other motivations behind".*

4.1.1.3. Altruistic purposes & one's sense of self

Some of the respondents advanced altruistic purposes as motivational drivers. The individuals addressed in altruistic behaviours ranged from "*everyone*" to "*one-to-one*" music sharing. According to Munar & Jacobsen (2014), altruistic behaviour is often misinterpreted due to a *social desirability bias* (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Thus, the questions of the in-depth interviews aimed at deep diving into the motivations, in order to discern authentic altruistic purposes from biased altruistic purposes. The findings highlight that some altruistic purposes, specifically those addressed to wider audiences, reveal to be driven by self-related motives, namely *social recognition, reputation, self-presentation and self-efficacy.*

In music-sharing with "*everyone*", Respondent 7 claimed to share music online in order to provide inputs to other people. In fact, he claimed that "*if you are listening at a song and you*

find it extremely interesting, you should share it, maybe someone will get curious about it and ask more information about it". However, deep diving into his thoughts and opinions, it turned out that his intentionality was deeply motivated by a desire to be recognized as an expert, to maintain *reputation* in the field and to provide to himself a sense of *self-efficacy*. As a matter of fact, he acknowledged that he was *"extremely proud and satisfied when someone gets curious and asks about a song that I have shared"* and continued *"I think some people on social media could only learn from those that understand something about music".* Similarly, Respondent 3 recognized the existence of a sense of *self-efficacy* behind online music sharing with a wide audience, as she mentioned to *"appreciate when someone asks the title of a background song for a video on Instagram. Whoever says that the others' feedback does not count is lying".* In addition, Respondent 3 acknowledged that these feedbacks also support the process of recognizing peers with similar taste, since she revealed that *"it is helpful also in understanding who has similar tastes…who knows? maybe they could provide music recommendations in the future".* Furthermore, Respondent 3 admitted that sometimes her objective is not to excite curiosity on the music itself, but it becomes again a *self-representative* opportunity through selected musical preferences. As a matter of fact, sometimes Respondent 3 declared to share a track "*not because I want people to listen at it, but because I want to show that I am listening at it. To share something a bit representative of myself".*

In *one-to-one music sharing* or in *sharing with close friends*, Respondent 3 confirmed the underlying altruistic intention of giving a recommendation, similarly to a "gift" for a person with similar taste or a loved friend. She indeed explained "*I love sharing music with friends, especially when they have similar tastes",* which implied a certain degree of expected reciprocity, as she declared to *"often send music on WhatsApp through Spotify to some friends that I know they will appreciate, and that they will also send me music that I'll appreciate".* Understanding of other's preferences and emotional responses to music are

considered at the basis of altruistic-driven behaviour and a tool for further understanding a close friend. Respondent 1 mentioned an episode when she realized to have understood the specific sub-genre appreciated by her roommate. She commented that *"it's a sign of really knowing and loving someone, when you start understanding the specific sub-genre of your friend. When you hear that tone of voice or you recognize the sounds that he or she would love".* Thus, from these findings indicators of authentic altruistic behaviour are the *empathy* with a loved person and the *understanding of the other's preferences.*

On the other hand, when forced to share music with friends with different tastes or with unknown tastes, Respondent 5 admitted that in offline sharing he employed an *ingratiation* (Lee et al., 2011) strategy, trying to meet their tastes: "*I always try to think about the situation and the people, and I try to meet what I think is their taste"*. The finding is relevant inasmuch as Respondent 5 stated that he would do the same in the online context, should he be forced in a similar situation on *"a chat with friends for instance, that I don't know that much in terms of musical preferences"*. The ingratiation strategy is strictly connected to the desire of being liked (Lee et al., 2011) and in this case to be recognized as *"one that always listens at good music"*. This peer-oriented behaviour hides relevant self-related drivers, which are associated to *self-presentational needs* and external components of s*elf-esteem,* such as reputation and social recognition.

Some of the respondents mentioned collaborative playlists as another tool for sending music to their friends or peers with shared taste. In this context, the purpose is to add music that the sender appreciates and wants to share with one or more friends, because he or she likes "*them too much for not sharing them* (Respondent 2), or to share music that the receiver might potentially appreciate. In relation to the first motivation, some respondents highlighted the necessity to add music independently from the receiver's taste. In fact, some tracks "*are so emotional and beautiful, or so cool, that I need to spread the word. It's like a divine message that needs to be shared"* (Respondent 2), Whereas, in relation to the latter motivation,

"*collaborative playlists also have the function to exchange musical recommendations, especially with this close friend of mine"* (Respondent 3).

The findings of in-depth interviews show that authenticity of altruism is generally negatively related to the size of the audience with whom music is shared. Only when the group is composed of close friends and tastes are similar, altruism might enhance feelings of belongingness or affinity to a group, or other social aspects of the self-concept. On the other hand, there is a correlation between altruistic purposes and self-concept, inasmuch as altruism might enhance external components of self-esteem – *reputation, social recognition* –, internal components of self-esteem – *self-efficiency* - and *self-presentational* behaviours.

4.1.1.4. Social interactions & one's sense of self

According to the respondents, social interactions are extremely relevant in online music-sharing. Online music exchanges were found to be often complementary to offline discourses, inasmuch as they served as a trigger for offline conversations around a common interest and vice versa. Respondent 7 mentioned episodes of chatting with friends only through music-sharing links, that were following a *"conversation already started at the bar. We would not even answer at those conversations, only sending links to continue the discourse".* Moreover, Respondent 4 highlighted how music sharing may also enhance offline relationships, inasmuch as the feedback may happen online and lately, initiate discourses which might strengthen or create relationships. He briefly spoke about an episode with a friend during his Exchange programme, in which "*we were friends but not that friends. Then he put on Spotify this Italian artist (…) after that we had conversations and things started to get serious".* Respondent 4 recognized that music-sharing might significantly strengthen friendships and claimed for higher levels of interactions on Spotify, highlighting that it would enhance his engagement in online music-sharing. Also, Respondent 3 added that she wished that *"Spotify was more social, that I could select a community and Spotify could suggest me users with*

similar tastes, with whom I could exchange recommendations". Respondent 7 underlined the importance of carefully selecting the network, in order to avoid music that is incompatible with his taste and expertise. In fact, he stated: "*I don't want to contaminate my music. I would interact more only if I could select my network. I don't want you to be my Spotify friend, only because we are Facebook friends".*

Employing the framework of *extended self*, in which relationships are included in the definition of one's self, the findings pinpoint that individuals engaging in online music sharing by means of interacting with others appear to positively impact on their sense of self. Moreover, in some cases they fulfil *belongingness-related needs* and increase affinity to a certain group or to a specific person. In fact, some respondents declared to feel an increased group affinity by means of online music sharing, consequently encouraging offline and online conversations (Respondent 3, Respondent 4, Respondent 7).

4.1.2. Interrelations between motivations for not sharing and one's sense of self

Due to the poor prior literature on motivations for not sharing online and the lack of research on motivations for not sharing music online, this section has a very explorative nature. General motivations for not sharing were previously studied under a psychological and social perspective. This part of the analysis aims at answering to the second sub-question: *how do motivations for not sharing music on social media interrelates with one's sense of self?* This section will mainly provide insights from respondents who do not share music online or do it very rarely, namely Respondent 2, 4, 5 and 6.

4.1.2.1. Privacy concerns & one's sense of self

During the analysis of the transcripts, frequently emerged that the dominant motivation for low self-disclosure in terms of online music sharing derived from a high attachment to music. The statement "*For me music is very personal*" was present in almost all the interviews, and

in most of the cases led to less willingness to share. According to Respondent 4, music is inherently emotional and intimate, therefore it is hard to be shared, as *"music is such a personal thing"*. Also, Respondent 6 highlighted that he doesn't "*talk about this kind of things very often",* and that the profound attachment to music could hinder the process of sharing it with other people. Respondent 2 added that this attachment to music represented an obstacle when publicly shared with a wide audience, due to the strong association with her intimate nature and personality. Her concerns derive from the fact that "*perhaps (also because) there was a bit of me in that song. What I listen really represents me, so I don't want to share it"* (Respondent 2). According to these findings, self-presentational opportunities might be also perceived as a risk or an intrusive process in one's intimate nature. Privacy concerns depends on the willingness to self-disclosure, and in this analysis are divided according to the following psychological drivers: *discretion, need for uniqueness* and *low self-esteem*.

Discretion is a personality trait, that in these findings appeared correlated to *need for uniqueness* and *insecurity*. Respondent 6 explained his rare engagement in online music-sharing with a need for discretion in his intimate dimension and he compared online music streaming to the conception of Instagram stories: "*I don't even have Spotify. I don't like that everyone knows what you are listening at. It's the same as with Instagram stories. Everyone knows always what you are doing, where you are…and that really annoys me. I don't see the point. As I said, music is personal, and I don't see the point in sharing it online."* (Respondent 6). However, deep diving into the motivations for not sharing music on social media, Respondent 6 mentioned that "*there are a lot of songs that we all listen at, and that we don't want the others to know that we listen at them"* and continued claiming that *"that's also why I don't like Spotify. I don't want people to know my guilty pleasures",* explicitly expressing the fear of being exposed and/or socially judged. This is associated to a certain dose of insecurity, inasmuch as he was "*not sure about what the others would think",* together

with the need of maintaining his presumed image of music expert, as "*one that always listens at good music".*

Similarly, the investigation had to dig deep into Respondent 2's thoughts. She initially justified the decision of not sharing music on social media describing herself as very discrete: "*I don't like people knowing what I am doing or listening at, because it's mine and I generally don't see the point in knowing everything about the others"*(Respondent 2). However, the interview questions aimed at revealed what was behind that "*because it's mine*", and after some time Respondent 2 admitted that *insecurity* played a crucial role in overthinking about the others' potential reactions before posting, ending up not sharing music on social media. She declared to post content online (not music) *"only when I don't think too much about it"* (Respondent 2). However, since individuals are complex and hard to be reduced to one motivation or rationale, at the end of the interview she rationalized her behaviour and stated that *"not posting is a way to define yourself"* (Respondent 2). According to Respondent 2, non-disclosure behaviours might conceal the desire of being perceived as discrete, or – we argue - to be perceived as unique and anti-conformist. In fact, she claimed that not posting *"communicates something about you. It communicates that I communicate what I want to who I want"* and furthermore she declared to *"perceive her Instagram profile as an artistic product",* where she did not "*want to be like the others, posting pictures of my face".* Moreover, it can be argued that non-sharing has an influence on self-reflection and impacts one's sense of self.

However, non-disclosure behaviours were found to be also a product of an explicit *low self-esteem.* In fact, an overall low evaluation of one's worth may produce feelings of insecurity and fear of judgement. Respondent 5 admitted that she had always experienced *"musical preferences as something through which people judge other people",* and also Respondent 4 confessed that he had *"always judged people on the base of their music, so I don't want people to judge me".* Moreover, this insecurity creates the impression that the others have a

more valuable knowledge of the topic, as "*I know that I can appreciate the others' music better than mine, I always feel that the others listen at better music than mine"* (Respondent 5).

In summary, individuals are motivated in non-disclosing their music on social media by keeping their privacy, which in turn may be justified by different psychological drivers. It may derive from a personality trait, that is *discretion,* which is part of those personality traits and characteristics that are part of individuals' perception of self. However, also *discretion* was found to be motivated by a hidden or more explicit *insecurity,* which was associated to either a *low self-esteem* or to the need to maintain a certain image of one's self in front of the others. Moreover, not only the self-concept was found to be relevant in influencing motivations for not sharing, but also motivations for not sharing and the act of not sharing were discovered to be perceived as *markers* and s*hapers* of one's personality and values, inasmuch as *not posting is a way to define yourself.*

4.1.2.2. "Reception" concerns & one's sense of self

The findings spotlighted a recurrent motive, among those who denied any or rare engagement in music-sharing on social media, specifically on social network: they were afraid of a distorted reception of the message communicated through music or of the relevance of a significant track. In these terms, respondents 1, 2 and 4 mentioned that they were not fearing judgements, although they were frightened of not being fully understood or their contribution would not be seriously taken into consideration by others.

As affirmed by Respondent 1, "*I don't like the idea of posting music on social networks, because it is completely detached from the context. No one would understand why I have published it, except a few people, so I prefer to send it to those two people".* This is motivated by a desire of being understood and essentially receiving a feedback, both deriving from the broader category of *belongingness and love needs.* In addition, the lack of understanding from

a wide audience brought on the table also the risk of diminution of value. In fact, Respondent 2 defended her motives for not sharing content that is "*important, as when you post something or do an Instagram story, is generally to take a snapshot of something that is relevant for you",* by claiming that "*it could be belittled by others, or simply skipped, and that would make it less interesting also in my eyes"*(Respondent 2). This idea derives from the acknowledgement that *"not everyone is interested in what I listen at"*(Respondent 4), thus the music shared would not receive the same "treatment" and reception as if it would be shared in an offline context or in a one-to-one conversation.

Furthermore, as already mentioned (Respondent 5), the findings marked the acknowledgement of the others' lack of interest also due to a diminishment of one's musical preferences. The idea of *"(sometimes) having nothing really valuable to share"* (Respondent 5), might be interpreted in altruistic terms, to the extent that it is justified by *"I generally wait for others to share on collaborative playlists, because I assume that they know more than me, and I'll just wait until I have something interesting"* (Respondent 5). However, it is evident that in this case altruism is partially motivated by low self-esteem and insecurity, inasmuch as the assumption of others' superiority is relevant in the decision of not sharing.

In conclusion, individuals need others' reception and feedback in order to communicate, shape and define aspects of their self-concept or related emotional reactions. The perceived risk of missed or distorted reception, leads some individuals in considering music-sharing as a loss of time or as a risky operation of self-disclosure.

4.1.2.3. Intimate listening & one's sense of self

In the first part of the ZMET method, Respondent 2 discussed the pictures she brought underlining that they were all depicting situations in which she listened at music by herself, such as during a travel or in her bedroom. She commented: *"I love listening at music while travelling, while I develop my films, when I sing sad songs out loud in my room, it's*

something I really do by myself". Also, Respondent 6 stressed that he prefers *"listening at music by myself, especially when travelling"* and described listening at music as a means for integrating favourite songs into significant events, such as a specific travel. In fact, he mentioned that *"I could cite an album or a song for each travel that I have made, they form a sort of soundtrack"* (Respondent 6). Thus, in this case music listening practices cause a lack of interest in sharing music, inasmuch as it is true that *"it's something I really do by myself".* As already mentioned, the findings mark that for some individuals, music is extremely personal and represents an individual activity, in relation to which they have no interest in sharing it. This lack of interest does not derive from any particular motivation, it is simply connected to some established music-listening practices, which do not include the presence of other people.

In contrast, the intimate nature of music-listening, specifically for some tracks to which individuals are attached, hinders them in sharing it to others due to a form of *jealousy.* In fact, Respondent 3 affirmed that *"even though I do share a lot, the songs to which I am more attached I would never think about sharing them, I am jealous of them".* The research aimed at in-depth understanding this behaviour, which is very close to discretion, and concluded that they just don't want *"to be the reason why other people discover them"* (Respondent 3). This behaviour has been interpreted as driven by a form of irrational *selfish attachment* to one's favourite, intimate songs, that are carefully treasured by the respondents. Respondent 6 added "*there are some songs, that I have never shared with anyone, I have never talked about those songs or albums, and you are also going to forget the artists that I will cite in this conversation"*.

These motivations are strictly connected both to established music-listening practices and to a deep attachment to certain intimate music. They relate to one's self-concept, in terms of *extended self,* since some individuals perceive music to be a core part of themselves, and in terms of *unwillingness to self-disclosure,* due to their refuse to reveal parts of themselves.

4.2. Analysis of content on social media

The findings present three major themes: *self-presentation, interactions with friends and music-listening/music-sharing practices.* In this section the main findings will be discussed and later, compared to the interviews' results.

4.2.1. How music-listening and music-practices relate to self-presentation

From the content analysis a relevant motivational factor that emerged was *self-presentation,* in terms of general and emotional self-disclosure.

General self-presentation was mainly identified in the public sharing of music-related pictures and videos on Instagram. In fact, the presence of images of artists and visuals from music-videos was found to be a way of presenting one's self to the others. Specifically, Respondent 7 published on his feed two pictures of the group "Black Flag", associating his online profile to a certain musical preference. Similarly, Respondent 3 has posted one visual from a "French-pop" music-video, explicitly stating her preference for a music genre. Moreover, concert pictures and concert selfies were found to be a tool for self-presentation. In fact, they again associated the person with one or two specific genres, in this case with indie-alternative (Respondent 3) and punk-rock (Respondent 7), but also surprise the audience with some knowledge concerning an emergent genre such as French-pop (Respondent 3) or concerning well-known bands, such as pictures of visuals from Thom Yorke (Respondent 7). Furthermore, Respondent 3 associated three concert pictures to the tag "#analog", highlighting that she had taken pictures using an analogic camera. All the concert pictures were also containing the tag "@" the artist of the concert. Concert and festival pictures also were interpreted by the author as markers of participation to events, which generally increases the likelihood of being an outgoing, sociable person, boosting self-esteem and enhancing the self-concept.

In addition, Respondent 7 has created a Story Highlight only for music previously shared on his stories. Surprisingly, he stopped adding music daily to the Highlight right after the interview, whereas he kept on sharing music on Instagram stories. The music shared on the stories, on average two/three tracks per day, was generally associated to some lyrics, with the evident intention of communicating a mood, an emotion or simply a thought. For instance, they were associated to some thoughts on the current political situation or referred to a personal event, such as a recent break-up. Similarly, on Spotify the author found evidence of the creation of playlists and collaborative playlists with the explicit intention of sharing emotions, moods and communicate something about the self-concept. For instance, the title and the description of a playlist from Respondent 1, highlighted the intention of playing it during dinners with five close friends, thus sharing the emotional responses that these weekly dinners arise in her. Moreover, the author found many playlists from Respondent 1 divided in moods and/or explicitly related to phases of her life.

Additionally, Respondent 3 created a significant number of playlists dedicated to specific events (5 out of 45), showing the intention of sharing not only music, but also participation to music live events or festivals around Europe. Most of Respondent 3's playlists had cryptic and extremely customized titles, containing different kinds of genres, which demonstrated the high personalization of playlists and its self-related driver. *Self-presentation* is made through an eclectic listening choice, together with *emotion and mood sharing* that are various and diverse. It emerges the willingness of sharing lots of content, but the desire of not being explicit in the underlying meanings and references.

4.2.2. How music-listening and music-practices relate to social interactions

Social interactions were found to be relevant during the screening of content from social media, specifically in terms of pictures containing friends' tags, comments, collaborative playlists and playlists dedicated to significant friends on Spotify.

In the analysis of visual and textual content on Instagram, the researcher found that in festival and concerts pictures the respondents analysed were frequently tagging or at least capturing friends in the pictures. In fact, Respondent 7 published two selfies out of three containing friends and their tags at a popular techno festival. These pictures naturally caught the attention of friends and provoked their reaction. Indeed, their feedbacks generally included positive comments, such as hearts emoticons or affirmation of their friendship ("*I really love you, it has been a blast!*", Respondent 7's friend). Moreover, also other music-related pictures were capturing the attention of friends, who shared musical preferences. For instance, Respondent 7 posted a picture with the group "Black Flag", probably knowing that only a few friends would have understood. A friend commented with the lyrics of one of the most popular songs of the punk band. The reaction of Respondent 7 was "*I knew you would have understood"*. The interpretation of the author is that individuals post music-related content in order to intentionally or semi-intentionally arise reactions in the other users and foster social interactions.

Similar results were found in the case of Respondent 3, as friends were frequently reacting to concert pictures, concert videos, whether they were tagged or not, affirming their relationship and supporting her musical taste. In addition, the author observed high levels of activity in Instagram stories for Respondent 3 for two weeks during the month of August 2019. The respondent was posting on average from 5 to 7 stories per day at a concert or a music-related live event. Possibly, the stories were published to provoke friends' reactions. Also, the stories were frequently including the presence of friends, which increased the chance of eliciting reactions from friends to the Instagram stories.

Eventually, the researcher found evidence that the three most active respondents have created public personal and collaborative playlists. The collaborative playlists of Respondent 3 were all co-created in collaboration with an intimate friend, possibly strengthening the relationship and arising conversations around music-related topics. Similarly, Respondent 1, 4 and 5 had

created two collaborative playlists with a friend or more than one friend, intended at increasing music exchanges.

4.3. Comparative analysis

In this section findings from the interview analysis and from the social media content analysis are compared. The comparison only entails the themes of *self-presentational motives and social interaction motives*, with some additional considerations on differences of music-listening and music-sharing practices compared to what stated by the respondents during the interviews.

Findings on *self-presentational motives* in the social media content analysis were in line with the interview analysis, to the extent that music-sharing on social media was used as a self-presentational tool. The assessment of consistency was supported by observing that music-related content was shared both on Instagram profiles, in relation to a personal online profile, and in Spotify's public personal playlists. Moreover, evidence was found that the analysed individuals (Respondent 1,3,7) were willing to disclose intimate emotions and moods through music. In the case of Respondent 7, social media content analysis confirmed the s*elf-representative* function of music-related content shared on the feed, and the *mood-representative* function of music-related content shared on Instagram stories.

The results confirmed self-related intentions of sharing music online, namely *self-presentation* by means of music listening in significant phases of life or by means of favourite genres, and *mood and emotion sharing* by means of playlists dedicated to specific moods and emotional memories. The author was able to better interpret the latter due to personal information shared during the interview. This is in line with Respondent 1 statement "*I share a lot on Spotify because I know that only a few people would be able to understand"*. Thus, self-disclosure is sometimes encouraged by the awareness (or – we argue – the illusion) that

only a restricted circle of friends would thoroughly understand the meanings of personal content shared.

Findings on *social interaction motives* also confirmed the engagement in music-sharing activities in order to elicit friends' and others' reactions. Specifically, social media content analysis highlighted friends' tags, comments and stories with friends as markers of social connections and general reaching out strategies in music-sharing activities. The interpretation of collaborative playlists was certainly supported by previous information shared during the interviews, also by the fact that some respondents were screening their Spotify playlists during the interviews and describing the personal relationship with co-creators.

Differences were found in *music-sharing and music-listening practices.* In contrast to what affirmed during in-depth interviews ("*After moving to Berlin, I am only doing maximum one or two stories at concerts")*, Respondent 3 almost daily shared concerts and music live events on her Instagram stories, specifically during two weeks in the month of August. Similarly, Respondent 7 did not update his "*highlight stories*" with music content on daily basis, in contrast to what affirmed during the interview. The author observed other interesting post-interview behaviours in Respondents 2 and 6. They declared to engage respectively never and very rarely (once a year) in music-related Instagram activity. However, after the interview and during the daily stories content analysis, the author noticed that they both published one story each containing a song, extracted from Spotify.

5. Discussion

The findings of this research are in line with the suggestion of Oyserman, Elmore & Smith (2012) that the self-concept is both context-sensitive and a driver for action. In fact, on one hand the author has found evidence of the influence of music-sharing activities on respondents' self-concepts, whereas on the other hand the findings highlight that music-

sharing behaviour is highly influenced by one's perception of self. Moreover, they confirm that digital possessions, such as digital music, are part of the individual self-concept (Belk, 2013). As a matter of fact, each respondent recognized music as extremely personal, somehow representative of themselves and, in certain cases, as a criterium for social judgement.

The first sub-question was: "*how do motivations for sharing music on social media interrelate with one's sense of self?"*. First, the present research confirmed the primacy of self-expression (Lee et al., 2011), mainly in terms of intentional self-presentation, emotional and mood disclosure, as motivational drivers for sharing music on social media. Thus, self-related motivations were associated to the evaluative judgements that are part of the self-concept. In fact, the self-presentational needs were found to be correlated to self-esteem, specifically to high self-esteem and even to narcissism as suggested by Mehdidazeh (2010). In this context, the self-concept influences motives for sharing, inasmuch as self-esteem enables the display of personal taste in music, emotional and mood-related music. Sometimes, self-presentational needs were associated to an ideal self-concept presentation (Whitty, 2008; Belk, 2013; Johnson & Ranzini, 2018), which was supposed to enhance self-esteem and reputation.

The other dominant self-related motive is the need for social engagement and the consequential seek for social interactions (Seidman, 2013), which was found also as complementary to offline relationships. The need for social interactions was found to be relevant in the intention of sharing music on social media, in order to create, enhance or maintain relationships, both online and offline. The findings highlight also the quest for potential online music-exchanges, elicited by online social interactions. Respondents generally admitted the appreciation of a positive feedback, while the overlook of negative feedback depended on individual self-esteem. Positive feedbacks were found to enhance one's positive self-image as a music expert or as a point of reference, whereas negative feedbacks were influencing only the respondents with a low self-esteem and a poor confidence in their

musical tastes. These results are in line with the proposal of Seidman (2013) to associate needs for *belongingness and love* to engagement in online sharing-activities.

Another interesting motive for sharing which was found to be related to one's self-concept, is altruism. Altruism was already present in existing literature as a motive for music-sharing on social network platforms (Lee et al., 2011). Lee et al. (2011) pinpointed that altruistic purposes might aim at *psychosocial rewards,* similarly to Munar & Jacobsen (2014) who argued that many *community-related motivations*, included altruism, are essentially moved by self-related drivers. The findings of this research contribute to this suggestion, to the extent that in-depth interviews revealed the self-related nature of many altruistic purposes. Specifically, altruistic motivations for sharing music on social media addressed at wider audiences were frequently justified by *self-presentational motives, self-esteem (reputation, social recognition…)* and *self-efficacy.* Thus, a relation was found between altruism-driven motivations and the self-concept, inasmuch as altruism might be biased by self-related constructs. Authentic forms of altruism were found to exist, when addressed to close friends or a single, significant person. In that case, altruism was motivated by the genuine desire of provide musical suggestions, supported by the understanding of the others' preferences.

As mentioned before, self-concept was found to be not only the trigger for many motivations for music-sharing, via psychological needs, but it also discovered to be deeply influenced and shaped by motivations and music-sharing activities. In line with the theory of the *extended self* (Belk, 2013), this research found evidence that music not only is representative of individuals' self-concepts (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018), but also forms an integral part of the self-concept. First, the research confirms that music preferences might mirror personality traits, desires and needs (Schwartz & Fouts, 2003). In addition, the association with significant memories and relationships enhance one's self-concept. In fact, music often allows to create a "*musical diary*", a storytelling of one's phases of life, enabling the individual to

connect past and current self-concepts (Gergen & Gergen, 1988), increases self-awareness and elicit a process of self-reflection.

The findings of this research outline that digital goods, namely digital music, are considered valuable by individuals. Prior research argued that virtual goods are considered less able to contribute to one's sense of self (Belk, 2013). Siddiqui and Turley (2006, in Belk, 2013) pinpointed that, compared to physical goods, virtual goods are perceived as "*less authentic*" (Belk, 2013). However, Lehdonvirta (2012) contrasted this thought by stating that digital good have brought attachment to goods to a completely renewed level. This research is in line with the latter position. In fact, the findings highlight that all the respondents considered music as an extremely personal thing and their attachment did not diminish, even though they were all listening at music via online streaming platforms.

The second sub-question was: *how do motivations for not sharing music on social media interrelate with one's sense of self?* First, the research findings stress the relationships between *privacy concerns* and the self-concept. In fact, the connection between them might be declined under different aspects. Privacy concerns may indeed be motivated by personality traits, that is *discretion,* which is part of one's self-concept, to the extent that presumed traits and characteristics compose one's perception of self (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). Moreover, *privacy concerns* might be essentially driven by *insecurity,* that in turn could be a product of low levels of *self-esteem,* which are evaluative judgements of the self-concept and therefore part of the self-concept (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). In addition, *insecurity* might be the result of overthinking processes motivated by the desire of being positively perceived by the others, thus related to social desirability and social aspects of the self-concept (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). Eventually, the self-concept was found to be influenced and defined by non-sharing behaviours, to the extent that non-sharing may represent a self-statement, that the respondent made in a process of self-reflection in the course of the interview.

"Reception" concerns were presented in this research, even though no evidence was found in prior research. They gather all those motivations that derive from the need of being fully understood and to be taken seriously by other users. In fact, some respondents highlighted a lack of interest or a fear in sharing their music online, which derived from the apprehension that their message would be altered, or the importance of the music would be undermined. These concerns are related to one's self-concept, inasmuch as the respondents felt that undermining or altering the music that they share would impact them in a similar way as undermining themselves or altering their words. This is in line with Belk (2013) and his, already mentioned, conception of *extended self,* which includes also digital possessions. Similarly, this feeling of deep attachment and the perceived intimate nature of music, might lead individuals to individual music-listening practices that exclude music-sharing activities. This *intimate music-listening* may also regard specific songs to which the individual is particularly attached and that he is extremely *jealous* about. The findings outlined that also this form of jealousy could be interpreted as *selfish attachment* to some tracks, that hinders the individual in sharing them. The author argues that this could be related to personality traits and unwillingness to disclosure parts of one's self-concept.

5.1. Theoretical contributions

The research aims at contributing to the exploration of online sharing behaviours and more specifically to prior research on music-sharing behaviour, within a psychological perspective. Since the project is motivated by a literature gap in the relationship between music-sharing behaviours on social media and the self-concept, the project aimed at contributing to filling this gap. Thus, the research wants to provide an in-depth understanding of motives behind music-sharing on social media, especially Instagram and the online streaming platform of Spotify, and evidence of the interrelations between motives and individuals' perceptions of self, in terms of self-presentation, emotions and mood, self-esteem, seek for uniqueness or conformity, and borders of the self-concept.

Concerning the motivations behind music-sharing behaviour, the author contributed to confirm prior findings in music-sharing intentions, in line especially with Lee et al. (2011) and Johnson & Ranzini (2018). Furthermore, the research investigated online non-sharing behaviours, which received little attention from existing research in general and totally lacked prior research in the specific case of music-sharing on social media. Therefore, the research contributed in providing novel findings in motivations for not sharing music on social media.

In relation to self-concept theories, the author didn't aim at providing any novelty to the self-concept literature, in terms of definition of the concept. In fact, the thesis limits to contribute to the self-extension theories (Belk, 1988; Belk, 2013) and in confirming the suggestions of Oyserman, Elmore & Smith (2012) of considering the self-concept as a force for action and a context-sensitive construct. Nevertheless, the project might provide new perspectives in investigating the self-concept and its interrelations with other intangible goods.

In summary, the project contributed in confirming or providing new insights on the role of psychological needs as triggers for motivations for sharing and not sharing music on social media. The study specifically confirmed individuals' self-expression and social interaction motivations in sharing mass media products on social media (Johnson & Ranzini, 2018), in a framework where the self-concept includes digital possessions – such as music.

5.2. Managerial contributions

The research aimed at providing recommendations and useful tools to professionals in the creative industry. In the first place, the results of this exploratory research may benefit artists' marketing managers, since the study of motivations of consumers' social media sharing is significantly relevant for music companies willing to engage in social media marketing (Salo et al, 2013). The study aimed at providing general insights on consumers' needs and the mechanisms behind sharing music on different social media platforms. In fact, users' social media behaviour is relevant to the extent that it gives suggestions for segmenting the different target markets, that means selecting social media tools and appropriate communities (Salo et

al., 2014, p. 39). In congruence with Salo et. al. (2014), understanding the relevance for users of content shared on social media facilitates the communication between artists and fans, among fans, and moreover it helps in generating word-of-mouth (Salo et. al., 2014, p. 39). Eventually, the study involved self-concept related concerns, since individuals are more prompt to share content that is somehow referred to themselves and/or that represents them (Belk, 2013).

Thus, the project wanted to contribute with insights on the relevance of self-expression, opportunities of interaction (Salo et. al., 2014) and communication, and other motives in the context of music sharing on social media. Moreover, it provides findings on the influence of sharing activities on one's self-concept, which may be useful in the elaborations of new services and functions, which aim at meeting users' expectations and/or desires. For instance, the findings on self-reflection and distributed memory, might benefit online streaming platforms developers in enhancing Spotify's features. In fact, the author believes that the present study could support social network platforms and online streaming platforms (i.e. Spotify) in developing functions that could further enhance users' experience, and other companies which engage with Spotify in promoting their activities and/or products, such as brands or festivals.

In addition, the research includes the behaviours of non-active users, which could provide suggestions for attracting new potential active users and improving services. These contributes may benefit artists' marketing managers and record labels in the elaboration of a social media marketing strategy, as a way of enhancing promotion, service marketing and customer relationship marketing strategies in record companies and artists (Salo et. al., 2014 p. 24; Vaccaro and Cohn, 2004). The research aimed at contributing in identifying new modalities for converting non-active users in active users. A suggestion that the author believes could be interesting for further exploration is that some respondents explicitly claimed for enhanced social interactions on Spotify. Considered also the privacy concerns, a

suggestion might be for Spotify to integrate private messaging in order to enable private music-sharing and avoid sending tracks off other social network platforms.

5.3. Limitations and further research

The author acknowledges that the study presents some evident limitations. First, the author is aware that the employment of content analysis enabled the exploration of active users, inasmuch as it is not possible to analyse content that does not exist. The author recognized that it constitutes a lack of additional information on non-sharing behaviours and a strong limitation to the study. Moreover, stories were explored only during the month after the period, since they normally disappear after twenty-four hours. Thus, in that context the author was not able to analyse content from the past months. Similarly, Spotify music-listening activities were accessible only during the month of investigation, as they are displayed in real time. The author suggests for further research the extension of content analysis to a longer period, in order to provide meaningful insights for a longer and possibly more relevant time length.

In addition, content on Instagram can be shared only with close friends. Therefore, the author is not entirely sure that all relevant content was accessible for this analysis. Similarly, content on Spotify in private session was not accessible. The author proposes for further research to ensure access to these contents from respondents, in order to provide a more comprehensive review of non-sharing behaviours and selective sharing. In fact, future directions might explore the behaviours and motivations behind the selection of content to be shared in contrast to content to be hidden from others.

Other suggestions for further research and novel perspectives regard post-interview behaviours. In fact, the author proposes a connection between respondent's behaviour and post-interview reflection, as she observed that some respondents modified their music-sharing behaviours after the interview. These post-interview behaviours might be relevant for future research on qualitative methods. Additionally, further directions might regard findings on

non-sharing behaviours in music-sharing, as they are still largely unexplored, and the author simply contributed in starting the discourse of these behaviours.

6. Conclusions

The study has been conducted in order to explore the growing phenomenon of online sharing, in the specific field of music-sharing, considered its increasing popularity on social media platforms. Moreover, it has been motivated by including an investigation of the interrelations with self-concept, due to the strong subjectivity of content shared by social media users. The project built on prior research defining the self-concept and on literature on online sharing behaviour from a psychological perspective, in order to investigate the connections between them. Psychological needs were employed as the main bridges linking individual motives for sharing, not sharing or selectively sharing to their self-concept(s). The focus of the research was on social media platforms, specifically the social network platform Instagram and the online streaming platform, Spotify. Whereas, the respondents were sampled in accordance to their age-group, young-adults, and to their music enthusiasm.

More specifically, the research question was: *How do motivations for sharing music on social media interrelate with one's sense of self?* The research questions included sub-questions concerned with sharing motivations and non-sharing motivations, and the interrelations with the self-concept. The study has emphasized that interrelations included both online music-sharing motivations and music-sharing influencing the self-concept, and the self-concept shaping and directing behaviours in online music-sharing. Especially, the analysis has underlined the role of self-concept and other self-related constructs in driving self-presentational motives for sharing, social interactions motives for sharing and altruistic motives for sharing.

On the other hand, privacy concerns were found to be significantly associated to the self-concept, to the extent that personality traits and evaluation of self-esteem influenced

unwillingness to self-disclosure and consequent non-sharing behaviour. Additionally, there was evidence that respondents cared about others' feedbacks, in terms of individual self-esteem and in terms of fear of being misunderstood or not understood by other users, while sharing their music. Moreover, the inclusion of music within one's self-concept was found to impact on both self-disclosure via self-expression and on the unwillingness to self-disclosure, due to a preference for intimate listening experiences. The framework of the extended self-concept enabled to interpret profiles and archiving digital music on social media as opportunities for self-reflection and further acknowledgment of past and current self-perceptions.

The study revealed the relevance of interrelations between music-sharing and self-concept, offering significant opportunities for further research and new perspectives in both sharing behaviour literature and self-concept literature. It also highlighted the importance of studying non-sharing behaviours, as they might disclose new ways for improving music-sharing and music-streaming services and features.

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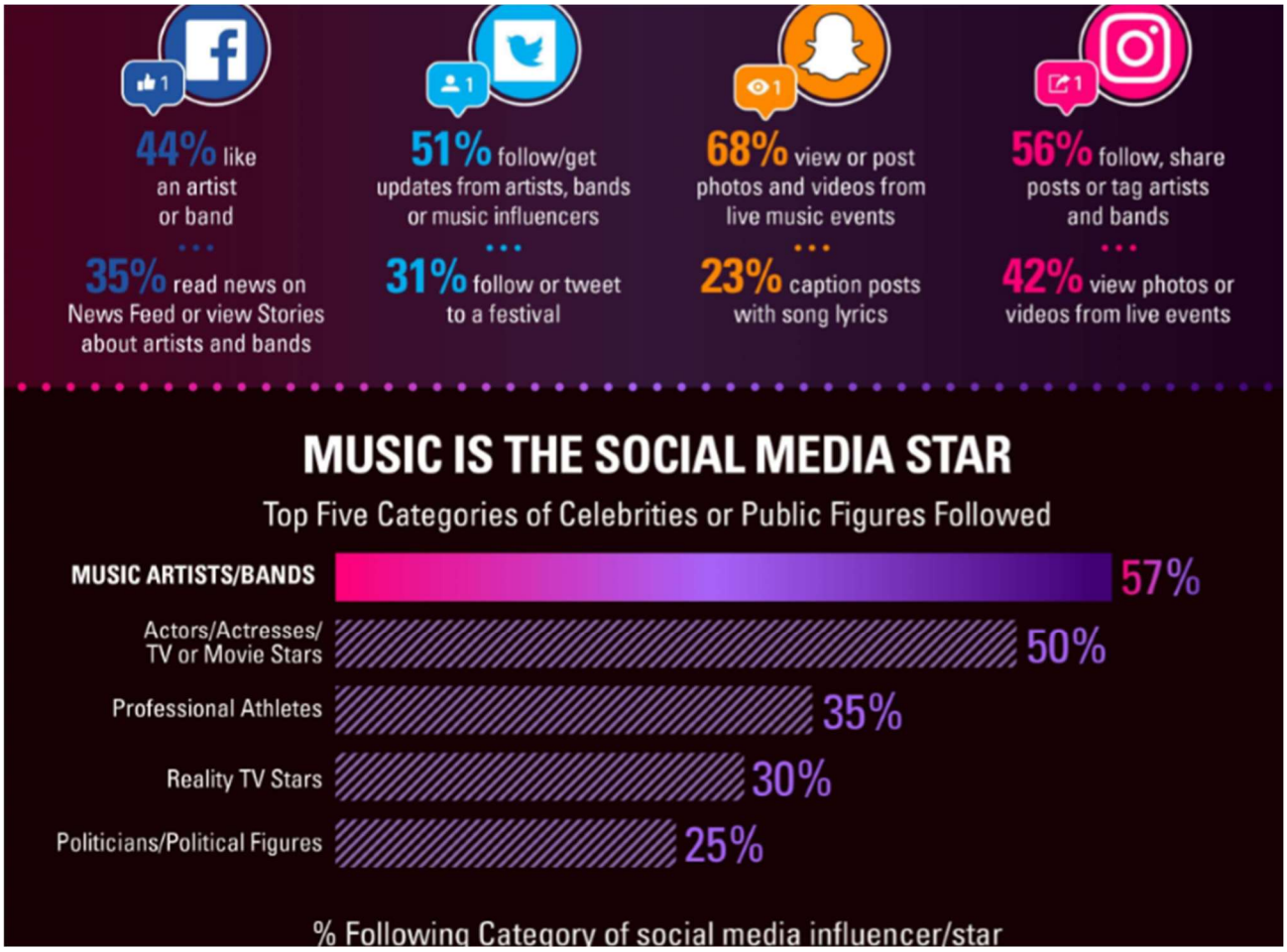
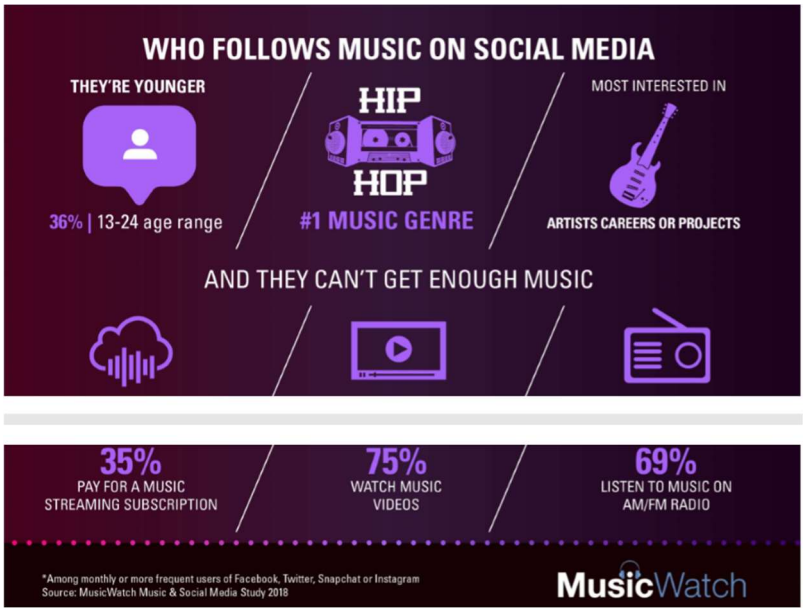
APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Trends in music-sharing – Source: MusicWatch Music & Social Media Study (2018)

Appendix 2: Trends in music-sharing (2) – Source: MusicWatch Music & Social Media Study (2018)



Appendix 3: Trends in music-sharing (3) – Source: MusicWatch Music & Social Media Study (2018)



Appendix 4: Summary of digital changes and extended self

DIGITAL DIMENSION	SELF	POSSESSIONS
Dematerialization		Attachment to and singularization of virtual possessions; almost, but not quite the same
Re-embodiment	Avatars affect offline self; multiplicity of selves	Attachment to avatars
Sharing	Self-revelation; loss of control	Aggregate possessions; sense of shared place online
Co-construction of self	Affirmation of self; building aggregate extended self; "Attachment to Virtual Possessions in Videogames"	
Distributed memory	Narratives of self	Digital clutter; digital cues to sense of past

Appendix 5: Interview Guidelines (very open to modifications, and often re-phrased)

Q1) Let's start from the pictures that you have selected. Could you please discuss each image that you have chosen and explain to me the motivations why you chose those images in relation to your relationship with music?

2) Are there any images that you would have liked to bring here, but you were unable to do it for any specific reason?

3) Can you tell me what is for you the opposite of music? (ZMET method: ask for the opposite of the theme chosen)

4) Looking at your pictures, which themes do you think that are the main ones? (guide the respondent in constructing a mental map starting from each picture) We can start from the first picture and find a construct for each one.

5) Question connected to the discourse on the chosen pictures. For example: You said that you see music as something intrinsically shareable with others…Can you think about an example of music that you want to keep for yourself?)

6) When a respondent was an active user: Questions connected to the platforms that the respondent uses most, for instance:

6.1. Could you tell me more about the relationship with your playlists?

6.2. Can you think about an example of collaborative playlist?

6.3. Can you tell me an example when you made use of the private session on Spotify?

6.5. Do you have any experience in posting music on Instagram stories? If yes, could you provide some examples?

6.6. How do you feel about your Instagram feed? Is there any music-related content on it?

6.7. Have you ever experienced negative feedbacks on the music shared on social media? If yes, could you describe the situation and how you felt about it. Have you posted again after that?

6.8. Have you ever experienced positive feedbacks on the music shared on social media? If yes, could you describe the situation and how you felt about it.

6.9. How personal is music for you?

6.10. Have you ever associated experience or people to songs?

6.11. Is there any genre or song that you feel closer to you?

7. When the respondent was a non-active user: Questions trying to deep dive into motivations. For instance:

7.1. Can you make an example of music that you are not willing to share at all and one of music that you would be likely to share in a comfortable environment?

7.2. How personal is music for you?

7.3. Is there any situation offline in which you like to share music?

7.4. Could you describe the moment in which you decide not to post?

7.5. How do you feel about “the others’ music”? Do you listen at others’ playlists?

7.6. How would you modify online streaming services and/or social media?

7.7. Can you remember people and experiences through music?

7.8. How do you feel represented by your favourite songs?

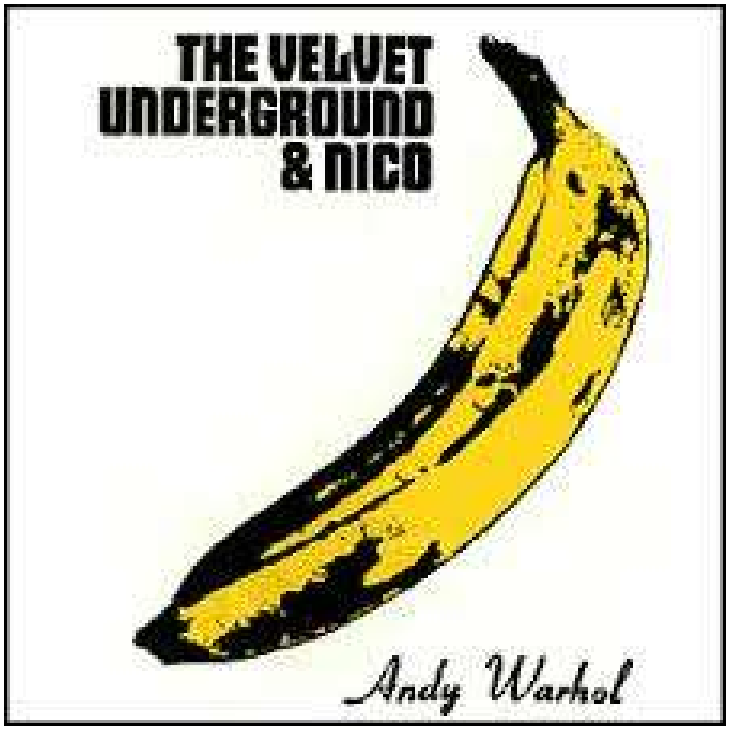
Appendix 6: Overview of participants

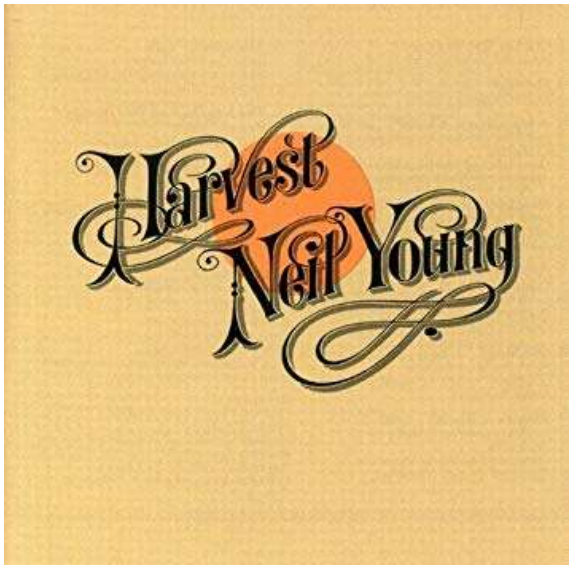
Respondent #	Age	Profession	Interview Length	Music-sharing engagement
# 1	24 years-old	CBS Student in Brand & Communication + E-commerce assistant at Bang & Olufsen	1 hour	Very active user on Spotify; rarely on other social media
#2	24 years-old	Anthropology student at Università of Bologna	1 hour and 45 minutes	Non-active user, sometimes engaging in music-listening on Spotify
#3	23 years-old	Management student at Grenoble Ecole de Management	1 hour and 45 minutes	Very active on every function of social media (Instagram & Spotify)
#4	25 years-old	CBS Student in IMM	1 hour	Non-active user, sometimes engaging in music-listening on Spotify
#5	24 years-old	Master in HR & Organization at Bocconi University	1 hour and a half	Non-active user, sometimes engaging in music-listening and playlist creation on Spotify
#6	24 years-old	Film studies at DAMS (Turin)	2 hours	Rarely engaging in music-sharing on social network, non-present on Spotify
#7	23 years-old	Language & Tourism Studies at Universitèe de la Valleè d'Aoste	1 hour and 45 minutes	Extremely active in every social media music-sharing

Appendix 7: Example of images chosen for the ZMET method by Respondent 2

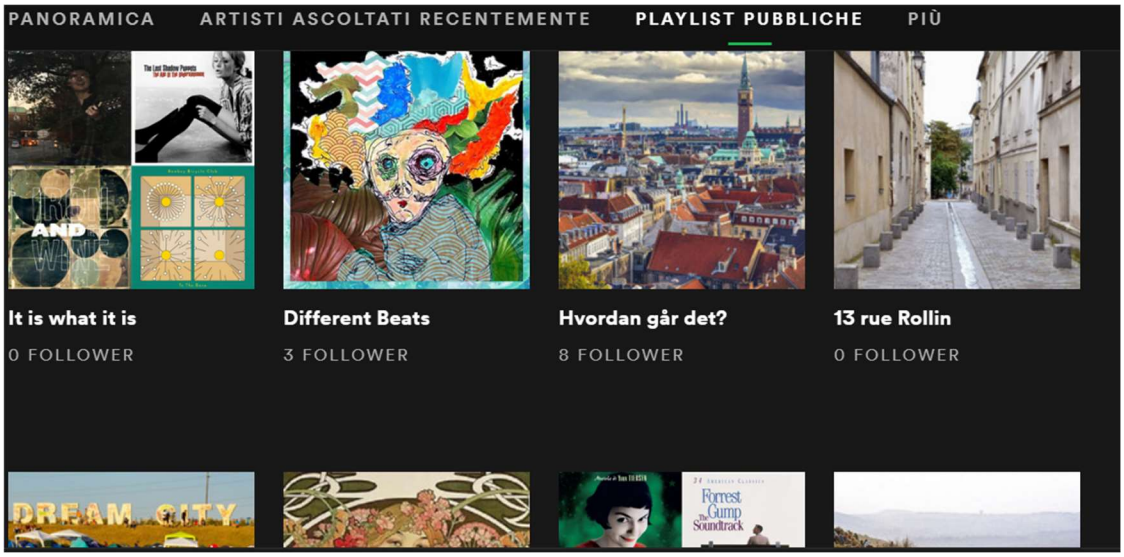
Appendix 8: Examples of images chosen for ZMET method by Respondent 3

Appendix 9: Examples of images chosen for ZMET method by Respondent 7





Appendix 9: Overview of a Spotify's personal profile



Appendix 10: overview of an Instagram's personal profile