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**To Be *Not* So Lonely: Support and Community through Twitter Fan Accounts in
the Harry Styles Fandom**

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Pforzheimer Honors College Thesis

Communication Studies

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the ways that fan accounts on social media foster community and fill the void of emotional engagement when the artist is not as active. It also looks at how fans' parasocial relationships change when the subject of their emotional connection disappears. This study adds to previous research done on fandom, parasocial relationships, and social media. To perform this study, a close content analysis was done, focusing on one specific Harry Styles fan account on Twitter, @hsdaily. Two time periods were defined, one being a time of low activity from Harry Styles and one being high activity. All of the tweets from these two periods were gathered and analyzed for similar themes and behaviors regarding community and emotional engagement. There were three main themes found across the tweets and replies: creating vs holding space, spreading information, and prompting discussion. A further analysis of specific tweets reveals exactly how this fan account encouraged fans to get engaged with Harry's music and each other to keep their connection to him in focus even when he is not available. The account also acts as a resource for information relating to Harry Styles and a common place for fans to come together and bond over their shared interest. This fan account was able to fill in the void left behind when Harry was not as active, maintaining fans' relationship with him in his absences. Further research may look deeper into how exactly these parasocial relationships manifest themselves into fans' behaviors and whether these findings hold true across other fan accounts and other social media sites.

Keywords: fandom, social media, fan accounts, parasocial relationships, Harry Styles

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Introduction

Harry Styles is an English singer-songwriter who got his start in the boyband One Direction after auditioning for the X-Factor in 2010. Harry and fellow band members Niall Horan, Louis Tomlinson, Liam Payne, and Zayn Malik released five albums between the band's creation and subsequent hiatus that began in 2015. After the band's separation, all of the members have gone on to pursue solo careers and have released multiple albums each in the seven years since. Harry Styles is arguably the most successful out of all the members and is currently the 10th most popular artist on Spotify worldwide with over 63.7 million monthly listeners (Harry Styles, Spotify, n.d.). According to the 2022 Spotify Wrapped statistics, Harry was the 7th most streamed artist globally with the second most popular album and number one most popular song for *As It Was* (Newsdesk, 2022). He has also won a Grammy for Best Pop Solo Performance for his single *Watermelon Sugar* and has a total of nine nominations, including the six for the upcoming awards (Harry Styles, Recording Academy, n.d.; Lee, 2022). Harry has released three studio albums so far, *Harry Styles*, *Fine Line*, and *Harry's House*, which have all reached number one on the Billboard charts (Harry Styles, Billboard, n.d.). Along with all of these accomplishments, he also has a very sizable and dedicated fan base with many of them watching his career flourish since his time in One Direction.

Harry's Instagram (@harrystyles) and Twitter (@Harry_Styles) accounts have 47.9 million and 38.4 million followers respectively (Harry Styles, Instagram, n.d.; Harry Styles, Twitter, n.d.). A large portion of his fan base was once teenage girls when he was in One Direction, but has broadened in the years since as his music has continued to reach a larger audience. Despite this change in audience, his support for his fans has never wavered. In a 2017 Rolling Stones interview, Harry explained:

Who's to say that young girls who like pop music – short for popular, right? – have worse musical taste than a 30-year old hipster guy? That's not up to you to say. Music is something that's always changing. There's no goal posts. Young girls like the Beatles. You gonna tell me they're not serious? How can you say young girls don't get it? They're our future. Our future doctors, lawyers, mothers, presidents, they kind of keep the world going. Teenage-girl fans – they don't lie. If they like you, they're *there*. They don't act 'too cool.' They like you, and they tell you. Which is *sick*. (Crowe, 2017)

More recently, at the Venice Film Festival in September, Harry explained, "I'm incredibly grateful to the people who've supported me in my life and the fans in particular have always provided me with a place to be myself and feel comfortable doing so and express myself. I would like to hope I can give that space back to them" (Bahr, 2022). This support and love for his fans easily goes both ways, with many fans finding comfort in the singer through not only his music, but also his personality and the environment he cultivates within his fandom (Buricelli, 2022). Many fans choose to get involved with the fandom and show their support for Harry through dressing up for his concerts, posting on their social media, and running or engaging with fan accounts. This feeling of comfort and desire to support him can lead to some fans developing a parasocial relationship, meaning they feel a deep connection and friendship with Harry despite the fact that they do not truly know him (Chilton, 2022).

As seen through Harry's statements, he does love and appreciate his fans, but the way that he feels this and the way his fans feel this are inherently different. The power imbalance of fan and celebrity cannot be erased no matter how close the two parties feel to one another. Despite this, his fans do feel a connection to him which is often encouraged by the way he talks about them and interacts with them (Chilton, 2022). But what happens when Harry is not active

and these interactions are not happening to cultivate their relationships? This is the idea that my study will be built off of. I anticipate that it will be found that fans find comfort in one another when Harry is not available to provide the emotional support that these parasocial relationships rely on. The research question of this study is:

RQ: How do fan accounts on social media foster community and how do they fill the void of emotional engagement from the artist in times of low activity? How do fans' parasocial relationships change when the object disappears?

This is a topic I am very passionate about because I have been a fan of Harry Styles for twelve years, and throughout my time in this fandom I have witnessed much comradery on social media from fellow fans, specifically through fan accounts. I want to better understand exactly how this community is built and how fans' parasocial relationships with Harry are affected when he is not available. This topic fits into the greater scope of communication studies research because both fan behavior and social media are major topics within the field, but there is not as much research done on the overlap between the two. Also, the research done on fans tends to be outdated, so my study aims to fill in this gap within a focus on a current and influential celebrity, as well as combining these two major topics.

Literature Review

Defining Fans and Fandom

Fans and fandom have been the subject of numerous studies within the communication studies field because of its presence in the lives of many teens and young adults, especially as the internet has grown over the past decades. Fiske (1992) examined the cultural economy of fandom and defined fandom as follows:

It selects from the repertoire of mass-produced and mass-distributed entertainment certain performers, narratives, or genres and takes them into the culture of a self-selected fraction of the people. They are then reworked into an intensely pleasurable, intensely signifying popular culture that is similar to, yet significantly different from, the culture of more 'normal' popular audiences. (p. 30)

He also explains how fandom is typically associated with forms of media that the dominant culture belittles and is often associated with subordinated groups of people in regards to gender, age, class, and race (Fiske, 1992). An example of this can be seen with how fans of boybands, who are typically young women, are treated compared to how fans of sports, who are typically adult men, are treated. Radway (1984) also examines this disparity, specifically about women reading romantic fiction who are belittled for enjoying this genre. She explains that this criticism often stems from the subject of these novels but disregards the social aspect of reading these novels and how the content fills in where their real life may lack (Radway, 1984). This is something that can lead to parasocial relationships and a reliance on a celebrity, or in this case a character, to supplement their real life relationships and needs.

Another topic that Fiske (1992) brings up in his research is the idea of cultural capital. He explains that "through fan knowledge and appreciation, [they] acquire an unofficial cultural capital that is a major source of self-esteem among the peer group" (Fiske, 1992, p.33). This demonstrates the intense type of "class system" that exists within these fandoms, encouraging the members to get more involved and educated in order to fit in with their fellow fans. It is also explained how fans in fandom are simply "excessive readers," meaning that they "differ from the 'ordinary' one in degree rather than kind" (Fiske, 1989, Fiske, 1992, p.46). Additionally, the fans

that have acquired the most knowledge, and are among the highest degree of fans, are ranked higher in the fan hierarchy, acting as experts.

This type of ranking becomes more prevalent and important when many fans gather in the same space. In the past, this joint space could have been on fan club websites or blogs as well as at conventions for particular types of media, but currently, the most common joint space is on social media, particularly on fan accounts run by expert or experienced fans.

Fan and Celebrity Relationships

Social media has changed the way that celebrities exist in our world and pop culture. In early Hollywood, the only way to get information on a celebrity's upcoming projects or personal life was through fan magazines which were heavily connected to the star's publicists. This meant that the only information the public got was "studio-approved" (James, 2010). In today's society, paparazzi have made a living out of seeking to capture embarrassing moments in celebrities' lives or break the next big news. James (2010) explains how the internet and social media have made this easier but also given the celebrities' more ability to control the narrative. What the celebrity does with this new ability and what the fans do in response to this new access is where research reveals the various problems that come with this change.

Bond (2016) explains that social media impacts teens' parasocial relationships, which is defined as "unilateral, intimate relationships that audience members develop with media characters and celebrities" (p. 656). When these stars post on social media with small glimpses into their personal lives, they create a sense of false closeness with their audience which is referred to as performative intimacy (Bond, 2016, p. 657; Marwick, 2011). This performative intimacy has the potential to strengthen parasocial relationships because fans may perceive these social media posts as authentic and non-calculated which increases the feeling of closeness to the

star themselves (Bond, 2016, p. 657; Cohen, 2016). In fact, Stever & Lawson's 2013 study on celebrities' use of Twitter revealed that they "disclose personal information on Twitter and that such disclosure is meaningful and potentially harmful for those who consume the message" (Bond, 2016, p. 659; Stever & Lawson, 2013). This is because the disclosure emphasizes the intimacy between star and fan, but yet, the intimacy is merely a caricature and the distance between the two parties are still being steadily enforced (James, 2010). As social media has become more ingrained in our culture, this presentation of false intimacy has become necessary for the success of a celebrity and maintenance of their status. This creates a dilemma for the star having to balance what reveals too much and what is not enough in order to ensure that the fan can still perceive a sense of connection and intimacy keeping them involved (James, 2010).

On social media, celebrities also have the ability to directly engage with fans through retweets, responses, or likes. Bond (2016) found that individuals on the receiving end of one of these interactions had a stronger parasocial relationship compared to an individual who has not had this experience. This computer-mediated communication has also been found to have a larger impact on perceived intimacy compared to more traditional forms of interaction, such as autograph signings. These events are very structured and limited while social media posts are seen as more authentic and spontaneous, meaning fans feel more connected since the star actively and voluntarily chose to interact with them (Bond, 2016, p. 659; Marwick, 2011). While these interactions do strengthen parasocial relationships, they can also be the result of the severe one-sidedness of the celebrity-fan relationship. James (2010) mentions in her study that:

The fan is arguably using the celebrity for purposes of fantasizing, or a mere hobby. The celebrity uses the fans as a means for income, popularity, visibility and 'buzz'. As such, a Kantian ethic of specific imperatives is often invoked – fans will often mention to each

other that a celebrity owes them a specific Tweet or gig, especially if it has been a long time since the celebrity has been in contact. (p. 285)

When fans realize that they are doing so much for the celebrity and not getting something in return that they think they deserve, it could possibly cause the celebrity's interactions with them to become less spontaneous and special but more an act of upkeep to satisfy and maintain their fans.

Parasocial relationships are not necessarily harmful, but there is much potential for this connection to grow and begin crossing boundaries. There is a phenomenon known as:

erotomania, in which a fan suffers from the delusion that the celebrity is not merely sending Tweets, press releases or status updates online, but that the very actions, words, gestures, or items appearing in a celebrity's film or song are a means by which the celebrity is 'speaking to' or 'communicating' with the fan. These items are used as 'self-referential delusions' confirming the love relationship. (James, 2010, p. 285)

When the imagined closeness between fan and celebrity transforms into these imagined romantic relationships, it is no longer "harmless" and can very quickly lead to stalking behaviors, which has happened to celebrities such as David Letterman and Jodie Foster (James, 2010). This line is a very thin one that is pertinent to maintain and there is not much a celebrity can do to stop the delusion created by the fan once it begins, so it is necessary to not only look at the celebrity-fan relationship but also how exactly fans act on social media both with the star and with fellow fans.

Online Fan Behavior and Fan Accounts

Fans engage in a variety of behavior online and on social media in relation to their fandom of choice including running fan accounts or update accounts, interacting with fellow fans, creating and consuming fanfiction or fan art, as well as just passively observing. These

behaviors are not automatically harmful or boundary-crossing by nature, but again, there is a very thin line that separates these behaviors. James (2010) explains the behavior of a “good fan” who respects the celebrity’s need and right to privacy and how these fans make sure to separate themselves from those who do not. These fans and their accounts may refrain from visiting paparazzi websites and will not post or spread photos taken by them or others who did not respect their privacy. These “good fans” believe they have a duty to respect the star’s privacy, so they do not endorse or support any people or institutions that do not do the same (p. 285).

Fans also are cited as “feeling that they are in a sense ‘guardian angels’ watching over the celebrity’s day-to-day activities and emotional state” (James, 2010, p. 286). To do this, it is said that they maintain an archive of all things regarding that celebrity, such as news stories, photographs, and press releases, in order to stay updated. This also relates to the idea of fan hierarchy where fans who have been in the fandom longer are seen as experts and more experienced, so they are more trusted to give interpretations or verify information than newer fans. It is understood that they “know them better” since they have seen more of their career and often newer fans will want to befriend these experienced fans to boost their own standing in the community (James, 2010).

Looking at why fans choose to engage in the behavior at all, James (2010) once again explains that there are sets of rewards and benefits through online participation that grow a fan’s feeling of belonging. This not only makes them feel more involved, but it keeps them invested in the celebrity’s career and allows them to become one of those top-tier fans that are trusted and community-based celebrities in their own right.

Additionally, because of the disclosure granted by celebrities through their own social media posts, fans might feel the need to reciprocate with their own disclosure in order to

continue to develop the relationship. This can be attributed to the social penetration theory, which explains that as a relationship grows, the communication transitions from shallow levels to deeper and more intimate ones (Pennington et al., 2016, p. 60). This behavior can deepen parasocial relationships that are already present and make fans believe that they are fostering a genuine connection that in reality, is not entirely real. Oftentimes the disclosure allowed by the celebrity is strategic in order to gain commitment from the fans, but to fans it can seem very real. This relates to this study and how it examines what exactly happens to fans when this emotional engagement from the star, whether genuine or not, goes away and they must rely on each other to fill in the gaps.

Methodology

To better understand the ways in which fan accounts on social media foster community and fill the void of emotional engagement from the artist, this study did a close content analysis of a popular Harry Styles fan account (@hsdaily) over two distinct periods of time. This content analysis aimed to find both commonalities and variations on the type of content posted by the account as well as by the fans in the replies. This is a common research method in the field of communication studies and is often used to examine social media posts to find common behaviors, like being done in this study.

Twitter was chosen as the social media to analyze because of its widespread use within the Harry Styles fandom as well as by Harry's accounts to post official announcements and news. Instagram is also a popular social media for fan accounts, but because of its heavily utilized story feature and the need to post photo or video content every time, it is more difficult to track down past posts or get the full scope of interactions. Because of these limitations, Twitter was chosen as the social media to be analyzed.

The Twitter account @hsdaily was chosen to be the object of this study because of its large presence within the fandom, boasting a following of approximately 592.7k (HSD, n.d.). This account is one of the main sources for information surrounding Harry Styles and is even followed by @HSHQ, Harry's official "headquarters" account. The account joined twitter in July of 2013, which is in the midst of Harry's time in One Direction, making its owner a longtime fan and someone that would be viewed as knowledgeable and trustworthy in the fandom.

The two time periods that were chosen for analysis each represented an opposite volume of interaction or activity from Harry Styles. The period of low activity was during the summer of 2020, specifically April 15 to July 31. Over this period there were approximately 350 tweets, with 25 tweets and replies being selected for analysis. During this time, there was very little activity from Harry Styles, who was supposed to be starting his world tour that was postponed because of the pandemic. He was rarely seen in public, released no new music, did not perform any shows, and only released one music video for *Watermelon Sugar*. To contrast this, the period of high activity was during the weeks leading up to and shortly following the release of Harry's third studio album, *Harry's House*, on May 20, 2022. The specific dates were May 11 to May 22 and there were approximately 430 tweets over this period, with 16 tweets and replies being selected for analysis. During this time, Harry was very active and had multiple events happening almost everyday. Since he was promoting his new album, there were new interviews being released, new merchandise, pop-up shops, One Night Only performances, and tons of sightings by fans. This was also the first new album since December of 2019, so this moment was being built up and looked forward to for years.

To choose which tweets to analyze, all of the tweets from the selected periods of time were scanned for specific ones that demonstrated ways the account brought its following of fans

together and supplemented its typical posts with ones encouraging participation. Once these tweets were selected, the replies were also scanned for evidence of this community in action. There were three evident themes or goals among the tweets from both time periods: creating vs holding space, spreading information, and prompting discussion. After these themes were identified, the tweets were further analyzed for their methods and effectiveness through these lenses.

Findings

As previously mentioned, there were three main themes among the selected tweets from both time periods. First, was the idea of creating vs holding space, meaning that during times of low activity, the fan account would create spaces for the community to flourish such as hosting listening parties, giveaways, or trivia games. Oppositely, during times of high activity, the account would hold space open for the community while directing them to events already arranged by Harry's own team or other professionals instead of creating their own. Additionally, both time periods showed evidence of spreading information and prompting discussion, which could be understood as the job of these fan accounts. Harry's social media accounts also perform these tasks, but it tends to be received as too official and strategic as opposed to the fan account performing them, where it's received as more casual and friendly. To better understand these discoveries, I will do a close analysis of a selection of tweets and discuss the general tone of others within the time period as well as the replies.

Creating vs Holding Space

Focusing on the period of low activity, it was found that one of the fan account's main behaviors was creating space and activities for fans to get involved with Harry Styles content. During this time, he was supposed to be embarking on a world tour, meaning that fans were

expecting to get a lot of new content and interactions from Harry, but due to the pandemic, this was postponed and fans entered what they would refer to as a “drought” of Harry content. To make this pause more bearable and keep fans involved, @hsdaily would create events such as listening parties or giveaways and ask for input from followers for how the event would go. One tweet on April 15 read:

As we all know Harry’s world tour was supposed to kick off today so we are organizing a #LoveOnTourStreamingParty so we can still have fun and celebrate Harry’s music from home! Join us TONIGHT from 7PM ET. Send us ideas for a setlist and we’ll pick one at random! (15 songs) (HSD, 2020a)

As expected, hundreds of fans flooded the replies with their input on what songs should be played at the party. The replies ranged from his new releases from *Fine Line* to deep-cut songs from the One Direction days. This activity had many people excited to purposefully dedicate time to listen to Harry’s music and interact with fellow fans, bonding over their shared disappointment in not getting new content from the canceled tour.

This was not a unique activity though. Within the range being examined, there were multiple other examples of these listening parties as well as giveaways and trivia games. For example, on May 8, there was another streaming party, specifically for the *Fine Line* album, that was announced by stating:

Welcome back to another #FineLineStreamingParty! 🎉 If you’re a first timer this is the dynamic of the party: make sure you have your device ready to play so we can all start at the same time. We’re going to tweet each song we’re at so everyone can keep track. We start in 5 MIN (HSD, 2020b)

On June 25 there was another Love On Tour streaming party with an additional giveaway for fans that was announced by stating:

Tomorrow is our #LoveOnTourStreamingParty! 🥳 Joining us? RSVP with this link and you'll be participating in a giveaway: hsdaily.wixsite.com/rsvp At the end of the party we'll pick a fan who RSVP'd and also participated actively in the party to send them a gift from Harry's store! (HSD, 2020d)

On July 31, there was a streaming party in an effort to get *Watermelon Sugar* higher on the charts, so @hsdaily hosted a trivia competition with questions about details from the music video. The winner of this game would receive free merchandise, and the details of this game were announced in a tweet stating:

ROUND TWO: Watch the #WatermelonSugar video! We've prepared a fun game for y'all! We are going to ask 7 questions about the video while you watch and then we're gonna choose a winner depending on who gets most right answers first! READY? Start watching now, see you in 3:09 min (HSD, 2020e)

Within the replies of all of these tweets, fans expressed their excitement for the upcoming activity and their gratitude to the account's owner for hosting these events and giving them something to look forward to. Fans also responded to each other's tweets about enjoying specific songs and got to interact with each other online in a way that would typically be done at his concerts. @hsdaily was able to create spaces for fans to express their shared interest and interact with each other and the music in ways that are not typical for social media.

Moving on to the period of high activity, the account did not host events in the same way they did during the time of low activity due to the fact that there were plenty of events already happening. This was during a time of album promotion for a very heavily anticipated release, so

there were many events already planned by Harry's team, meaning that the fan account did not need to take on the responsibility of planning, but instead just directed fans on events they could attend or tune-in to. For example, on May 11, @hsdaily directed fans to a listening party in Amsterdam by tweeting, "Sony Music NL is hosting an exclusive #HarrysHouse listening party in Amsterdam on May 18! Check out their Instagram post for more information: [instagram.com/p/Cda6mB9qqGA](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cda6mB9qqGA)" (HSD, 2022a). On May 20, they tweeted the information for the Apple Music livestream of his One Night Only performance by stating, "Stream is live on @AppleMusic. Harry takes the stage in 25 min! #OneNightOnlyNY apple.co/AMLHarrysHouse" (HSD, 2022d). Finally, on May 21, @hsdaily told fans about a listening party being hosted on a secondary website for fans to tune-in to by tweeting, "It's time! Join us for Harry's House Party! party.harryshouse.com/event" (HSD, 2022e).

In all of these examples, @hsdaily was not the one responsible for planning the event, but their account was still open for fans to tweet about the experience. In the comment section of these announcement tweets, hundreds of fans replied about what was going on and their excitement for certain songs just like they had when the account was the one responsible for the event. This means that while @hsdaily no longer carried the burden of organizing the activities, the account still acted as a space for fans to come together and discuss what was going on.

The difference between these two times is whether the fan account was creating or just holding the space for fan interaction, acting as an active or passive entity, but either way, the comments were a method for fans to bond and speak to each other in a way that would not be possible without an account like this. The fan account acted as a type of meeting ground for all fans to flock to and subsequently facilitated their interactions with one another and their involvement with Harry Styles content.

Spread Information

@hsdaily is a specific type of fan account referred to as an “update account,” meaning that they tweet news about Harry ranging from big news that would also be announced on his main accounts to little pieces of information that are not as important but fans still like to know. When looking at the tweets from both time periods, this is something the account continued to do throughout, even though the frequency of these types of tweets differed.

During the time of low activity, the only recent news was the release of the *Watermelon Sugar* music video and the push to get the song higher on the charts. On July 31 after one of the streaming parties, they tweeted to let fans know that the song had been discounted by stating:

Thank you so much to everyone who joined the streaming party. We hope you had lots of fun! #StreamWatermelonSugar #WatermelonSugar has been discounted on iTunes and in Harry’s Official Store so buy it if you haven’t! 🍉 shopus.hstyles.co.uk/collections/fi...
 🍉 hstyles.lnk.to/watermelonsugar (HSD, 2020f)

This piece of information could be something that Harry’s official accounts would tweet if they were really pushing to be top of the charts, but in this case it was not as necessary because the song was already very popular. The fan account tweeted the information for fans to see and be aware of even though it was not the biggest news.

During the time of high activity, there was a lot more information to be spread and both @hsdaily and Harry’s accounts were frequently tweeting about upcoming interviews, performances, or merchandise releases. In this case, the information that the fan account spreads would be more detailed and specific, often even using photos or information from fans with firsthand accounts. For example, on May 16, @hsdaily tweeted a photo of one of the pop-up merchandise stores being set-up that came from a fan who saw it in person. The tweet read, “A

pop-up store is being set up at one of the coordinate locations in Berlin! (via rrysgender)” (HSD, 2022c). The inclusion of the photograph is very important information to fans looking to decide what they will purchase at the stores, and specifically for Harry Styles fans because his merchandise has a history of being disliked by fans. Knowing this backstory, it makes sense why this picture would be useful information for this audience and why it is important to tweet. Also, including the user who submitted the photo not only gives them credit, but also directs fans to someone who may be able to answer any follow-up questions they may have.

Another tweet on May 21 announced when Harry would be on television for his Bedtime Stories segment. The tweet, alongside a photo, read, “Harry for @CBeebiesHQ. Catch his Bedtime Stories segment on May 23 at 6:50pm” (HSD, 2022f). This is something that Harry’s accounts would most likely tweet as well, but again, this update type of account posts any news even if it is being repeated. The account acts as a sort of database for all things Harry Styles and a place that fans know they can go to find all available information.

This unwavering act of tweeting information relating to Harry Styles demonstrates the role that this account takes on by becoming one of the largest Harry fan accounts and its dedication to the fans. Even when there was not much information to spread, the account still did what it could, maintaining itself as a reliable resource for Harry information as well as a commonplace for fans to come and find a community of fellow fans.

Prompt Discussion

As a fan account with many followers, it's not possible for the owner to respond to all of the comments and engage in discussion with everyone, so instead, the account facilitates discussion among followers and poses questions. During the period of low activity, @hsdaily made an effort to keep fans engaged with Harry’s content and with each other. On June 13, they

tweeted a question, prompting fans to respond in the comments and engage with each other. The tweet read:

6 months ago Harry released his sophomore album Fine Line, immediately the album reached mainstream success & critical acclaim. But beyond that, millions of fans identified with the record's theme of heartbreak, self-discovery and retrospective. What does #FineLine mean to you? (HSD, 2020c)

This question was a way for fans to share their thoughts and also reflect on their connection to Harry's music. Some of the comments read, "It means everything. It's life, love, sadness, sex, happiness, joy. It's acceptance and discovery. It's everything. @Harry_Styles" (White, 2020) and "Fine Line makes me think, create, cry, smile, to go outside and enjoy the sun. Most of all it gives hope, in the end everything will be fine. A real magical fruit salad, isn't it?" (Bird, 2020) These responses share their deep feelings and emotions connected to this album, but also reinforce their role as a fan by quoting Harry's own words about the album's meaning. Harry had previously said something along the lines of "life, love, sadness, sex, happiness, joy," so this callout was a type of inside joke for only other fans. The question posed @hsdaily allowed these responders to express themselves, claim their fan status, and get emotional engagement with Harry's music again.

During the period of high activity, @hsdaily tweeted a similar type of prompt, encouraging fans to share their excitement for the upcoming album. The tweet read, "1 WEEK TILL HARRY'S HOUSE 🏠 What song are you looking forward to hearing the most? 🍣🌞🚗📡💛🎬🍷🌙 hstyles.lnk.to/HarrysHouse" (HSD, 2022b). Some of the responses read, "matilda, what about you?" (shatha, 2022) and all of them tbh but i'm most curious about music for a sushi restaurant" (angel, 2022). The original tweet received hundreds of replies and

many of these were fans replying to each other, sharing thoughts like “me too” or “that one’s gonna be great I can tell.” The question encourages fans to tap into the emotions they are feeling leading up to the release and also predict what certain songs are going to make them feel.

Prompting discussion is a task that Harry’s official accounts only occasionally take on, and often with bad results. When these types of questions come from the business-people behind Harry’s career, it comes off as very insincere and calculated and fans are less likely to fully engage with it because of its one-sidedness. @hsdaily is able to avoid this problem and receives heartfelt and meaningful responses because the followers are of the understanding that the owner is a fellow fan and so is everyone else in the comments. This environment is much more comfortable and casual, which allows the fans to speak their feelings more truthfully and get emotionally engaged with the content.

Conclusions

This study sought to understand how fan accounts on social media foster community, how they fill the void of emotional engagement when the artist is not as active, and how fans’ parasocial relationships change when the object disappears. Through this close content analysis of the Harry Styles fan account @hsdaily, it was found that the account acts as a resource for all Harry information and creates a common space for fans to come together and discuss or enjoy Harry’s content as a community. When Harry cannot provide the interactions with fans that encourage their parasocial relationships, the bond that fans feel may be weakened so these accounts step in to bridge the gap. Fans begin to rely on each other for relationships and to keep Harry and his content at the top of their minds. The community that is built within fan accounts on social media is a fun place to go to when Harry is active in order to share their interests and

excitement, but it is a necessary piece of fans' connection to Harry when he is not available himself.

After the conclusions of this study, there are still some questions due to its limitations and focus that prompt further research and understanding. I recommend further research be done on how exactly fans' parasocial relationships manifest themselves in their interactions with others and with Harry. I would imagine when fans speak about Harry Styles to their peers who are not fans, the manner in which they talk would indicate at least an acquaintanceship between the two parties despite that not being the reality. Fans may talk about him like they talk about a friend and may also talk *to* him like a friend. This would be an interesting topic to study and an important piece when it comes to understanding the current state of fan and celebrity relationships. Also, a similar study done with a different fan account or on a different social media would either support or oppose these findings and deepen the understanding of current fan accounts and their importance. Understanding the environment of fandom in society is important since most teenagers and young adults get involved with it at some point. I hope further research is done to better understand this environment and how individuals engage with it.

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