

## **Self-Representation of Scooterists through Instagram Social Media (Analytics on Instagram Accounts@arug000)**

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### **Abstract**

The development of social media, especially Instagram, has changed the way individuals and communities construct and represent their identities in the digital space. This study aims to analyze scooterists' self-representation through Instagram social media with a case study on the account @arug000. This study uses a qualitative approach with netnography methods to understand the practices of visual representation, narrative, and social interactions that shape the digital identity of scooterists. The theoretical framework used is Stuart Hall's theory of representation, which emphasizes a reflective, intentional, and constructionist approach in the production of meaning. Data were obtained through non-participatory observation of uploaded photos, videos, captions, hashtags, and audience responses on the account. The results show that the Vespa is represented not only as a means of transportation but also as a symbol of status, freedom, and lifestyle that shapes the identity of scooter riders. Instagram functions as a strategic space for constructing individual and collective identities through consistent visual and narrative channels. In addition, digital scooter identities are fluid and dynamic, formed through continuous interactions between account owners and audiences. This study confirms that Instagram plays a significant role in the process of self-representation and identity construction of automotive subcultures in the digital era.

**Keywords:** CDA, healthy lifestyle, content commodification

### **INTRODUCTION**

The development of social media in recent decades has transformed the way individuals and social groups produce and negotiate their identities in public spaces. Instagram, as a visual-based platform, allows users to construct meaning through consciously curated photos, videos, text, and symbols. From the perspective of representation theory, this practice is understood not merely as a reflection of reality but as a process of producing meaning through a system of signs that operates within a specific social and cultural context. Thus, Instagram has become a representational space where identities are produced, distributed, and collectively interpreted.

Stuart Hall (1997) emphasizes that representation is a central practice in culture because it is through representation that meaning is produced and

exchanged between members of society (Zahro, 2021). Language, both verbal and visual, is the primary medium in this process, including the dominant visual language on Instagram. Photos, visual styles, community symbols, and captions are not merely aesthetic elements but function as signs that construct a particular understanding of the subjects represented (Winarty, 2024). Therefore, Instagram posts can be analyzed as cultural texts containing ideological meanings and social identities.

Instagram is not only a personal branding arena for individuals in general but also a space for social groups and communities to build a collective image that reflects values, lifestyles, and group affiliations. Riding communities such as scooterists are one example of such groups where visual and narrative posting practices often play a role in projecting community identity, lifestyle aesthetics, and symbolic values held by community members. As an automotive subculture, scooterists have distinctive digital communication practices, combining visuals of classic vehicles, community attire, gathering places, and riding lifestyles that are aesthetically presented to a virtual audience.

Previous studies have shown that Instagram plays a significant role in shaping the identity of the younger generation. Aulia & Putri (2024) stated that the process of identity strengthening occurs through consistent themes and visual narratives constructed by users. These findings indicate that self-representation is not merely a spontaneous activity but a planned communication practice. This is relevant when examining the self-representation of the account owner @arug000. Latupeirissa & Wijono (2022) emphasized the relationship between self-esteem and self-presentation strategies on Instagram. Users tend to construct a certain image to gain social recognition, which then influences their interaction patterns in the digital space. In the context of scooterists, community recognition is a crucial factor in constructing group identity. Therefore, an analysis of the @arug000 account needs to consider this motivational aspect.

Furthermore, Yoanita et al. (2022) found that some users manage multiple Instagram accounts to project different facets of their identity depending on their audience. This concept of multiple selves demonstrates that digital identity is situational and performative. This finding is relevant for understanding whether the content on the @arug000 account represents a specifically curated representation of the public. Therefore, research needs to consider the context in which the account is used.

Miyake (2018), in his book "The Gendered Motorcycle: Representation in Society, Media, and Popular Culture," on the representation of mobility and vehicle culture on social media, shows that online visual practices contribute to the social construction of the riding lifestyle. Social media not only functions as personal documentation but also becomes a space for the articulation of culture and collective identity (Andersen & Krumsvik, 2017). This further strengthens the importance of researching scooterist self-representation

because this subculture has unique artifacts and symbolic values. Therefore, analysis of the @arug000 account can reveal more complex dynamics of representation.

Several studies on self-representation across various digital subcultures have emphasized Instagram's role as a strategic medium for negotiating personal identity and audience social expectations. For example, a study on self-representation among female comedians on Instagram shows that verbal and non-verbal narratives are interconnected in shaping the self-image they project to their followers (Aunul & Handayani, 2022).

While numerous studies have examined self-representation on Instagram based on specific demographics such as college students or teenagers, there remains a gap in research on specific automotive user communities, particularly scooterists, who possess distinct cultural identities and visual aesthetics. Existing studies are often general in nature or focus on broader social and cultural contexts; therefore, implementing representational analysis on specific subcultures such as scooterists would provide new insights into how digital identities are shaped through specific and community-based visual posting practices. Therefore, the analysis needs to be directed toward understanding the visual content, narrative, and aesthetics consciously chosen by the subjects.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Representation**

Maulana (2017) Representation is a linguistic phenomenon, namely how a person is presented, which can be explained using language. It is through language that various acts of representation are displayed by the media and presented in news reports. Therefore, what deserves criticism is the use of language presented by the media. This process is inevitably closely related to the use of language in writing reality for the public to read (Pratama, 2018).

Stuart Hall also argues that there are several principles of representation as a process of producing meaning through language, namely:

- a. Representation to give meaning to something, meaning to explain and depict in the mind by an imaginary image to put the previous equation in our mind or feelings.
- b. Representation is used as a tool to explain or construct the meaning of a symbol or can be understood as an interpretation of something given to the object being represented. Representation refers to all forms of communication, especially mass communication, for everything it constructs and how we interpret it.

In simple terms, representation is a concept used in a social process through the interpretation of a system of signs found in mass media in the form of text, video, and audio.

### **Scooterist**

Scooterists refer to individuals or groups who identify themselves as scooter users, particularly Vespa users, who build social relationships through riding activities, community gatherings, and specific cultural practices. The existence of scooterists is not only understood as a hobby but also as a form of social identity construction built through symbolic interactions and collective solidarity (Megasari et al., 2017). The Vespa community has a relatively egalitarian social structure, with an emphasis on the values of brotherhood, togetherness, and loyalty among members (Al Firdaus, 2017). Scooterist identity is also reinforced through community rituals such as touring, meet-ups, and social activities that serve to reproduce group values and norms (Jefry et al., 2024).

In the context of a digital society, scooterists utilize social media, particularly Instagram, as a space to visually and narratively represent themselves and their communities. Instagram allows scooterists to project their self-image through photos of their vehicles, clothing styles, and travel documentation, consciously curated to create a specific impression (Aulia & Putri, 2024). This process demonstrates that self-representation is not neutral but rather the result of selection and construction of meaning according to the intended audience (Yilmaz, 2021). Identity representation on social media emphasizes that consistent visualization can strengthen social recognition and legitimacy within online communities (Machmiyah, 2019). Therefore, Instagram serves as a crucial medium in the formation of a reflective and performative scooterist identity.

The symbols used by scooterists, such as scooter types, vehicle modifications, community stickers, and other visual attributes, serve as a cultural language for conveying identity and social affiliation. These symbols not only have aesthetic value but also contain ideological meanings related to lifestyle, freedom, and solidarity (Megasari et al., 2017). Visual symbols are understood as a means of producing meaning that is continuously negotiated in social spaces, both offline and online (Metastasio et al., 2024). The practice of scooterist representation on social media demonstrates the relationship between mobility experiences, visual culture, and the construction of collective identity (Yilmaz, 2021).

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research method used is qualitative with a netnographic approach, which focuses on understanding the meaning of Instagram users' self-

representation as scooterists through their digital practices. The ethnographic approach was chosen because it is able to explain digital culture phenomena by observing behaviors, symbols, and narratives that appear naturally in digital spaces (Putri, 2016). The research data was obtained from the content of the Instagram account @arug000 (aruGo), including photos, videos, captions, hashtags, and follower comments that represent the identity and lifestyle of scooterists. The data collection technique was carried out through non-participatory observation of the account's digital activities over a certain period (Fitrianti & Hanaf, 2025).

Data analysis in this study was conducted through the stages of data reduction, thematic coding, and interpretation of meaning, with an emphasis on the relationship between visuals, text, and audience interaction. The coding process was directed at identifying patterns of self-representation, scooterist cultural symbols, and self-image strategies constructed through Instagram as a visual medium (Franzia et al., 2015). Data validity was strengthened through triangulation of digital sources and repeated reading of the social and cultural contexts underlying the account's posts. Ethical aspects of ethnographic research were also considered by limiting the analysis to public data and maintaining the anonymity of other users involved in online interactions.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Vespa as an Expression of Status and Freedom**

Posts on the @arug000 account predominantly feature classic Vespa motorcycles in various situations, such as long trips, community gatherings, and aesthetic photos at dance venues. The Vespa's presence is seen not only as a vehicle but also as a symbol of social status within the scooterist group presented to the Instagram audience. This aligns with previous research that self-representation on social media often involves symbols that reflect social aspirations, prestige, and certain lifestyles (Situmorang & Hayati, 2023).

The visual aesthetic of Vespas in the account's feed, complete with photo compositions reflecting quality and an aspirational lifestyle, demonstrates Vespas as visual status symbols consciously constructed by users. This status symbol is not simply a luxurious display but reflects social values among scooterists who value aesthetics, the authenticity of classic machines, and an authentic riding experience. Previous research has also noted that identity representation on social media is often utilized by users to project a desired ideal image, including the status associated with certain consumer objects such as vehicles or classy goods.

Beyond the status aspect, Vespa content shared by @arug000 also showcases the Vespa as a symbol of freedom in the riding experience. Many posts feature journeys on open roads, natural landscapes, and the rider's expressions while riding, depicting the riding experience as an expression of personal freedom. This finding is consistent with the view that social media can be an arena where users represent personal values such as freedom and exploration of life experiences through selected and publicly displayed visual content. (Khairany, 2025).

The narratives in captions accompanying Vespa photos often include personal reflections on the meaning of freedom, travel, and the satisfaction of facing challenges on the road. These narratives demonstrate that the Vespa not only symbolizes social status but also serves as a medium for users to express ideas about individual freedom in life. Thus, the representation of the Vespa goes beyond the physical aspect of the vehicle and becomes part of the self-concept projected to followers as a sign of freedom in life (Setiawan & Astuti, 2025).

Social interactions from followers in the form of likes, comments, and reposts on Vespa posts demonstrate appreciation and recognition of the status and freedom symbol represented by the @arug000 account. Many comments praise the Vespa's aesthetics or the riding experience or identify with a similar lifestyle, socially reinforcing the Vespa's meaning as a symbol of status and freedom within the scooterist community. This representation is consistent with research findings that social validation on social media can strengthen the identity construction presented by users (Situmorang & Hayati, 2023).

Furthermore, the account's Reels and Stories features frequently showcase Vespa riding activities in the form of live travel footage, rather than simply static images. This dynamic format enriches self-representation by demonstrating the process of experience, rather than simply curated visual output. A netnographic approach to this content demonstrates that the way users present the Vespa as a symbol of status and freedom is performative and dependent on visual and temporal interactions, a hallmark of modern representation on Instagram.

Finally, the consistent content pattern highlighting the Vespa as a lifestyle centerpiece within the @arug000 account reflects the Vespa's transformation into a symbol of collective identity beyond simply a mechanical vehicle. The Vespa becomes a space where aesthetic values, status, freedom, and social relationships are continuously constructed and negotiated within the Instagram digital network. These findings demonstrate that the Instagram platform allows users not only to present themselves but also to articulate subjective experiences through the cultural symbols they choose.

## **Instagram as a Shaper of Scooterist Identity**

An analysis of the @arug000 account shows that Instagram serves as a crucial visual and textual representation platform for scooterist identity formation. The uploaded content consistently showcases Vespa riding activities, community moments, and the distinctive scooterist lifestyle, shaping the self-image they seek to project to the digital public. This representation aligns with research confirming that Instagram enables users to actively construct and negotiate identities through the visuals and narratives they convey to their audience (Aulia & Putri, 2024).

@arug000's bio and profile elements also play a significant role in scooterist identity representation, conveying key information about the user and their life's focus as part of the scooterist subculture. In the context of self-representation on social media, bio descriptions like these serve as social labels that guide audiences in understanding the identity practices displayed.

Furthermore, the captions accompanying the posts reflect a personal narrative that reinforces scooterist identity as part of their lived experience and a sense of community pride. In many posts, the narrative combines aspects of the riding experience with social recognition gained through likes and comments from followers, reinforcing the meaning of the represented identity. This finding aligns with research showing that Instagram not only displays visual identity but also serves as a narrative space for reinforcing a desired self-image (Khairany, 2025).

Social interactions, such as comments on @arug000's content, demonstrate how audiences validate this identity representation through their social responses. Many comments compliment the vehicle's aesthetics or the riding experience or identify with fellow scooterists, indicating that this identity representation receives social recognition in the digital realm. This supports the view that representation on social media often involves dialogue and social recognition between content creators and their audiences (Situmorang & Hayati, 2023).

Furthermore, the use of various Instagram features, such as stories and reels, further enriches the representation of scooterist identity by enabling dynamic and diverse content presentation. These features allow @arug000 to construct a scooterist identity narrative that is not merely static in the feed but also memorialized through stories and videos that showcase daily activities in a more authentic format. This aligns with other netnographic findings, which suggest that the use of various social media functions can expand self-representation and strengthen identity engagement in the digital realm (Ifanisari, 2025).

Overall, the analysis of the @arug000 account indicates that Instagram serves as a strategic space for scooterist identity formation through interconnected visual representations, narratives, and social interactions. This identity emerges not only as a record of activity but also as a symbolic construction that is continuously negotiated between users and their

audiences. These findings reinforce Instagram's role as a significant medium in the process of identity formation in the digital era, where users can actively construct and represent themselves according to their chosen values and aspirations.

### **Self-Representation : Scooterist as a Lifestyle**

A netnographic analysis of the Instagram account @arug000 shows that scooterists' self-representation is strongly reflected through recurring visuals, such as photos of Vespas, riding activities, and gatherings at community events. These posts reflect aspects of scooterists' real lives, where vehicles and riding experiences are part of their social lives. Research suggests that photos and videos on Instagram can serve as a reflection of the social identities users seek to share (Putri, 2016).

The intentional approach to representation theory in social media asserts that content creators consciously signify specific identities through the posts they choose. On the @arug000 account, captions accompanying photos of Vespas and scootering activities imply an intention to highlight the values of togetherness, pride, and the scooterist lifestyle as part of their personal identity. This aligns with research that suggests Instagram users actively construct identities through visuals and narratives chosen to support their desired self-image (Tahir & Nur, 2025).

Within a constructionist framework, the representation displayed on the @arug000 account does not simply reflect reality or intention but is shaped through symbolic practices and social interactions on Instagram. The Vespa is uploaded not merely as an object but as a symbol of social status and a particular lifestyle, integrated by the audience. This representation aligns with findings that identity representation practices on social media are shaped through a combination of symbols, cultural values, and evolving digital social contexts (Situmorang & Hayati, 2023).

This analysis also reveals that social interactions between the account owner and their followers enrich the meaning of scooterist identity. Comments, likes, and reactions to posts often reinforce the presented image, for example, when followers praise the Vespa's aesthetics or share riding experiences. Previous research has also shown that Instagram can be a space for self-representation and social validation, with content and audience responses mutually reinforcing each other.

Self-representation in the @arug000 account also utilizes the stories feature to showcase more spontaneous and authentic scooter activities, which don't always appear in the feed. This practice illustrates the performative dimension of identity representation, where identity is not static but is continuously reproduced through temporal and narrative content. Other

social media studies have shown that this dynamic storytelling aspect contributes to the disclosure of user identity (Kertamukti et al., 2019).

The use of hashtags in posts on @arug000 demonstrates that scooterist representation extends beyond visual aesthetics to encompass broader community engagement. This suggests that scooterist identity is collaboratively constructed through shared digital practices that create a larger community narrative beyond individual accounts. Other research has also highlighted how Instagram can serve as a space for collective identity construction through shared digital signs (Indirawati & Tambunan, 2025).

Furthermore, the personal narratives in the captions often convey emotional meaning about riding experiences, challenges, and camaraderie with fellow scooterists, demonstrating that Instagram functions as a narrative space for identity. These narratives allow users to share personal stories about themselves, which are then read and interpreted by their audiences. This aligns with studies that suggest that narratives in social media content play a crucial role in identity representation (Putri, 2016).

From a reflective perspective, the content displayed by @arug000 also reflects the social reality internalized by users, where scootering is seen not only as a hobby community but also as a lifestyle and a source of identity formation. Posts about community gatherings, group tours, and travel demonstrate that scooterist identity is not merely a visual aesthetic but also a concrete social practice. This further strengthens the understanding that self-portraits and activity can be a robust representation of social identity.

An intentional and constructionist approach is also evident in how users select content to archive in posts, which then become long-term identity documentation. This section functions as a curated representation that is more stable than traditional stories, thus reinforcing the identity narrative they wish to present to profile visitors. These findings suggest that such features expand the ways individuals present themselves and construct a consistent digital image on social media.

Overall, the analysis of the @arug000 account demonstrates that scooterists' self-representations on Instagram are produced through interconnected reflective, intentional, and constructionist processes. Instagram becomes a digital arena where individual and collective identities are produced, interpreted, and negotiated through visual practices and social interactions, thus enriching insights into how social media shapes contemporary notions of identity.

### **The Liquidity of Digital Identity**

An analysis of the @arug000 account shows that scooterists' digital identities are not static but rather fluid and constantly transforming along with the user's posting practices, interactions, and narratives. Consistent

uploads of Vespa photos, reels, and stories that represent riding experiences and community life indicate that users construct digital identities through consciously selected content. This phenomenon aligns with findings in studies of self-representation on social media, where digital identity is understood as an ongoing construction, not merely a static reflection of the self, but performative and dynamic (Putri, 2016).

Furthermore, captions accompanying posts often contain personal narratives that reinforce how scooterist identities are experienced and shared digitally. These narratives demonstrate a negotiation between the personal identity they wish to project and the audience's interpretation through comments or likes, making digital identity a fluid intersubjective space. Studies of social media representation on Instagram suggest that individuals often present curated versions of themselves to meet social expectations while simultaneously representing aspects of their personal lives digitally (Situmorang & Hayati, 2023).

Social interactions in the form of comments, likes, and responses from followers of the @arug000 account contribute to the fluidity of scooterists' digital identities. Comments offering praise, support, or even criticism of specific content demonstrate that the represented identity originates not only from the content creator but is also shaped by the digital public. This is consistent with research on self-representation, which shows that social media is not simply a space for monologue but rather an arena for dialogue where identity is co-constructed between users and audiences (Salsabila & Nur, 2025).

Finally, the practice of using hashtags, locations, and narrative features like reels reinforces the fluid nature of digital identity, allowing users to vary their presentation and expand their social connections. In this way, scooterists on the @arug000 account not only project individual identities but also create a flexible collective identity that can adapt to the ever-changing digital social context. This ethnography of virtual identity confirms that Instagram is a primary medium for users to manage, negotiate, and expand their digital identities according to social needs and platform expectations.

## CONCLUSION

This research concludes that Instagram functions as a strategic space in scooterists' self-representation, particularly through the account @arug000, by combining visuals, narratives, and social interactions as a system of signs that shape meaning. The self-representation displayed is not neutral but rather consciously constructed through the selection of content, visual aesthetics, and personal narratives that reflect the scooterist's values, experiences, and lifestyle.

Within the framework of practical representation theory, this demonstrates that scooterist identities are produced through intertwined reflective, intentional, and constructionist processes. Thus, Instagram serves not only as a medium for documenting activities but also as an arena for the production of social and cultural identity meaning. The identities presented are symbolic and communicative, intended to be understood and recognized by a digital audience.

The research also shows that the Vespa is represented as a symbol of status, freedom, and lifestyle inherent in the scooterist identity. Through uploaded photos, videos, and captions, the Vespa appears not simply as a means of transportation but as a cultural artifact embodying aesthetic values, community solidarity, and meaningful mobility experiences. Social interactions in the form of likes, comments, and audience responses play a crucial role in reinforcing and legitimizing this symbolic meaning. This confirms that self-representation on Instagram is dialogic, as the identity displayed is continuously negotiated between the account owner and their followers. Thus, scooterist identity is formed through a reciprocal relationship between content production and social validation in the digital space.

Furthermore, this research found that scooterists' digital identities are fluid, dynamic, and constantly changing according to the context of interactions and the Instagram features they use. The use of feeds, stories, reels, and hashtags allows account owners to display various facets of their identities, both situational and performative. An ethnographic approach demonstrates that digital identity does not fully represent a single reality but rather the result of curation and construction of meaning tailored to the audience and platform context.

These findings enrich the study of digital communication and culture by demonstrating how the scooterist subculture utilizes social media to construct both individual and collective identities. Overall, this research confirms that Instagram plays a significant role in the formation, strengthening, and negotiation of scooterist identities in the contemporary digital culture era.

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