

Digital Identity Negotiation among Indian Youth: A Study of Instagram Self-Presentation

Dr. Amita¹, Ms. Ankita Yadav²

¹Associate Professor, Journalism and Mass Communication, Central University of Haryana

²Research Scholar, Journalism and Mass Communication, Central University of Haryana

Abstract

In the contemporary digital media landscape, Social media has transformed the way youth perceive and share their identities. This paper analyzes the negotiation processes and the digital identities that are formed by the youth of India on the social media platform Instagram. The study focuses on fashion and lifestyle micro-creators. The research is qualitative in nature, a sample 10 micro-creators who have followers between 50K and 90K is choose, as they represent a window into youth identity available and relatable enough to negotiate their online identity in a way that the followers can observe and attempt to follow. The data consisted of 2 posts and 1 reel per creator, making 30 content items. Thematic analysis of the paper shows that the digital identity in Instagram is a practice of curation that is dynamic and performative and depends on the strategic curation of creators, and the capabilities of the platform.

Keywords: Digital Identity, Micro-Creators, Audience Engagement, Self-Presentation, Indian youth.

1. Introduction

The spread of social media has dramatically changed the way youths form and manifest identity. Digital media, especially Instagram, is becoming a space of interaction where people participate in creating and negotiating their identities using visual and textual media. Modern studies define social media as a digital reflection, which reflects itself and defines the self-image in its interaction, feedback, and representation as a result of constant interaction (Pérez-Torres, 2024).

The importance of Instagram, especially, in the process of identity building, is seen in the characteristics of the app that emphasize visual narrative and interaction. Research shows that users strategically use images, captions, and aesthetics to create coherent self-narratives and that these are often mediated through symbolic interactionist processes (Aulia and Putri, 2024). Nonetheless, these activities are not entirely personal, and they are determined by platform affordances and algorithmic visibility, which determine what is observed, appreciated, and reproduced. Consequently, identity on Instagram is self-mediated and structural in nature.

One of the aspects of the formation of digital identities is the rise of the ideal self and aspiration. The use of social media often propagates mediated images of success, beauty, and lifestyle, which may affect the self-perception and aspirations of the users. It has been argued that this exposure may improve self-expression and motivation and generate pressures of comparison and conforming at the same time. This duality frequently results in the simultaneous presence of multiple selves whereby people thus bargain

their true selves and an iconic online self, which also gives rise to phenomena such as identity fragmentation (Zahra et al., 2023).

Moreover, Instagram identity construction is thoroughly rooted in the socio-cultural backgrounds. With the growing number of global interactions in a digitalized world, young people are exposed to a wide range of cultural influences, and thus, hybrid identities are created as a mixture of local and global trends (Pérez-Torres, 2024). Meanwhile, social media is perpetuating and reinventing gender norms, especially via visual representations that shape body image, self-esteem, and gendered desires. These processes underscore the intertwined nature of the agency of the individual and the structural limits in the development of digital identities.

Although the existing body of knowledge on social media and identity is growing, there is a lack of research on Indian micro-creators in the fashion and lifestyle sphere. These creators are in a special place in that they are walking the line between authenticity and aspirational branding and are communicating with niche audiences. To fill this gap, this research paper explores how these micro-creators of Indian fashion and lifestyle form their identities on Instagram using posts and reels. Through thematic analysis, the study will be able to offer detailed information about the trends of self-presentation, cultural negotiation, and identity performance in the Indian online space.

2. Literature Review

Majumdar et al. (2022) examine the intersection of gender and digital identity by examining the manner in which social media platforms are utilized by young Indian users to execute identity. They have found that gender is an important factor in online self-presentation. The female users are much more concerned with appearance, relationships, and expressing emotions, whereas male users are more concerned with independence, achievements, and status. The research indicates that these trends are affected by a larger social norm, which still affects digital behavior even in the assumed free online environments. It is especially applicable to the research on Instagram, where the visual representation is at the core, and gendered expectations may have a strong impact on the content production process.

Social media has been extensively discussed as a vibrant arena of identity formation and self-expression among young people. The study takes a sociological approach in its quest to examine the way in which identity formation in online social spaces is informed by interactive functionalities like likes, comments, and visual self-representation. The results show that identity formation is a dynamic and constant process that is affected by the involvement of peers, feedback systems, and platform affordances. Social validation is important in influencing digital behavior because users strategically manage their online presence in relation to visibility cues. Nevertheless, this literature mostly focuses on the agency of the users, and on interpersonal relations, giving very little consideration to the structural processes, especially to the algorithmic models that predetermine which identities and content become visible. (Martinez & Vasquez, 2023).

Instagram has been noted extensively to be a major platform on which teenagers construct their self-identity in the online space. This quantitative study illustrates that teenagers are active in choosing photos, videos, and profile stories that portray them, and consistency in the content is one of the factors that shape identity. Like, comment, and hashtags are examples of interactive elements that serve as symbolic features that support social validation and shape self-perception. Based on symbolic interactionism, identity is formed through the process of constant interaction and interpretation of the feedback as given by other people. Another contribution of Instagram to the research is the extension of social networks and

possibilities. It, however, does not critically look at how the algorithmic systems influence the visibility and accessibility of these identity performances. (Aulia & Putri, 2023).

The studies have shown that social media such as Instagram offer space for young people to display their authentic and positive self-presentation, which helps them develop their identity. The longitudinal results indicate that there is a reciprocal relationship between positive self-presentation and self-acceptance, and identity clarity predicts future self-expression (Noon et al., 2024). These effects are moderated by peer feedback, which increases the effects as compared to the cultural context, which is not very influential. These data advance the previous cross-sectional studies by showing the dynamism and changeable character of identity construction on the internet.

Sahu and Verma (2025) analyzed how social media has affected the identity of young people in India, theorizing that digital platforms are areas where people are engaged in a continuous process of self-construction. The paper points out the two-sided nature of social media in facilitating the self-expression process and, at the same time, reaffirming social pressures with idealized images. Results suggest that the effects of these have been considerable on self-image, values, and behavior that culminate in tensions between authentic and performed identities, also known as identity fragmentation. Although the research has a lot to offer in the Indian context, its small sample size and absence of a sound theoretical basis limit its generalization and require more systematic and theory-based studies.

3. Research Objectives

- To analyze identity formation among Indian micro-creators on Instagram.
- To examine the trends in self-presentation in digital media.
- To investigate how social media affects identity formation.
- To learn about the socio-cultural aspects of digital identity.

4. Research Questions

- How do Indian fashion and lifestyle micro-creators form their identities on Instagram?
- What are the trends in micro-creators online content in terms of self-presentation?
- What is the impact of Instagram on identity formation of youth?
- What are the socio-cultural implications in the digital lives of Indian micro-creators?

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Approach

This paper uses a qualitative method to examine how Indian fashion and lifestyle creators on Instagram mediate and construct their identities online. It takes a closer look at the content these creators produce, the photos, videos, captions, hashtags, and emojis to determine the decisions they make when presenting themselves to the world.

5.2 Creator Selection

Purposive sampling was used to select ten Indian fashion and lifestyle creators on Instagram. The creators were not randomly selected but selected based on certain criteria. All ten had between 50,000 and 90,000 followers. Influencers in this bracket are usually called upper-tier micro-influencers in studies. They are more likely to be well-connected to their audiences and enjoy higher engagement rates than larger accounts and have sufficient reach to influence trends and be involved in brand partnerships (Audrezet et al., 2020; Ki and Kim, 2019).

The following criteria were used to include creators in the study: (a) they needed to have posted at least five times a month during the three months before the data collection; (b) their content must have been distinctly about fashion, personal style, or lifestyle; (c) their audience must have been primarily Indian, which was identified by the use of language and cultural references in captions; and (d) their profile needed to be fully public and accessible

5.3 Content Corpus

Two image posts and one Reel were chosen of each creator, which is 20 images and 10 Reels, respectively, and 30 pieces of content altogether. The posts and reels were selected as they were representative of the style, themes, and the ones that received the highest number of likes. The presence of both static images and Reels also enabled the research to consider two distinct yet similar forms in which creators use the platform to express themselves.

5.4 Data Collection

All data were retrieved using the publicly available Instagram data. In each post and in each Reel the following information was taken:

- Screenshots of pictures and Reel thumbnails.
- The entire text of the caption, all hashtags, emojis.
- Basic post information, including the date when it was posted, the nature of the content, and engagement statistics (likes and views) were only mentioned as a background.
- Notes on visual decisions - such as modes of dressing, colour, framing of the image, and any cultural element that can be seen, such as traditional clothes, local clothes, or festival clothes.

Everything was systematized in a record sheet, and every post was assigned a distinct code to ensure anonymity of creators. No confidential or limited content was viewed in any way. The content employed in the study could be viewed by any Instagram user.

5.5 Data Analysis

The analysis was performed in four steps, based on the reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2019) and the multimodal analysis, which focuses on the analysis of how meaning is constructed using both images and words simultaneously (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001).

Phase 1: Introducing oneself to the Data.

The analysis was initiated by making a complete read-through of all 30 content pieces. All posts and Reels were revisited multiple times, focusing on what was being shown visually, what was written in the caption, and how aspects such as hashtags and emojis were utilized. This assisted in creating an overall impression of patterns and recurring concepts prior to the actual coding.

Phase 2: Initial Coding

Once acquainted with the data, every piece of content was coded - that is, certain features and ideas were labeled and recorded. Not only some superficial aspects but also some underlying implications were discussed. These involved such aspects as:

- What kind of clothing is depicted, and who is it representative of?
- Tone and language of captions - e.g., was the creator being personal, inspirational, humorous, or in a blend of English and a local Indian language?
- The identity of the creator and specific audiences were positioned with the help of hashtags.
- Popular trends of content followed, particularly in Reels.
- Allusions to the Indian culture, festivals, traditional clothing, or local customs.

Phase 3: Building Themes

The codes were then tabulated and revisited in order to find general patterns, which were then the themes of the study. The themes were evaluated based on their ability to articulate a specific concept and their relevance to this study based on research regarding identity and self-presentation. It was determined that there were five themes:

1. Curated Self-Presentation: The way that creators selectively assemble their online visual and written content to create an attractive, consistent online identity.
2. Aspirational Identity: The use of fashion images to help create the image of a desirable lifestyle or imply social upward mobility.
3. Trend-Driven Identity: The way creators use, adapt, or even resist the world trends in fashion to form their own image.
4. Cultural Hybrid Identity: the way in which creators combine Indian traditional style with Western influences in order to develop a multiple cultural identity.
5. Gendered Identity: The way that fashion and lifestyle content is used to convey, maintain, or challenge ideas about gender.

Phase 4: Interpretation

The themes were then integrated in the last phase to create a more comprehensive image of identity work on Instagram among Indian creators. This entailed considering the influence of the platform itself, its functionality, algorithms, and visual culture on the decision makers make. The discussion was based on the concept of everyday self-presentation as a form of performance proposed by Goffman (1959) and the studies on the manifestation of Indian identity in contemporary consumer and online environments (Appadurai, 1996).

5.6 Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted within the proper ethical regulations. The most important were:

- Public content only: The content analyzed (posts and Reels) was all publicly available; no private accounts, restricted stories, or content that required a login were utilized. This is consistent with the recommended practices of conducting research with online data (Association of Internet Researchers, 2019).
- Anonymisation: In this study, although the profiles were public, all creators have received coded identifiers. Enough detail has been left out to prevent anyone from identifying them. This grants creators the protection against any unwanted effects of an academic analysis of them.
- Academic only: This content is utilized only for research purposes. No pictures of the creations of any creator have been reproduced, but the details of the pictures are described by words, not depicted directly.
- Researcher awareness: The researcher recognises his or her cultural background and how this could affect the process of reading and interpreting the contents. This sensibility was upheld during the analysis, which made the findings as unbiased as possible.

6. Findings

The content analysis of thirty Instagram content pieces generated by ten Indian micro-creators found five common patterns of content. Each theme is outlined below as an opening into the identity ideals that are being spread through the content that the Indian youth actively consume as creator content.

6.1 Curated Self-Presentation

The greatest pattern throughout the corpus was the cautious maintenance of a refined, aesthetically cohesive internet character. Artists employed image editing and colour-matching, image designs, idealistic language of captions, and selective personal revelation to create a logical and attractive public image. The aesthetic logic strictly dominated the content; only some moments, costumes, and emotional shades were revealed, and ordinary unattractiveness was not shown.

To the young Indian followers, this trend is revealing a specific ideal of selfhood, namely the notion that the good, successful, and socially admirable life is the one that appears to be controlled, curated, and purposeful. Studies about youth and social media always indicate that young audiences internalize the presentational norms they see in what they are exposed to. This tendency among artists of various genders, cities, and styles indicates that this is a common cultural code - a rule of self-representation that young Indian users will experience many times and are likely to use as a model of their own online identity. This is in line with the theory of front-stage performance, as postulated by Goffman (1959), which is now expanded to the digital scene, whereby the instruments of impression management are more potent and more easily available than ever.

6.2 Aspirational Identity

The second theme that was prominent was the frequent depiction of an aspirational lifestyle. Creator content involved upscale consumer-products, global travel, professional success, and life decisions that all indicated the right to an attractive and high-end lifestyle. Notably, such signals did not apply to creators whose material wealth was high - even creators whose production values were low used the visual syntax of aspiration, to place all their daily decisions in a discourse of development, ambition, and self-enhancement.

This is one of the main themes that is relevant in the context of youth identity negotiation in India. The fast-growing middle class in the country, combined with the exposure of the global consumer culture via digital channels, has generated a generation of youths, whose upward social mobility is a feature and individual desire. The aspirational content created by micro-creators acts as a colorful, familiar example of what such mobility might resemble. Young followers compare their lives, choices, and trajectories to the idealised versions of creators using the Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) to compare their own lives, choices, and trajectories with those shown in creator content.

6.3 Trend-Driven Identity

The third theme reflects how the trends of the platform influenced and were receptive to creator content - viral Reel formats, trending audio, challenge participation, and popular hashtag conventions. The presence of a certain tension between the need to keep to a unique personal aesthetic and adapt to the formats that are most noticeable and rewarded by the recommendation systems of Instagram was evident among a number of creators.

To young Indian followers, this trend is indicative and supportive of a specific ideal of identity based on cultural currency, the need to be perceived as up to date, digitally savvy, and allied to the beats of peer culture. The ability to stay on top of trends, among many youths, is a type of social capital: it means that one is a part of a group, is aware, and is part of a common cultural experience. The Uses and Gratifications framework by Katz et al. (1973) can be used to understand why young viewers gravitate towards trendy content: it achieves the social integrative function of making viewers feel like a member of a larger group of peers. Observing such a dynamic within the content that they engage with, young followers can internalise the notion that identity itself needs to be enacted in a manner that would fit into existing cultural

formats, in order to be socially recognised.

6.4 Cultural Hybrid Identity

The fourth theme was the most culturally specific to the Indian context. Creator content had a consistent tendency to reveal an advanced mixture of Indian traditional aesthetic objects - regional fabrics, festival event costumes, traditional silhouettes - with worldwide disseminating fashion codes. The captions often switched between English and local Indian languages, and some of the creators explicitly positioned their style as the new and the old.

This is the theme that is most explicitly the identity negotiation in the research. It reveals an actual dilemma of Indian youth: to be modern, globally-linked, and aspirationally cosmopolitan, but also remain meaningful in their relationship with Indian cultural heritage, family norms, and community membership. The idea of imagination as a social practice proposed by Appadurai (1996) can also apply: the particular instance of youthful Indian fans of the hybrid creator content does not passively consume it but actively imagines potential selves, which are rooted and worldly. The fact that those creators who manage to achieve this balance are popular gives the impression that cultural hybridity is not a problem that young Indian audiences are struggling to overcome, but an identity resource that can be utilized.

6.5 Gendered Identity Representation

The fifth theme touches upon the gendered aspects of the self-presentation of creators. There were clear and consistent patterns in the sample: female creators had focused their content on beauty routines, skincare, self-care, emotional sharing, and body-positive messaging; male creators focused their content on fitness, entrepreneurship, professional achievement, and competence-oriented personal branding. These patterns were consistent to a level that they formed a structurally significant divergence.

The importance of this theme to the negotiation of youth identity is that the normative power of repeated, consistent gendered representation is important. The repetitive exposure to a specific script of gender and identity intersection, young people who regularly engage with content that sets women as aesthetic and relational subjects and men as agentic and achievement-oriented subjects are being repeatedly exposed to a certain way of doing gender and identity.

Table 1
Summary of Analytical Themes: Codes and Theoretical Interpretations

Themes	Codes Identified	Theoretical Interpretation
Curated Self-Presentation	Polished and filtered visuals, coordinated colour palettes, motivational and lifestyle captions, selective disclosure of personal details, and strategic use of aesthetic templates.	Creators function as their own image managers, carefully staging a coherent and aspirational online persona. Content choices reflect conscious front-stage performance (Goffman, 1959).
Aspirational Identity	Luxury product displays, travel documentation, career and achievement posts, lifestyle signifiers indicating upward social positioning.	Posts consistently project an idealized self-oriented around desirability and social advancement, reflecting the commodification of personal identity

		in digital spaces (Duffy & Hund, 2015).
Trend-Driven Identity	Adoption of viral Reel formats, participation in trending audio and challenge structures, replication of popular hashtag architectures.	Creators' self-presentation is shaped partly by algorithmic visibility logics, which reward conformity to prevailing platform trends and popular content formats.
Cultural Hybrid Identity	Indo-Western styling, festival-occasion outfits blending traditional and contemporary elements, visible negotiation between regional and global aesthetic codes	Creators occupy a hybrid cultural position, drawing simultaneously on local Indian heritage and globalised fashion influences to construct a distinctly modern yet rooted identity.
Gendered Identity Representation	Female creators: beauty routines, self-care narratives, relational and emotional sharing; Male creators: fitness documentation, professional milestones, competence-oriented content	Digital self-presentation continues to reflect and reproduce broader societal gender norms, suggesting that offline gendered expectations remain active in online identity construction (Gill, 2007).

7. Discussion

The five themes that were discussed in this paper all point to the fact that Instagram is an effective identity tool used by the Indian youth. Instead of merely entertaining their audiences, micro-creators create content that idealizes desirable lifestyles, cultural identities, and social scripts that young Indian audiences are exposed to and look up to - knowingly or unconsciously - when creating their own identities. The findings are placed in this discussion into four major theoretical arguments.

7.1 Instagram as a Front Stage to Youth Ideals of Identity.

The theoretical framework that will be used in explaining the results is the idea of front-stage performance introduced by Goffman (1959), which is furthered by Marwick and boyd (2011) to the digital realm. The perceived ideal of selfhood, which is so evident in the curated self-presentation evident throughout the creator corpus, portrays a specific ideal of selfhood as a highly visible phenomenon to young followers: the notion that an admirable, successful life is one that appears to be in control, polished, and intentional. The youth who use this content on a regular basis internalize the presentation standards and tend to use them as guidelines for their own online personas. The platform intensifies this mechanism - its editing technologies, grid systems, and recommendation algorithms encourage aesthetic uniformity and aspirational framing of things, so that they seem to be natural and not created.

7.2 Aspiration and Social Comparison in the Youth of India.

The aspirational identity theme has a special significance in the Indian context. To a generation that is in a state of speedy societal transformation and growing yet unequal economic opportunity, the lifestyles embodied by micro-creators are bright and recognizable illustrations of how upward mobility may appear. Applying Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), young followers apply the content of creators as an upward reference group - the choices they make and their paths are compared to the idealised ones on

the screen. Duffy and Hund (2015) warn that the process itself masks the labour of seemingly painless success and may encourage the young audiences to think that aspiration is merely a question of individual desire, but not systemic position.

7.3 Cultural Hybridity as Active Negotiation.

The most directly expressed theme of Ting-Toomey's (2005) identity negotiation theory is the cultural hybrid identity. The young Indian people are in a constant negotiation between the global consumer culture and the local cultural belonging, and the creators they follow exemplify one of the possible ways out of the negotiation. Combining Indo-Western aesthetics, having bilingual captions, and dressing it in festival-occasion style, micro-creators show that contemporary, yet culturally rooted. This hybridisation is not passive mixing but active, culturally significant, as Appadurai (1996) reminds us, but this is what young Indian followers watch, internalise, and integrate into their identity work.

7.4 Gendered Scripts and Algorithmic Mediation.

The identity landscape that young Indians are going through is further determined by two structural forces. The trend-conforming content rewarded by an algorithmic visibility is based on the principles of platform logic instead of the true diversity of expression. Second, that gendered patterns persist through the corpus, female creators focused on beauty and care, male creators on achievement and competence, indicates that Instagram is not disruptive of offline gender norms (Gill, 2007). This uniform framing, in particular, makes the terms of identity seemingly acceptable and visible to young Indian women in particular.

8. Conclusion

This paper analysed how young Indian people mediate their identities based on the content of fashion and lifestyle that they see on Instagram. To adopt the stance that micro-creator content is a cultural mirror, namely, reflecting and strengthening the ideals of the identity that circulate among young Indian audiences, the study explored thirty pieces of content published by ten Indian micro-creators, using qualitative content analysis. They were found to be five themes: curated self-presentation, aspirational identity, trend-driven identity, cultural hybrid identity, and gendered identity representation.

The results display that Instagram is more of an identity source among the young Indian people and not merely a source of entertainment. Aesthetic standards, aspirational life, and cultural statuses revealed through creator content are a compelling and repetitive array of identity formations that young viewers are exposed to, compare and contrast, and utilize in the process of building their own identity. The fact that these patterns persist throughout the corpus of creators indicates that young Indians are negotiating a fairly consistent - and in a sense limiting - identity space that is both as influenced by algorithmic logics of the platform as by personal creative agency.

The most direct theme of this study, which could be said to capture this negotiation dynamic, is the cultural hybrid identity theme. Instead of merely imitating Western aesthetics or shrinking back into tradition, Indian micro-creators are actively hybridizing global and local cultural codes - setting an example to their young viewers of a form of identity which is both aspirational cosmopolitan and culturally-grounded. This observation plays a part in the research on non-Western digital identity by showing that Indian youth are not mere consumers of the global platform culture but are active participants who release it to a localized set of practices that make sense to them (Appadurai, 1996).

The continuation of gendered patterns of identity throughout the corpus is a more worrying result. The regularity with which the female creators focused on beauty and relationships and the male creators focused on achievement and competence indicates that Instagram replicates instead of challenging the

status quo of social norms, which have specific consequences in the identity choices young Indian women consider open to them (Gill, 2007).

There are limitations to this study. This sample of ten creators is narrow, and the lack of direct data on followers makes assertions regarding youth reception theoretical instead of being empirically verified. Further studies should involve gathering primary data on the young Indian followers by interview or survey to understand how they actively construct, challenge, or internalize the ideals of identity that can be seen in creator content. Inter-regional, inter-class, and inter-caste comparative studies would also contribute to a better understanding of the diversity in youth identity negotiation in India.

Young Indians are not passively scrolling; they are busy making use of what they see in order to find out who they are and whom they want to be. The micro-creators that they are being led by are major players who determine the terms of that negotiation. The interpretation of what is projected by those creators, and what it is to the millions of young viewers, is a crucial field of further academic research.

References

5. Pérez-Torres, V. (2024). Social media: A digital social mirror for identity development during adolescence. *Current Psychology*, 43, 22170–22180.
6. Zahra, M., Zubair, A., Aslam, N., & Naz, M. (2025). Investigating the impact of perceived social stigmatization and social appearance anxiety on quality of life among patients with facial skin diseases. *Archives of Dermatological Research*, 317, 198.
7. Majumdar, S., Tewatia, M., Jamkhedkar, D., & Bhatia, K. (2022). “You don’t know me so don’t try to judge me”: Gender and identity performance on social media among young Indian users. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 867645.
8. Martinez, J., & Vasquez, M. (2023). The impact of social media on youth identity formation: A sociological perspective. *Cineforum*, 63(1), 13.
9. Aulia, F., & Putri, K. Y. S. (2024). Use of Instagram as a medium for adolescence self-identity construction. *International Journal of Media and Communication Research*, 5(1), 33–43.
10. Noon, E. J., Seiler, G., Yang, C.-C., Pesout, O., & Stefanczyk, M. M. (2024). Insta-identity: The longitudinal reciprocal relationship between authentic and positive self-presentation on Instagram and the sexual identity development of sexual minority youth. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 158, 108278.
11. Sahu, A., & Verma, A. (2025). Evolving identities: The transformative power of social media among India’s youth. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 7(3).
12. Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.
13. Association of Internet Researchers. (2019). *Internet research: Ethical guidelines 3.0*.
14. Audrezet, A., de Kerviler, G., & Guidry Moulard, J. (2020). Authenticity under threat: When social media influencers need to go beyond self-presentation. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 557–569.
15. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
16. Duffy, B. E., & Hund, E. (2015). “Having it all” on social media: Entrepreneurial femininity and self-branding among fashion bloggers. *Social Media + Society*, 1(2), 1–10.
17. Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7(2), 117–140.

18. Gill, R. (2007). Postfeminist media culture: Elements of a sensibility. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 10(2), 147–166.
19. Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine.
20. Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Doubleday.
21. Horton, D., & Wohl, R. R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. *Psychiatry*, 19(3), 215–229.
22. Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and gratifications research. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509–523.
23. Ki, C. W. C., & Kim, Y. K. (2019). The mechanism by which social media influencers persuade consumers: The role of consumers' desire to mimic. *Psychology & Marketing*, 36(10), 905–922.
24. Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. Arnold.
25. Marwick, A. E. (2015). Instafame: Luxury selfies in the attention economy. *Public Culture*, 27(1), 137–160.
26. Ting-Toomey, S. (2005). Identity negotiation theory: Crossing cultural boundaries. In W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Theorizing about intercultural communication* (pp. 211–233). SAGE Publications.
27. Whiting, A., & Williams, D. (2013). Why people use social media: A uses and gratifications approach. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 16(4), 362–369.