Who's account(able)? Making sense of Instagram in vocational teaching practices

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Abstract

While social media in an educational context has interested researchers for a long time, its use in vocational education constitutes a sparsely explored field of research. In this study, we explore how three vocational teachers in Sweden make sense of Instagram in their teaching practice through interviews and analyses of their Instagram accounts over time. Technological frames are used as a theoretical lens to explore how teachers perceive the nature, the strategy, and the use of Instagram at an individual level. Results show that initiatives, motivations, and approaches clearly differ among the teachers and that questions about accountability and expectations on the teacher and the accounts remain vague. Contributions include demonstrating how vocational teachers make sense of Instagram and how it can be linked to different levels of engagement that are rooted in diverse perceptions of how their role and their practice can be supported.

Keywords: social media, instagram, vocational education, vocational teaching, technological frames

Introduction

Social media has become commonplace in people's everyday lives and educators constitute no exception (Callan & Johnston, 2022; Carpenter et al., 2020). Thus, the time when social media was unilaterally regarded as a leisure activity has been left behind and we know that social media usage has implications for a variety of domains including work and education (Jungselius, 2019). Social media is a continuously important academic topic because of its nature of openly shared, user-generated content that helps people connect, collaborate, socialise, and coordinate (Boyd, 2015; Selwyn & Stirling, 2016). Already in 2016, Selwyn and Stirling (2016) argued that social media is a topic in educational research where hopefulness prevails when it comes to the impact on learning. Research sheds light on the increasing importance of conceiving learning with both formality and informality as pedagogical practices and the notion of informal practices (such as social media) within formal educational contexts is relevant (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Kanwar et al., 2019). In 2023, 4,9 billion people use social media across the world. The users divide their attention to several social media platforms from which the most popular are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, WeChat, and TikTok (Wong, 2023). In the education literature, there has been research exploring various social media platforms such as Twitter (Buzzelli et al., 2020; West et al., 2015) Facebook, (Nelimarkka et al., 2021; Thalluri & Penman, 2015), and TikTok (Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022; Nguyen & Diederich, 2023). Furthermore, researchers have taken an interest in different educational contexts including primary education (Romero López et al., 2019; Yunus et al., 2019), secondary education (Gleason & Von Gillern, 2018; Lantz-Andersson et al., 2016; Valasmo et al., 2023), and higher education (Greenhow & Galvin, 2020; Manca, 2020; Perez et al., 2023; Vandeyar, 2020). Some studies focus on the experience of the students using social media (Cooke, 2017; Neier & Zayer, 2015), while others pay attention to pre-service teachers' (Marín et al., 2021; Szeto et al., 2016), in-service teachers' (Aguilar et al., 2021; Greenhow & Galvin 2020), and school leaders' experiences (Netolicky, 2020). A recent scoping review (Chugh et al., 2021) concluded that among academics, social media use is mostly connected to research dissemination and personal reasons such as career and network development, but, not for teaching. Furthermore, a literature review by Barrot (2022) explores social media as language learning environment and concludes that there is overwhelming evidence of the positive impact of social media as a language learning and teaching environment. Although social media in an educational context have drawn much attention, research shows that while platforms such as Facebook and YouTube have received a lot of interest other social media platforms such as Instagram have remained underexplored (Barrot, 2022; Carpenter et al., 2020). In addition, few studies have taken an interest in the digitalisation of vocational education (Cattaneo et al., 2022), especially in a

Swedish context (Asplund & Kontio, 2020). In this study, we shed light on how vocational teachers relate to and use Instagram in a Swedish context, where Instagram is considered one of the three most popular social media platforms (Internetstiftelsen, 2023). According to Orlikowski and Gash (1994), individuals must make sense of technology to engage with it, and in this study we use technological frames as a theoretical lens to analyse vocational teachers' approach to Instagram in their teaching practice. By teaching practice, we advocate for a broad definition, that encompasses the actions that teachers engage in within the scope of their profession. It includes teaching and associated activities as the teacher or others impose on the teacher (Willermark, 2018). The research question is as follows: How do vocational teachers make sense of Instagram in their teaching practice?

The remaining article will be structured as follows. First, an overview of related research is given that deals with social media in a vocational education context with a particular focus on Instagram. Then technological frames are described followed by method, results, and analysis as well as discussion and conclusion.

Related work

In vocational education contexts, research on digitalisation, in general, constitutes a scarce research area (Asplund & Kontio, 2020; Cattaneo et al., 2022). This even though the digitalisation of society has significant consequences for vocational teachers and vocational teaching practice (Carlsson & Willermark, 2023, 2024). Vocational teaching is often described as dependent on physical material such as tools and objects, and practical performance in relation to them (Asplund et al., 2021; Hansen, 2017; Kilbrink et al., 2023; Lindberg, 2003). Vocational education and training are experiencing changes, and actions need to be taken to increase the attractiveness of vocational education to young people (Billett et al., 2020; Callan & Johnston, 2022). Billet et al. (2020) suggest that appreciation of the specific national, institutional, and contemporary contexts is required. This entails an engagement with the industry and professional groups as well as marketing of educational institutions in which social media plays a crucial role (Billett et al., 2020; Callan & Johnston, 2022). Social media in general and Instagram, in particular, are recognised as potential marketing tools within vocational education (Altamira et al., 2023; Stojanović et al., 2019). Social media has meant new opportunities for informal networking and learning for vocational teachers, especially for teachers teaching in less common occupations or specialised work tasks (Andersson & Köpsén, 2019). Social media has also been seen as a tool for bridging learning gaps between the arenas of education and workplaces (Enochsson et al., 2020), to increase vocational students design

thinking (Liu & Ko, 2021) or to enhance their literacy and critical thinking (Yasdin et al., 2021). However, adopting social media as a part of a formal educational practice can add pressure on vocational teachers due to the risk of criticism or failure, especially when the students have a greater understanding of the features and functions of social media (Connolly et al., 2019). Social media in general, and Instagram in particular, is seen as commonplace, and beneficial but also comes with risks.

Instagram is the fourth most widely used social media platform in the world. The use has increased since 2014, from 200 million users to over 1.3 billion users (Richter et al., 2022). At the time of writing, features include editing photos and video content with multiple filters and text characters. Additional features include sending private messages, using hashtags, and sharing stories only accessible for a limited time. Richter et al. (2022) suggest that the design of Instagram, its functionality, with its visual nature, may distinguish it from comparatively more text-focused platforms and could contribute to teachers using the platform differently from other social media (Richter, 2022, p. 4). The visual nature of the widely used Instagram (Adnan et al., 2021; Richter et al., 2022) has been described as suitable for branding, communication, and building connections (Adnan et al., 2021; Schaffer & Debb, 2020), self-branding due to its low cost of money and time (Adnan et al., 2021) as well as a tool for teacher's professional development (Carpenter et al., 2020). Carpenter et al. (2020) have particularly discussed the implications of benefits and critiques of educators using Instagram. From an online survey, 841 educators described how and why they used Instagram and the authors found that intensive and multifaceted use of Instagram that provided multiple professional benefits were reported. They found that professional wisdom, networking, as well and affective support were provided. Instagram was perceived to have increased educators' self-efficacy, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge. However, critiques concerning sponsorship leading to teacherprenureship, a term referring to teachers' participation having motives to influence beyond the classroom or school by marketing and selling products (Carpenter et al., 2020), and the increased attention to aesthetics due to the visual nature of Instagram, were also reported. Another finding was that participants also tended to mix personal and professional content on Instagram (Carpenter et al., 2020). Richter, et al. (2022) explored collaboration among elementary and secondary teachers in Germany, and concluded that different activities such as information seeking, information sharing, and co-creating, take place on Instagram. However, researchers also shed light on issues linked to critical aspects of social media usage in education including e-safety, control, and surveillance (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016) as well as worries that social media will negatively affect the educational system with intensified bullying and stress (Callan & Johnston, 2022; Leino Lindell, 2018;

Miller et al., 2016; Ott, 2017) or digital addiction among students (Aygul & Akbay, 2019; Bagci, 2019; Yildiz & Alkan, 2019). Based on previous studies, it is clear that the purpose and use of social media and Instagram within an educational context are multifaceted. As Instagram in combination with vocational education remains underrepresented in research, it is of particular interest to shed light on how vocational teachers make sense of Instagram within their teaching practice.

Technological frames

This study uses technological frames as a theoretical lens to analyse vocational teachers' approach to Instagram. Technological frames were introduced by Orlikowski and Gash (1994) to investigate technological development and use within an organisation. As stated by Orlikowski and Gash (1994), individuals must make sense of technology to engage with it. In that sense-making process, people develop certain knowledge, assumptions, and expectations pertaining to technology that influence their actions and behaviours. In their empirical study of an organisation's adoption of a groupware technology, they identified three domains which include; i) the nature of technology, referring to people's images of the technology and their understanding of its capabilities and functionalities, ii) technology strategy, referring to people's views of why their organisation acquired and implemented the technology, and, iii) technology in use, referring to people's understanding of how technology will be used on a day-to-day basis and the likely or actual conditions and consequences associated with such use (Orlikowski & Gash, 1994). The technological frames are connected to individuals and thus reflect individual variations yet are often consistent with people who share work tasks and experiences within an organisation, referred to as group frames. Within an educational organisation, this could imply that teachers, management, and the IT department have different group frames. If the group frames are similar across key actors within an organisation, they are characterised as congruence while the opposite is characterised as incongruence (Orlikowski & Gash, 1994). The degree of congruence and respective incongruence is assumed to explain opportunities and difficulties related to the implementation of technology within organisations. The technological frames are not static, instead, they are changeable and context-bound.

Though introduced over 30 years ago, the framework's focus on the subjective interpretation of technology by diverse stakeholders remains crucial in today's fast-evolving technological landscape. As organisations adopt new technologies, the varying perspectives of users, developers, and decision-makers shape their implementation and use. Its flexibility allows the framework to be applied to emerging technologies offering an approach to understanding the interplay between people and technology in organisations. Technological frames have

often been used to study the implementation of technology in a range of organisational contexts, such as the aircraft industry (Van Burg et al., 2014), electronic procurement (Mishra & Agarwal, 2010), and eldercare (Frennert et al., 2021). It has also been used in an educational context. Hsu (2003) uses technological frames to explore university students' views on online education. In a more recent study, Carlsson and Willermark (2024) used technological frames to analyse how teachers perceive smartphones and smartphone bans in vocational education. The results show that the smartphone constitutes a controversial and disputed technology in teaching practice and a breadth in how teachers understand, interpret, and relate to the smartphone in vocational education. Similar to that study, we here examine the use of digital technology in the context of vocational education. However, instead of exploring the role of smartphones, we investigate how vocational teachers make sense of Instagram.

Method

In this study, we use a qualitative approach where we explore three vocational teachers' approach to Instagram by observing their Instagram accounts in combination with semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2016).

The interest in studying vocational teachers' approach to Instagram emerged because of the first authors' dissertation project, about digitalisation in vocational teaching, in which vocational teachers were interviewed and observed. In the interviews and observations indications of the use of Instagram became evident, and the informants were recruited from the first authors' established network. The informants were teaching in upper secondary vocational education, at three different programmes. The informants represent three different vocational programmes at three different schools, however all three have an Instagram account connected to their teaching practice. Rebecka, a teacher at the Health- and social care programme, Einar, at the Handicraft programme, and Peter at the Electricity- and energy programme. Rebecka has more than 10 years of teaching experience while Einar and Peter have less than 5 years. Informed consent was gathered from the informants. During the interview, informants were provided with verbal information about the aim of the study, and that participation was voluntary. The analysis of Instagram brought about a need to protect anonymity also for the online community in question (Tuikka et al., 2017). Out of respect for this, we have chosen to anonymise the Instagram accounts and give them fictitious names. Furthermore, we have chosen not to republish any posts or other content.

Before the interviews, the authors observed the account and analysed its content and the frequency of posts. The first interview was conducted by both authors and the subsequent two interviews were conducted by the first author.

The interviews were semi-structured, lasted between 25 and 50 minutes, and were recorded and partly transcribed. The interview guide included three overarching themes; 1) The nature of Instagram, with questions like 'How would you describe Instagram?' 2) The Instagram strategy, including questions like 'Who is responsible for posting content?' During this theme, the informants were also asked to describe some posts of their own choice, and the interviewer selected posts that stood out and functioned as stimulated recall (Haglund, 2003) where the informants were encouraged to reflect on their decision-making process which led to them posting certain content at a certain time. Stimulated recall can be considered as a method to remind a person of how he or she reasoned during a certain episode and enable the interviewer to ask specific questions about the purpose and context behind the posts. 3) Instagram in use, included questions such as 'How do you use Instagram on a daily basis, and has the usage changed over time?' Based on the informants' answers follow-up questions were asked. Informed consent was gathered according to analysing content on the Instagram account as well as statements given in interviews. In one case (#thehealthcareprovider) it was difficult to localise who was responsible for the account because it was 'inherited' from a previous teacher who no longer worked at the programme. This meant that the researchers had to conduct inquiries, which involved contacting a chain of individuals to identify the original creator of the account.

The data analysis encompassed a dual approach, involving the examination of posts within respective Instagram accounts from the initial post with a starting point ranging from April 2018 to March 2019 with a common end date of June 25th, 2023. This entailed scrutinising aspects such as post frequency, utilisation of hashtags, and accompanying captions, in conjunction with assessing the extent of engagement as evidenced by likes and comments. Additionally, the focal point of each post was investigated, that is, such as presenting individuals, showcasing activities, and disseminating information. The analysis of the accounts consti-tuted the basis for designing the interview guide. In addition, the analysis of the accounts enabled more informed follow-up questions about how the usage has developed over time. For analysing the interviews, the theoretical lens of technological frames was applied to analyse the respondents' perspectives vis-à-vis the i) nature of Instagram, ii) the Instagram strategy, and iii) Instagram in use. Both authors were active in the data analysis where interpretations were jointly discussed.

Result and analysis

The three teachers with respective Instagram accounts have similarities, such as the name of the account following the same pattern, their number of followers

being similar, and their posts mainly depicting teaching activities in style. At the same time, views on Instagram's function, strategies, and use differ. Below, each teacher with the associated Instagram account is presented and analysed using the lens of technological frames.

Rebecka #thehealtcareprovider

The nature of Instagram. The Instagram account is named after the vocational programme and the school. The account has 181 followers and contains posts from March 2019. Rebecka describes the nature of Instagram as a 'feed based on interests' which she uses sporadically both privately and professionally. For professional purposes, she considers Instagram primarily as a marketing tool for the organisation and the vocational programme. She describes the functionality of being able to save and return to posts as central which makes her prefer Instagram over, for example, Snapchat.

The Instagram strategy. Rebecka describes the strategy of implementing Instagram at the school as something that occurred on the initiative of the management and a former teacher, and thus the presence on Instagram is something that she inherited. The followers are described as a mix including for example former teachers, students, the relatives of students, and principals, that is, mainly internal followers. From her perspective, Instagram offers the school and the programme an opportunity to showcase and promote themselves, while also enabling the content to reach a wider audience. Rebecka believes that the management appreciates that the programme is visible on Instagram. However, she expresses that they may have different ideas about what content is appropriate, as illustrated by; 'we also must show the right things, it's more important for them [the management] than for us I guess… but I think it is more in their interest that we are visible to attract students and that is what the idea is all about'. It can be seen as a particular characteristic of vocational education, which generally has a harder time attracting students than a university preparatory programme (e.g., Billett et al., 2020; Swedish National Agency for Education, 2023) and where teachers are involved in matters of making education attractive.

Instagram in use. It is the students who are responsible for updating the account and filling it with content, as illustrated by; 'I never post anything myself, but I always encourage students to update'. More specifically, it is the students in their final year of the programme who are responsible for the programme account. In practice, it means that the account with login credentials is handed over to the next generation of final-year students. There is no designated person tasked with monitoring the account, but the teachers at the programme collectively try to keep track of what is posted. Rebecka describes that during the graduation celebration, teachers had to intervene in the students' posts and encourage them

to use their personal accounts instead since it was not suitable content for the programme or school. The incident, however, constitutes an exception. In everyday use, the account consists of updates showing classroom activities, fieldwork, and internships, thus providing insights into the vocational student's everyday school activities, where images or videos are combined with captions, emojis, and hashtags. Some trends can be traced over time. Initially, the posts display activities related to education and workplaces while later posts also display social activities such as the 'Friday dance' or activities related to the student's game 'score hunt' which means that the whole school had an initiative encouraging the graduating classes to collect points by conducting different tasks and post them on the class Instagram. In sum, Rebecka views Instagram as a matter for the students and the organisation and her role is mainly to supervise the account together with her vocational colleagues.

Einar #thecarpenter

The nature of Instagram. The Instagram account is named after the vocational programme. The account has 398 followers and contains posts from April 2018. Einar describes the nature of Instagram as a social media where the vocational programme he represents can display their work to others via pictures and text. To him, Instagram is mainly a professional tool for marketing the vocational programme, but he also stresses that it can be of interest for students to document their work and the activities they take part in and that the medium is suiting for documenting the vocational programme.

The Instagram strategy. The initial technology strategy is not clear to Einar. He was not the one creating the account and is unsure who did. However, he assumes that the motivation behind the adoption is about marketing since the programme is lacking students at the same time as there is a great need for labour in the area. Einar elaborates; 'I realise that our programme is relatively unknown as not even the student counsellor in primary school knows about its existence […] Therefore we feel that we have to do what we can to market ourselves so that our municipality does not shut down the programme due to low student intake'. He highlights that the programme and the account he represents are aiming at a vocation where the needs for educated persons are much higher than the number of students taking the programme. He points out that the companies in the area are often small and have no financial muscles to conduct marketing and the programme is relatively unknown to the applicant students. Einar expressed that the ideal strategy would include joint engagement where the school management, municipality, and industry organisations and students collaborated to create interest and content.

Instagram in use. Einar describes that he wishes to highlight the quality of the students' work on Instagram, illustrated by 'We learn how to build beautiful

furniture here, not just butter boxes'. Einar sends the pictures and the text to a colleague, an apprenticeship coordinator, who edits and attaches applicable hashtags to the post. The post often shows daily work at the programme where ordinary activities are documented. The account has posts and stories providing content from social activities as well as information from different stakeholders and workplaces. There are many short videos of students working, and pieces of furniture in production created by students are also common. However, Einar describes an exception. One morning he made plans together with a student to meet up on the way to school, by boat. Einar sometimes takes his private boat to work, and the student was inspired to do so during his apprenticeship. Their meeting at sea was documented and resulted in an Instagram post containing an edited film, accompanied by music, a logo for the school, and the workplace the student went to, and several hashtags. The caption refers to the boat-building traditions in the local area. Einar describes that the post took some time to create, and he had to learn a new editing tool to be able to put the music and the logo together with the pictures and film sequences. This took him some time, but he describes it as fun and interesting to create the film and to learn how to edit the content, although he still sends the content to the coordinator for posting. The post has 28 likes, and a few comments preferably from the student's family. During the interview, he wishes to highlight another post where a student displays her piece of furniture, a serving trolley, both in school but also in her home environment. The post has about twice as many likes as the other and Einar is occupied by learning how this post became so appreciated. He wants to learn from the post that receives reactions in the future. A third post important to Einar is a post where a student created a stool. In the post, Einar states that the learning process is documented when three pictures show the idea, the drawing, and the finished product. He says that he knows that the student was proud of Einar posting it on Instagram. In sum, Einar mainly uses Instagram for marketing but also to relate to his students by encouraging their work in different ways. He sees potential for increasing the use of Instagram by involving students but would also like to invite the professional community and the municipality to engage in marketing via Instagram to attract students. The use of Instagram also holds potential for his own professional learning and to stay up-to-date with the industry.

Peter #theelectrician

Nature of Instagram. The Instagram account, #theelectrician, is named after the vocational programme and has 415 followers and contains posts from January 2019. To Peter, Instagram is both a private and a professional networking tool with visual features. He describes it as a social media among others which can be linked to, and supplemented with, for example, YouTube or TikTok. Peter started

to use Instagram in private, yet it became a professional tool as he was inspired by other teachers presenting their work and programmes.

The Instagram strategy. Peter's view on why he wanted to implement the Instagram account in his professional work is multifaceted. The initial idea was to display activities for students and their parents in a more interesting and accessible way compared to the e-mails with the information he previously sent. In time, he started to identify several reasons for using Instagram in his work including networking within the electrical industry, building and maintaining relationships with and among students, and contributing to knowledge sharing among students, the electrical industry, and the surrounding community. Knowledge sharing is not only directed towards content relevant to the work as an electrician, but also a reminder to supervisors of the struggles of learning a new craft. Peter describes how he also wants to show the positive environment and the relational ties that exist at the programme. During the interview he shows a post representing a picture of a student celebrating his birthday in the classroom and explains: 'With that post, I wanted to highlight that we have fun together, we care about each other, and we celebrate birthdays'. Overall, Peter describes how the strategy of using Instagram comes from himself with many partially different purposes. Peter argues that the threshold for uploading content should not be too high or associated with demands for perfection. Otherwise, the programme's presence on Instagram may be compromised.

Instagram in use. When the opportunity arises, he takes a photo or records a sequence that is immediately posted. The account displays mainly events with content about activities related to the teaching activities in and outside of the classroom. As mentioned in the Instagram strategy, it is also highlighted that Peter uses Instagram daily to enhance learning, having noticed students discussing recent posts in the classroom and building further on that. As an example, he mentions a post where he gave a tip on how to use a pipe to position the cables in a neat way in the electrical cabinet. There is also internal information, for example, a post communicating 'Now you can book appoint-ments for development interviews'. Several of the posts contain humour or inside jokes for electricians. In this way, the content is described as authentic and unfiltered. However, during the interview, he describes one occasion where he took a detour to a golf course after work to review the electrical conditions and report back to the students via Instagram. A detour and an activity he believes he wouldn't have done if it weren't for the purpose of posting it on Instagram. To Peter, it is important that he is in control of the account, and he stresses that he would not want to leave the account details to the students, due to the 'municipal, tax-financed activity they are representing'. Still, if the students wanted to create content, it could possibly be facilitated by him. In sum, Peter uses Instagram for many purposes such as learning for his students and for the

professional community, marketing, and networking. He also sees ways to increase the use as a part of his professional learning by creating more content and linking to other social media applications.

In sum, all three teachers use Instagram for similar overarching goals. Still, their strategies diverge when it comes to balancing the involvement of students, the content they share, and the degree of control they maintain over the account. The use of Instagram as a teaching material varies from being of no relevance to highly relevant. Each teacher's approach reflects their individual view of Instagram's role in education and professional growth.

Discussion

In this study, we have analysed vocational teachers' approach to Instagram on an individual level. Even though the accounts look quite similar at first glance, the interviews reveal different perspectives, related to the nature of Instagram, the Instagram strategy, and the Instagram in use (Orlikowski & Gash, 1994). As for the nature of Instagram, all respondents mention the marketing aspect which they perceive that they need to relate to either as self-imposed or as an expectation from above to make their vocational programme visible to others. It is in line with previous research that highlights that social media in general and Instagram, in particular, are suitable for marketing (Adnan et al., 2021; Altamira et al., 2023; Billett et al., 2020; Callan & Johnston, 2022; Stojanović et al., 2019). Yet while Rebecka describes Instagram as mainly a tool for marketing, Einar also highlights the marketing aspect but also stresses the functions for students to document their work as part of a learning process. For Peter, the marketing function is only one aspect of many including networking, learning, and cross-promotion by linking different social media to each other. Peter highlights a learning potential that goes beyond students' learning, to become a tool for learning of parents, siblings, teacher colleagues, and colleagues in the industry. He also describes Instagram as a motivational tool for his own professional development and for his students' engagement in teaching activities. It is also in line with previous research stressing the potential of social media to facilitate networking and learning (Andersson & Köpsén, 2019; Carpenter et al., 2020; Enochsson et al., 2020; Richter et al., 2022) and where contact with industry is particularly stressed in vocational education (Carlsson & Willermark, 2023). Furthermore, the Instagram strategy differs. Rebecka assumes a more managerial role where she refrains from posting anything herself but prompts the students to post content and hands over the very ownership of the account to the students. Her role becomes more of a gatekeeper (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016) that ensures that inappropriate content is not published through the school's channels. In contrast, Peter takes full ownership of the account and creates content designed

to increase engagement, learning, and collaboration with the surrounding stakeholders. Einar on his side is positioned somewhere in between, being the one deciding what should be posted from the programme but using an apprenticeship coordinator as administrator, which means a shared ownership between Einar and the apprenticeship coordinator. The differences might have to do with the different ways the accounts arise. Rebecka and Einar inherited their presence, and it became a hassle to understand why and by whom the account arose. Peter, on his side, was inspired by a vocational teacher colleague to create an account and use it for several purposes in comparison to Rebecka and Einar. Thus, Instagram in use is enacted differently. In the case of Rebecka, the students use the account, and her role is merely monitoring it together with colleagues. She sees the value of the account, displaying activities marketing the programme, but also as one of the many tasks that she must tend to. Einar wishes to involve other stakeholders to increase the standing of the vocational programme he represents, also suggested in the literature. Andersson and Köpsen (2019) shed light on how vocational teachers use social media especially if they operate within less common occupations or specialised subjects, which could be said about Einar.

Different levels of engagement

Results show that initiatives, motivations, and approaches clearly differ among the teachers and that questions about accountability and expectations on the teacher and the accounts remain vague. As stated by Orlikowski and Gash (1994), individuals must make sense of technology to engage with it and individuals' technological frames are context-bound, based on the time and place in which they operate. Based on how the vocational teachers in this study make sense of Instagram in their profession, various levels of engagement emerge. We have created a figure to visualise those levels (see Figure 1). The different levels of engagement are rooted in diverse perceptions of how their role and practice can be supported. Vocational programmes are often stressed as close to practice because of their connection to working life, where practical knowledge is emphasised. At the same time, schools and working life constitute different contexts that are characterised by different norms and social practices (Billett, 2006). Here, Instagram usage constitutes both disturbance and support of vocational teaching practice. On the one hand, the utilisation of Instagram can be regarded as a facilitator that supports important activities, including, but not limited to, communication with parents, learning, and networking within the industry. On the other hand, it can be perceived as a burden, wherein an already extensive teaching role is expanded and diversified, that is, vocational teachers become polymaths who are expected to engage in tasks such as marketing, that do not fall within their primary mission.
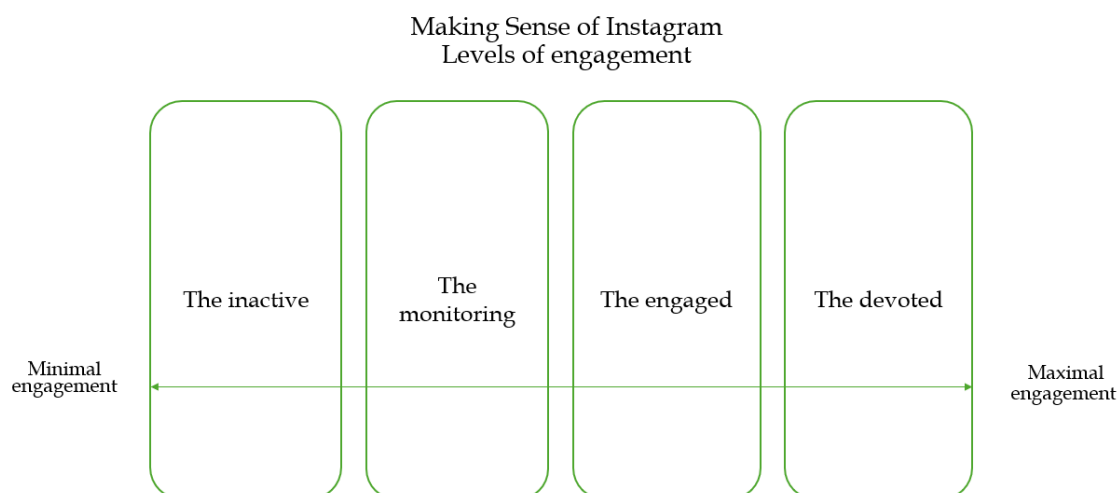
Making Sense of Instagram
Levels of engagement

| The inactive | The monitoring | The engaged | The devoted |

Minimal engagement ←————————————————————————————→ Maximal engagement

Figure 1. Categorisation of teachers' levels of engagement (authors own work).

Peter's engagement can be termed as 'devoted' which permeates his approach to Instagram as a multifaceted tool useful for a range of activities. The strategy of using Instagram comes from within and not because of pressure from the organisation. In everyday use, he is responsible for the presence and content of the account where it has become a natural part of his duties as a vocational teacher. Einars' commitment can be understood as 'engaged'. He primarily sees Instagram as a marketing tool but also highlights more possibilities. Einar was never the one who initiated a presence yet actively continues to fill the account with content and shares responsibility with a coordinator. Rebecka takes on a more passive 'monitoring' role, where the organisation's expectations prevent her from renouncing some degree of participation. In this study, informants were chosen based on the criterion of involvement with Instagram as an integral component of their teaching practice. Consequently, teachers who opted for inactivity were not included in the sample, despite the likelihood that a significant number of them may assume a fourth role characterised by 'inactivity' in relation to how they make sense of Instagram within their teaching practice. The categorisation can make visible different approaches to, and use of, social media within a vocational educational context, where the individual frames differ even though all informants have the same role as vocational teachers within their respective organisations.

Limitations

The study has provided in-depth insights into how vocational teachers make sense of Instagram in their teaching practice. However, it is essential to acknow-

ledge the limitations of the study. First, the study builds on a small sample of three teachers and their Instagram accounts, where only a selection of vocational programmes is represented. Furthermore, the study is bound to the Swedish context which potentially limits the range of experiences and perspectives examined. Additionally, the study has exclusively explored teachers who are present on Instagram and thus has not included the perspective of those who choose to abstain. Future research in this area could include a more diverse sample across different schools, regions, and countries.

Conclusions

In this study, we delve into how vocational teachers understand and incorporate Instagram into their teaching practices, using the framework of technological frames to unpack the varied perceptions and uses of the platform. We demonstrate how these perceptions shape distinct levels of engagement: The *devoted teacher* is characterised by their deep integration of Instagram into their professional lives, considering it a powerful tool for marketing, student engagement, and professional networking, using it creatively to produce dynamic content that supports educational goals. The teacher goes beyond basic usage, crafting dynamic and creative content that aligns closely with their educational objectives and enhances their teaching practice. *The engaged teacher*, while not as immersed as the devoted, still actively use Instagram, but their engagement is often more focused on showcasing students' work and promoting the programme. They tend to use the platform with intentionality but may not integrate it as seamlessly into their everyday pedagogical practices. The *monitoring teacher* maintains a more passive role, overseeing content created by students or colleagues without significantly contributing themselves. Their involvement is more about ensuring that the programme maintains an appropriate presence rather than actively shaping the content or direction of the account. Finally, the *inactive teacher* either does not engage with Instagram at all or has minimal involvement, viewing it as secondary or unnecessary to their educational practices. Ultimately, our study highlights the complexity of integrating digital tools like Instagram into vocational education, emphasising that the success and utility of such platforms depend heavily on the ways in which teachers engage with and make sense of them within the context of their teaching practice. Through these levels, we offer a nuanced understanding of how Instagram can function differently depending on how teachers perceive its role in their educational context, illustrating the complex and multifaceted nature of digital tools in vocational teaching practices.

Acknowledgments

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