

STUDENTS' SELF-PRESENTATION STRATEGIES ON INSTAGRAM

STRATEGI PRESENTASI DIRI ONLINE MAHASISWA DI INSTAGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This study explores online self-presentation strategies among Indonesian university students who actively use Instagram. Employing a descriptive qualitative design, two participants (SR and MT) were selected based on their high level of engagement on the platform and their willingness to provide access to both primary and secondary Instagram accounts. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observational analysis of Instagram activities, and content documentation. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model to identify key patterns of digital self-presentation. The findings reveal five core self-presentation strategies aligned with Hogan's (2010) digital dramaturgy framework: performance, exhibition, curation, audience selection, and archive control. SR demonstrated a spontaneous and reflective self-presentation style grounded in authenticity, whereas MT employed deliberate curation to construct a professional and aesthetically refined digital identity. These findings indicate that Instagram functions as a dynamic digital stage in which students strategically manage impressions in accordance with social contexts and identity goals. This study contributes to the growing discourse on digital culture by illustrating how Indonesian university students negotiate authenticity and professionalism in their online self-presentation practices.

Keywords: Instagram; online self-presentation; strategy; university students

INTRODUCTION

Instagram has become one of the most widely used platforms among university students, particularly Generation Z, who have grown up in a digitally connected environment (Santoso et al., 2025). Beyond entertainment, Instagram increasingly functions as a stage for constructing self-image and seeking social validation (Ferryanti et al., 2021). Through curated posts, visual aesthetics, and interactive features, students engage in impression management practices aimed at gaining recognition and approval from their peer networks (Syah & Septania, 2024).

The fluidity of digital identity enables students to adapt their self-presentation to different audiences and social contexts. However, this flexibility may also generate psychological pressure to maintain an idealized online persona. Social validation mechanisms—such as likes, comments, and follower counts—intensify the desire to

conform to prevailing online norms, potentially reinforcing idealized standards of appearance and behavior (Nurdin et al., 2024; Minandra & Moekahar, 2023). As individuals navigate these expectations, discrepancies between the ideal self and the authentic self may emerge, often resulting in self-discrepancy and emotional strain as users attempt to align personal realities with perceived social pressures.

Existing findings on the relationship between self-esteem and online self-presentation remain inconclusive. Some studies suggest that higher self-esteem is associated with more confident and open self-expression on social media (Laksono & Prayontri, 2024). In contrast, other research reports weak or negative associations, indicating that individuals with lower self-esteem may engage in more controlled or compensatory image management strategies (Arifin, 2022). These inconsistencies suggest that online self-presentation is shaped by a broader constellation of psychological, social, and contextual factors beyond self-esteem alone.

Hogan (2010) conceptualizes online self-presentation as a form of digital performance in which individuals construct and manage identities through content production, interaction styles, and audience segmentation. Within this framework, social media operates as a “digital stage” where users curate impressions, engage in selective self-disclosure, and regulate visibility. Psychologically, such performances reflect not only how individuals wish to be perceived by others but also how they evaluate themselves through ongoing processes of social comparison. The rapid circulation of trends, aesthetic norms, and algorithmically driven visibility further intensifies pressures to conform, underscoring the need for qualitative inquiry to capture students’ lived experiences of negotiating authenticity and idealization in everyday digital interactions.

Despite increasing scholarly interest, research on online self-presentation in Indonesia has largely emphasized correlational approaches—particularly studies linking self-esteem to online behavior—while paying less attention to the concrete strategies individuals employ in digital settings. Moreover, previous studies have predominantly relied on Goffman’s classical dramaturgical perspective, resulting in limited application of Hogan’s (2010) Digital Dramaturgy framework in local contexts. Addressing this gap, the present study adopts Hogan’s framework to examine how Indonesian university students construct and manage their online identities on Instagram. Specifically, this

study seeks to illuminate how young people negotiate authenticity and idealization in shaping their digital personas within the evolving culture of social media.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design, emphasizing the exploration of processes, meanings, and lived experiences within participants' natural contexts (Nurhayaty, 2023). This approach was selected to capture how university students construct and negotiate their self-presentation on Instagram, thereby enabling an in-depth understanding of their online behaviors, interpretations, and reflexive meanings.

Participants consisted of two 23-year-old university students from Bandar Lampung, identified by the pseudonyms SR and MT. Both participants were active Instagram users with more than 1,000 followers, frequently produced and shared content, and granted the researcher access to both their primary and secondary Instagram accounts. Purposive sampling was employed to select information-rich cases that illustrated contrasting orientations of online self-presentation. SR represented an authenticity-driven style characterized by spontaneous posting practices and reflective expressions, whereas MT demonstrated a more curated, strategic, and professionally oriented digital persona.

Consistent with Sugiyono's (2020) assertion that qualitative research does not require a fixed number of participants, data collection continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. Saturation was identified when interview narratives and observational data became repetitive and no longer generated new analytical insights. At this point, the data corpus was considered sufficiently rich and thematically coherent to describe the participants' digital behaviors and self-presentation strategies. Information of participants shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Demographic Data of Research Participants*

Code	Gender	Age	Status	Followers
SR	Male	23 years	Student	1,638
MT	Female	23 years	Student	5,215

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, systematic observations of Instagram activity, and documentation of uploaded content. The interview guide was

developed based on the five dimensions of Hogan's (2010) Digital Dramaturgy framework: performance, exhibition, curation, audience selection, and archive control. Sample questions included, "How do you decide which content to post?" and "How do you manage interactions and audiences on Instagram?" Each interview lasted approximately 45–90 minutes and was conducted face-to-face at mutually agreed-upon locations. All participants provided informed consent for participation and recording.

Observations focused on posting patterns, interaction styles, and the use of platform features such as Close Friends lists and secondary accounts. Documentation included screenshots of posts, Stories, and profile displays to support data triangulation. Field notes and reflexive journals were maintained throughout the research process to capture contextual nuances and the researcher's interpretive reflections, thereby enhancing analytical reflexivity and reducing potential interpretive bias.

Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model, which comprises three interrelated stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During data reduction, all interview transcripts, observational notes, and documentation were systematically reviewed and coded according to the five analytical dimensions of Hogan's (2010) framework. The coded data were subsequently organized into descriptive analytical displays in the form of narrative summaries supported by verbatim participant quotations. Interpretation was conducted by identifying recurring patterns, thematic structures, and underlying meanings related to online self-presentation practices.

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, multiple methodological strategies were employed. Methodological triangulation was achieved through the integration of interviews, observations, and documentation. Member checking was conducted through follow-up meetings in which participants reviewed transcripts and confirmed the accuracy of interpretive representations. Peer debriefing with academic supervisors supported the refinement of coding decisions and enhanced intersubjective consistency. Ethical principles were strictly upheld: participants' identities were anonymized, pseudonyms were used, and all identifying information was removed from report.

RESULTS

The findings of this study illustrate the online self-presentation strategies employed by the two participants, SR and MT, through the lens of the five core dimensions of Hogan’s (2010) Digital Dramaturgy framework: performance, exhibition, curation, audience selection, and archive control. Each participant demonstrated distinct approaches to constructing and managing self-image on Instagram, shaped by personal objectives, interaction patterns, and the social contexts they navigated. These differences highlight how young adults strategically adapt their digital personas to balance authenticity, social expectations, and desired identity outcomes. The illustration for students’ self-presentation strategy on Instagram is shown in Figure 1.

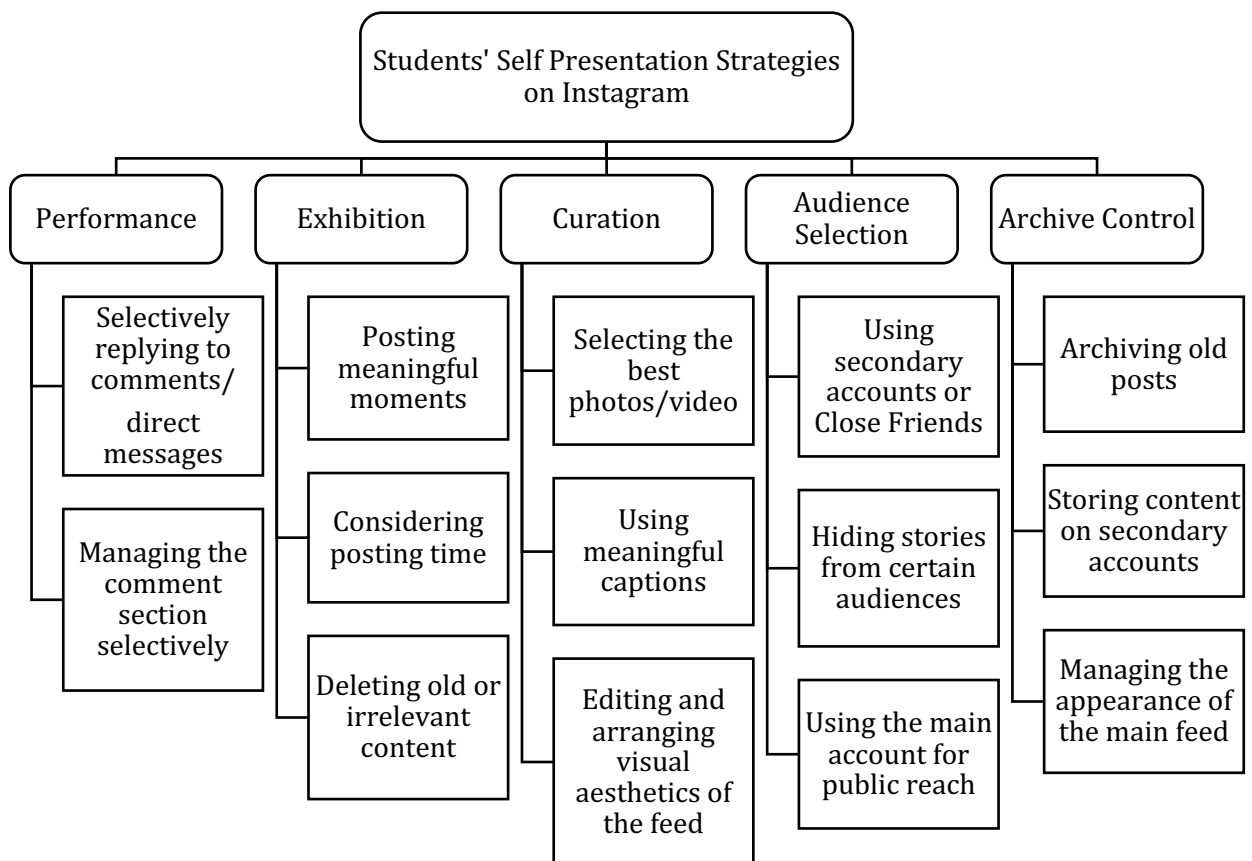


Figure 1. Online Self-Presentation Strategies of Instagram Using Students

Strategy 1. Performance

The performance dimension refers to how individuals manage interactions and express themselves through observable behaviors on Instagram, analogous to actors’ performances on a stage in Goffman’s dramaturgical perspective. Both participants

displayed distinct approaches to performing their online selves based on social intentions and audience contexts. SR demonstrated a spontaneous and humorous interaction style, often replying informally to comments from close friends while maintaining politeness when engaging with family members or unfamiliar audiences. In contrast, MT adopted a more regulated interaction strategy by selectively enabling or disabling comment sections to preserve a professional image and minimize unnecessary social exchanges.

These patterns indicate that the performance dimension operates as the front stage of online self-presentation, where individuals consciously shape social impressions through linguistic tone, responsiveness, and visibility management. Linguistic expression and interaction control function as micro-level performances that delineate digital persona boundaries, illustrating a subtle negotiation between personal authenticity and audience expectations. As summarized in Table 2, participants' narratives reveal contrasting orientations toward authenticity-driven and impression-management-oriented performances. SR's spontaneous and relational communication reflects an authenticity-oriented performance emphasizing warmth and social connection. In contrast, MT's selective comment management demonstrates strategic impression control aimed at sustaining professionalism, minimizing unwanted interactions, and displaying algorithmic awareness of how visibility, engagement, and moderation influence Instagram's dynamics. Collectively, these findings suggest that online performance involves an ongoing negotiation between authenticity and self-regulation in digital social spaces.

Table 2. *Interview Data for Performance Strategy*

Subject	Interview Data	Indicator
SR	“...for close friends, I reply jokingly... for strangers I usually just respond with an emoji...” “...I tend to be more polite when it's family” (PF.SR.P2.20-25, 29-30)	Selectively replying to comments/direct messages
MT	“Umm... I limit comments and such... but sometimes I don't close the comments because maybe someone wants to respond to that.” (PF.MT.P1.212-215)	Managing the comment section selectively

Strategy 2. Exhibition

The exhibition dimension refers to how individuals select, display, and organize digital content to convey particular impressions to their audience. Within Hogan's (2010) Digital Dramaturgy framework, exhibition represents the visual articulation of identity through posts, Stories, and feeds that function as curated artifacts of self. Through these visual and textual displays, individuals engage in selective self-disclosure by deciding which aspects of the self are revealed or concealed.

Both participants demonstrated distinct approaches to managing digital displays. SR tended to upload emotionally reflective content, such as personal photographs accompanied by captions expressing mood or lived experiences. His spontaneous posting practices—such as capturing a sunset photo simply because “it looked beautiful” (EX.SR.P1.278–281)—reflect an intuitive and affective engagement with the digital environment. These posts function as affective expressions and acts of self-validation, enabling SR to process emotions and affirm social presence through digital storytelling. As he noted, his intention was often “to show my friends that I just went somewhere” (EX.SR.P1.159–162), illustrating how exhibition becomes both expressive and relational.

In contrast, MT exhibited a more deliberate and goal-oriented exhibition strategy, primarily using Instagram to document organizational and academic activities (EX.MT.P1.95–96; 182–183). Her posts were designed to maintain a coherent and professional visual identity. Temporal awareness also emerged as a key element of her strategy; she reported delaying uploads “for a week if I’m not in the mood” (EX.MT.P1.187–189), indicating that decisions about when to post function as performative strategies for impression optimization. As illustrated in Table 3, participants exercised agency in controlling visibility on their digital stage. SR’s emotionally expressive posts foreground authenticity and self-validation, whereas MT’s structured and temporally regulated posting practices highlight strategic impression management through thematic consistency and timing. These exhibition practices also intersect with archival behaviors, which are discussed in the Archive Control section. Overall, the findings emphasize that exhibition on Instagram involves strategic decisions about how, when, and which aspects of the self are made visible.

Table 3. *Interview Data for Interview for Exhibition Strategy*

Subject	Interview Data	Indicator
SR	"I've archived some posts before, but I never reuploaded them. They were old posts that I thought looked kind of 'cringe,' so I just archived them. / I've never actually deleted any posts." (EX.SR.P2.65-68/73)	Deleting old or irrelevant content
MT	"When do you usually post the most? In the morning, afternoon, or at night?" / "It's not specific it depends on the moment" (EX.MT.P1.474-478)	Considering posting time

The data indicate that both participants exercised agency in controlling what appears on their digital stage. SR's emotionally charged and self-reflective posts illustrate the affective dimension of authenticity, positioning Instagram as a space of self-validation and emotional communication. In contrast, MT's structured and temporally aware posting pattern highlights strategic impression management through timing and thematic consistency. These exhibition patterns also intersect with participants' archival behaviors, which are elaborated in the subsequent Archive Control section. Collectively, these findings emphasize that exhibition on Instagram is not merely about displaying content but about strategically managing how, when, and which aspects of oneself are made visible to an audience.

Strategy 3. Curation

The curation dimension refers to how individuals consciously select, refine, and organize content prior to public display. Within Hogan's (2010) framework, curation functions as backstage management, where users determine which representations of self are appropriate for public consumption. This process involves editing, arranging, and at times omitting content to ensure alignment with an intended self-image.

Both participants demonstrated awareness of content management prior to posting. SR engaged in intuitive, emotion-driven curation, selecting images that felt personally meaningful rather than visually optimized. This approach underscores a commitment to authentic self-expression, where content selection is guided by affective resonance rather than aesthetic perfection. Conversely, MT practiced deliberate and goal-oriented curation, emphasizing visual harmony, balanced lighting, and color consistency

across her feed. Her editing choices—such as adjusting tones “to match the rest of my feed” (CR.MT.P1.116–118)—reflect symbolic self-enhancement, whereby aesthetic order communicates discipline and professionalism.

Table 4. *Interview Data for Interview for Curation Strategy*

Subject	Interview Data	Indicator
SR	“I take several shots and then pick one that feels right.” / “I just choose the one that looks better.” (CR.SR.P1.214,222)	Selecting the best photos/video
MT	“[...] the lighting and color tones actually, it didn’t look like this, I edited it to match the rest of my feed” (CR.MT.P1.116-118)	Editing and arranging visual aesthetics of the feed

As illustrated in Table 4, SR’s emotionally guided selections exemplify authenticity-oriented curation rooted in personal meaning and affective comfort. In contrast, MT’s meticulous attention to aesthetic coherence demonstrates impression-oriented curation aimed at reinforcing social credibility and perceived reliability. Collectively, these findings suggest that curation operates as an active negotiation between authenticity and self-optimization, enabling individuals to maintain congruence between private emotional experiences and public digital identities.

Strategy 4. Audience Selection

The audience selection refers to how individuals manage visibility and control access to their digital performances. Within Hogan’s (2010) Digital Dramaturgy framework, this dimension represents boundary-setting processes that distinguish between public and private stages of social media use. Audience selection involves deciding who is permitted to view, interact with, or respond to specific content, reflecting strategic control over impression management and privacy.

Both participants employed distinct strategies to regulate audience access. SR utilized a secondary account and the Close Friends feature to separate public and private spaces. His main account was reserved for formal and broadly accessible posts, while the secondary account functioned as a space for casual sharing with close friends. He also restricted story visibility from specific audiences, such as lecturers or family members, to preserve a favorable public image. In contrast, MT chose not to maintain a secondary

account and instead managed her audience through story viewer restrictions, allowing only selected individuals to access private content while maintaining her main account as professional and polished.

These selective practices reflect participants' awareness of audience diversity in digital environments, where friends, family, peers, and professional contacts often coexist within a single platform. By employing features such as Close Friends and content filters, both SR and MT actively reconstructed audience boundaries that social media platforms typically collapse. From a dramaturgical perspective, audience selection functions as a psychological and social filtering mechanism that allows users to adapt self-presentation to relational contexts and perceived social risks. SR's selective hiding of content reflects efforts to maintain a respectable front-stage image before authority figures, while MT's restricted visibility demonstrates preventive impression management to avoid unwanted scrutiny. Together, these findings illustrate a high level of digital self-awareness and strategic adaptability in managing audience multiplicity.

Table 5. *Interview Data for Audience Selection Strategy*

Subject	Interview Data	Indicator
SR	"Sometimes I hide my stories from some people like lecturers or family just to maintain a good impression" (AS.SR.P2.53-57)	Hiding stories from certain audiences
MT	"Why not show it on your main account? Well... because it might disrupt the image/ I'm maintaining there, and also, some people online just don't like you." (AS.MT.P1.404-408)	Using secondary accounts or Close Friends

The data suggest that audience selection functions as a psychological and social filtering mechanism, allowing users to adapt their self-presentation according to relational context and perceived risk. SR's selective hiding of stories reflects his attempt to maintain a respectable front-stage image before authority figures, while MT's restricted visibility demonstrates preventive impression management to avoid unwanted scrutiny. From a dramaturgical and socio-technical perspective, these findings illustrate how users actively reconstruct contextual boundaries in response to audience multiplicity. Such selective visibility reveals a reflexive understanding of audience

segmentation, indicating high digital self-awareness and strategic adaptability within collapsed social contexts.

Strategy 5. Archive Control

Archive control refers to how individuals manage, reorganize, or remove past digital content to maintain consistency with their current self-image. Within Hogan’s (2010) framework, archive control represents an ongoing process of regulating digital traces—deciding what remains visible, what is hidden, and what is removed entirely. This practice extends aesthetic maintenance to encompass identity regulation over time.

Both participants demonstrated intentionality in managing their digital archives. SR archived older posts that no longer reflected his current personality, expressing a desire to keep his feed tidy and aligned with his present self. In contrast, MT adopted a more assertive approach by deleting or archiving all previous content to refresh her profile and present a cleaner, more professional image. As illustrated in Table 6, these contrasting strategies indicate that archiving functions as a symbolic mechanism for regulating identity visibility rather than merely a technical feature.

Table 6. *Interview Data for Archive Control Strategy*

Subject	Interview Data	Indicator
SR	“Yeah, I’ve archived some posts before... they looked kinda cringey, so I just hid them and didn’t repost” (AC.SR.P1.65-68)	Archiving old posts
MT	“Yeah, it’s empty everything’s archived. I deleted them all.” (AC.MT.P1.490-491)	Managing the appearance of the main feed

Archive control thus operates as a self-regulatory strategy for maintaining identity continuity in digital spaces. SR’s selective archiving reflects a gradual process of self-editing that supports identity evolution while preserving authenticity. Conversely, MT’s comprehensive deletion of past content signifies identity rebranding, emphasizing professional reinvention and a decisive separation from earlier self-representations. These practices underscore the temporal dimension of digital dramaturgy, wherein past performances are continuously edited and recontextualized to align with an evolving sense of self. In this way, archive control emerges as both a technical and symbolic

practice for sustaining coherence between personal history and currently enacted digital identities.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the online self-presentation strategies of university students using Instagram through the lens of Hogan's (2010) Digital Dramaturgy framework. Within this framework, social media functions as a digital stage on which individuals perform roles, manage impressions, and negotiate between authentic and ideal selves before multiple audiences. The findings indicate that although both participants, SR and MT, were active Instagram users, their self-presentation strategies reflected distinct orientations: SR emphasized authenticity and emotional spontaneity, whereas MT prioritized professionalism and impression management. These orientations were shaped not only by personal motives and psychological needs but also by sociocultural expectations embedded in Indonesian collectivist values, such as politeness, harmony, and modesty.

The performance dimension illustrates how individuals express themselves through interactions on Instagram, functioning as the front stage of their digital persona. SR's spontaneous and humorous communication with close friends—tempered by politeness toward family members and broader audiences—reflects Indonesian cultural norms of courteous conduct and relational sensitivity. His behavior demonstrates how authenticity is enacted within culturally appropriate boundaries. Conversely, MT managed her interactions more selectively, often limiting comments to maintain a composed and professional impression. This pattern supports the argument of Nurdin et al. (2024) that users regulate online interactions to sustain a positive digital image. Beyond self-esteem considerations, these behaviors reflect a deeper cultural orientation toward face-keeping and respect for social hierarchy. Performance, therefore, emerges as a form of relational self-regulation that balances openness and deference within digital communication.

The exhibition dimension concerns how users construct and display visual narratives that communicate aspects of identity. SR's posts frequently included emotional reflections and personal captions that mirrored his mood, signaling authenticity and self-expression. In contrast, MT adopted a more goal-oriented visual

identity by posting curated content related to academic achievements and productive activities, thereby reinforcing a professional self-image. This finding aligns with Safitri and Ediati (2025), who observed that Instagram self-presentation often serves as a means of social validation. However, the present study extends this understanding by revealing how Indonesian students navigate a subtle tension between authentic self-disclosure and collective approval. The negotiation between honesty and prestige illustrates how collectivist norms and peer expectations shape digital impression management, positioning Instagram as both a social arena and a performative space for self-legitimation.

The curation dimension captures how individuals consciously select and refine digital content to align with intended identities. SR curated his posts intuitively, prioritizing personal meaning and emotional resonance over aesthetic uniformity. This intuitive selection reflects an authenticity-driven approach grounded in self-acceptance and affective comfort. MT, by contrast, engaged in deliberate editing and visual arrangement to create a consistent and harmonious feed. Such aesthetic control reflects not only Hogan's (2010) concept of impression management but also culturally informed notions of visual modesty, in which order and balance symbolize self-discipline. The contrast between SR's expressive spontaneity and MT's calculated visual coherence suggests differing psychological orientations: the former rooted in intrinsic expression, external validation and achievement-oriented self-worth. Curation represents backstage management of the self, bridging private intention and public image.

The audience selection dimension highlights how participants managed content visibility, revealing strategies of boundary maintenance and contextual impression control. SR utilized a secondary account and the Close Friends feature to differentiate between private and public spheres, demonstrating heightened sensitivity to situational appropriateness. MT, in contrast, maintained a single account but employed story viewer restrictions to regulate access. These findings are consistent with Hendraswara et al. (2021), who noted that students strategically manage visibility to preserve desired impressions. The present study further demonstrates that such practices are culturally motivated, rooted in collectivist emphases on social harmony and face protection. Audience selection thus functions as both a strategic and psychological mechanism that

enables individuals to manage context collapse—the convergence of multiple audiences—and protect emotional well-being in digital environments.

The archive control dimension represents how individuals manage digital traces over time to maintain coherence between present and past selves. SR selectively archived posts that no longer represented his evolving identity, whereas MT deleted or concealed outdated content to preserve a professional profile. These behaviors corroborate the findings of Minandra and Moekahar (2023), who emphasized the role of archiving in impression regulation. Extending prior research, the present study highlights the psychological function of archive control as a coping and self-regulatory strategy that helps individuals reconcile discrepancies between ideal and actual selves (Higgins, 1987). By managing what remains visible, participants preserved identity continuity while safeguarding digital well-being. This process underscores the temporal dimension of digital dramaturgy, wherein online identities are continuously revised in response to personal development and shifting social roles.

Taken together, the five dramaturgical dimensions—performance, exhibition, curation, audience selection, and archive control—constitute an ongoing negotiation between authenticity and impression management. The contrasting strategies employed by SR and MT reflect the dual orientation of Indonesian youth: a desire for authentic self-expression alongside an obligation to conform to collective norms of respectability. Cultural values such as modesty, politeness, and harmony intersect with psychological needs for self-esteem, recognition, and identity coherence. Through selective sharing, visual refinement, audience segmentation, and digital archiving, these students engage in what may be described as cultural impression management—a dynamic balancing act between the self they wish to express and the self they are expected to display. Overall, this study extends Hogan’s (2010) Digital Dramaturgy framework by demonstrating its cultural adaptability within collectivist contexts. It shows that online self-presentation among Indonesian university students is not merely an individual performance but a sociocultural negotiation of identity shaped by the interplay of personal authenticity, cultural values, and technological affordances.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study confirms that university students who actively use Instagram consciously construct and manage their self-image through the five dimensions of Hogan's (2010) Digital Dramaturgy framework—performance, exhibition, curation, audience selection, and archive control. Each dimension represents a distinct yet interconnected process through which individuals adapt their self-presentation in response to situational contexts and audience characteristics. The findings demonstrate that digital identity is not a static construct but a dynamic and continuously negotiated form of expression shaped by social relationships, perceived roles, and the technological affordances of the platform.

SR's online self-presentation was characterized by spontaneity, emotional expressiveness, and an orientation toward authenticity. His interactions were guided by personal reflection and affective openness. In contrast, MT adopted a more intentional and calculated approach, emphasizing professionalism, coherence, and strategic audience engagement. Despite these contrasting orientations, both participants exhibited a high level of self-monitoring and digital awareness. They actively utilized platform features such as Close Friends lists, secondary accounts, and content archiving to maintain congruence between their intended self-image and perceived audience interpretations. These practices underscore Instagram's function not merely as a medium for communication or entertainment, but as a digital stage for performing, negotiating, and continuously adapting identity within the fluid boundaries of online social life.

From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of strengthening digital literacy and psychological awareness among university students. Higher education institutions, in collaboration with student organizations, ambassador programs, and digital literacy initiatives, are encouraged to develop workshops and training modules that promote reflective and responsible online identity management. Such programs may assist students in critically evaluating their digital behaviors, recognizing the emotional and social implications of idealized self-presentation, and cultivating competencies in authentic communication, privacy regulation, and digital empathy. Integrating these competencies into campus well-being initiatives may support students in achieving a healthier balance between expressive freedom and responsible digital engagement.

Several directions for future research are recommended. First, subsequent studies may extend this inquiry to other social media platforms, such as TikTok, where visual performance, trend participation, and algorithmically driven visibility play a more pronounced role in identity construction. Second, comparative research across age groups or generational cohorts could provide deeper insight into how developmental stages and cultural contexts shape digital self-expression. Finally, future studies should examine the psychological dimension of digital well-being in greater depth, particularly the long-term effects of sustained self-presentation practices on self-esteem, emotion regulation, and overall psychological functioning. Investigating these issues will further advance understanding of how individuals navigate authenticity, identity construction, and mental health within an increasingly digitalized social world.

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