

Performance of ideal self-online having a detrimental effect on social media influencer's identity

Abstract

Influencers are today's mini celebrities; their audience is absurdly large with some having millions of followers. Influencers are normal people but will an added value, which having the chance to get money out of posting content online and thus earning their life. Their idea lifestyle encourages more and more people to become influencers. This paper aims to show how being an influencer can have a detrimental effect on their life. Yet being an influencer has many worthy sides, but as soon as the influencers go again the ideal identity is a rapid fall to hell that is waiting for them. As humans we only want the good side of us being shown which is logic when thinking of it. So as an influencer are human but also online public figure, they show the good side of their identity, thus creating an ideal self without even realizing it. The audience frequently forgets that the influencer they are following are human too and can do a mistake or change opinion or even reinvent themselves. The first thing this paper will demonstrate is i) that Influencers project an ideal lifestyle to the detriment of their real lifestyle, that their life turns around their online identity. ii) Cancel Culture of influencers not maintaining the ideal self. iii) Self-branding of influencers selling their identity. A perfect human is an oxymoron, but it is what influencers are trying to achieve to detriment of their real identity.

Keywords : Influencers, cancel culture, self-branding, identity, social media

Influencers losing their real identity suggest when it comes to all the changes, they need to do fit the standards online. Influencers are ordinary Internet users who accumulate a relatively large following on social media through the unfolding of their personal lives and lifestyles, engage with their following digitally and physically, and monetize their following by incorporating promotional posts into social media posts and making physical appearances at events. (Abidin, 2021). But influencers put their real (offline life) aside in order to keep all those privileges. The creation of the ideal self by influencers is a way for them not to go against norms that social media set. That ideal identity, which is more robotic than human, this search for perfection is unreal. Also, that aspect of cancel culture which at the root is a good thing but with the power of social media and the influencing sphere take a complexly different definition. Becoming a trend for the audience online as they watch for every little issue to cancel an influencer. Furthermore, the suggestion that influencer should sell their identity to the brand in order to make effective promotion. Influencer's works seem easy and worthy but when taking a closer look at the real-life of influencers are they not losing their real identity in order to keep their career.

The ideal self in detriment to the real self

Influencers, in general, perform an ideal identity online, this ideal self they showcase to an extent has bad effects on their offline identity. Influencers are once just some young people who use their social media to share their life and shape their online identities. Influencers shape their identity in accordance with what they are and then see what to keep, and what has its place in their new online identity (Leaver, 2015). Influencers self-presentation online is an “ evolving cycle” that is constantly changing, adapting, and comparing themselves to other influencers in order to have an ideal self. (Abidin, 2021). On Instagram posts of influencers, we see amazing places where they pose for their follower, but we never see the journey it takes to get to the place (De Perthuis & Findlay, 2019). The audience of these influencers will only see the incredible

picture of the influencer but the half-day it took her to get to the location, that she was sweaty all long and tired we will not see it because it does not fit to the ideal the influencer wants to project.

Influencers become influencers because of their big following, but this 'spotlight' which is on them because there are thousands of people following their life and that this audience expects the influencer to have an ideal self often lead to the influencer not having the right to have privacy (Papacharissi, 2010). Which lead to influencer having no offline life, but the public will always have that 'desire to get backstage access'(Papacharissi, 2010). This backstage access is what the audience of influencer wants the more because for the audience of influencers that there is no privacy allow ((Papacharissi, 2010), influencers then just do not have the right anymore to have an offline identity and he loses itself in this online identity and keeps being flawless. At the moment that influencers start to share their private life to its thousand for some millions of followers, it's as if they remove themselves the right to be someone else that X on Instagram. But is it is not because influencers chose to reshape their relation to privacy through sharing their life on social media that I mean that 'they are interested in giving up their privacy'(Papacharissi, 2010).

There is also that aspect of performing self of influencer that can have a detrimental effect on their offline life. Performing the self is when someone acts and behaves in a way that a specific audience sees him in order to show the most favorable image of him in a particular situation. (Goffman, 2001). But each individual when performing the self has a different self for each 'audience'. But for influencers, there is only one self-accepted in all situations; the ideal self. The pressure of social media does not really allow the influencer to perform self as they should and have much self including their offline self (Brusseau, 2019). The basic of performing the self clearly said that many selves can arise from one individual but having multiple faces will consider as contradictory to their online identity thus influencers having conflict with their real

identity may arise. (Brusseau, 2019). Social media as a whole allow influencer having only their ideal self in detriment of influencer real self which leads to self-denial of their offline identity and constant manipulation of their online identity in order to fit the ideal 'as though that their public image were a tool or instrument.'"(Brusseau, 2019).

Cancel Culture of influencers not maintaining the ideal self

Cancel culture is a well-known practice in the social media world and in sum, it can destroy an influencer's life in one day. Cancel culture is a "calling out" vigorously and condemning a powerful figure online because of actions the person has done. (Ng, 2020). Cancel culture touch mainly public figures, and influencer being public figure they do not escape this. An example of the cancel culture power will be the #metoo movement, which exposed a number of on social media in order to 'cancel' those public figures who have done sexual harassment and assault but have not paid for it. ((Ng, 2020). Thus, canceling these people mean destroying their career and make them respond to their action in court. Overall using social media platforms so as to 'call out' serious matters and make people pay for their fault is understandable. But cancel culture in some situations especially for influencers is not always justified.

Influencers in aiming to get a larger audience continuously create content and built a link with their audience gaining 'trust and confidence of those who follow them' (Neal, 2017). But simultaneously keep that ideal self-intact in order not to be cancel. Cancel culture not does not target only celebrities but also other public figures as influencers (Neal, 2017). But for influence cancel culture is a real fear even if the influencers did not do illegal or unethical action for influencers just a word, he said taken out of context can be a reason to cancel him. Cancel culture is now question if it should itself be canceled because of all the bad effects it had on people who have been cancel over exaggerated action which was not justified (Ng,2020). Cancel culture shows how content distribution

via digital platforms enables fast, large-scale responses to acts which are maybe problematic thus ending by ending people career out of not concrete. (Ng,2020).

The example of Charlie D'Amelio a young 16 years old Tiktok influencer who was the first influencer reaching one hundred of million followers on Tiktok who has been a cancel culture victim over a video of her asking for dino nuggets at a family dinner where a chef was hired for the dinner. This young influence who is only 16 years old has been judged over asking for nuggets by millions of people for the majority adult who was criticizing this young influencer all over the internet. She lost one million subscribers on that day, she received death messages and hate because of the power cancel culture gave to the audience online.

This example perfectly shows how when an influencer does not perfume the ideal self that is expected of her this results in people try to cancel her; destroyed her life. Anything's that goes again the image of an influencer can become a reason why canceling them. It usually happens like this: an influencer is accused of doing or saying something judged by their followers, they mutually "cancel" the person in question, and attempts to damage his or her career." (Tietjen, 2019). The base of cancel culture with the example of the #metoo movement was a good thing but the cancel culture attacks young influencers because they asked for nuggets this is the problem. It is important to keep the roots of the cancel culture only and not allowing those useless and easy judgments distribution to overshadow important matter which really needs to be called out. (Ng,2020).

Self branding of influencers selling their identity

Self-branding of influencers makes influencers only billboards for brands and their real self (offing self) is most of the time put aside in order for them to make their promotion as they are asked to do. Self-branding is when someone creates a specific public image

in order to commercialize a product and get their gain (Khamis et al., 2017). Influencers are a real tool of marketing for brands, a good influencer has a link with their audience, a sense of trust so if influencers propose products to their audience through a post that seems authentic their audience will for sure buy the product. (Neal, 2017). Influencer supporting brands contribute to a rise in purchasing behaviors as well as brand trust, even more so than celebrity support, as influencers are perceived to be more relatable and credible (Leader et al., 2021).

Branding forms part of marketing; however, the concept of self-branding does not fit well branding, and putting the branding concept down to the individual is problematic. (Khamis et al., 2017). Influencers who work with brands allow only to have the ideal identity that the brands allow them. Branding an individual rises theoretical, practical, and ethical issues, which are either not recognized or are simply glossed over by their personal beliefs. (Khamis et al., 2017). This reminds the postmarxist model of identity which is let an ideological system in this case promotion to form and reform the influencer's identity. The risk every brand takes when an influencer has been employed for promotion: the influencers must maintain at least a make-believe of consistently desirable, aspirational attributes just for influencers not to go 'off message' (Khamis et al., 2017).

Influencers have the pressure of their audience, of social media, and even brands they are working with. The Self-branding of influencers suggests the idea that the influencers sell their identity to the brand in order to have money. When an influencer works with a brand he is asked to have a certain attitude and evenness which is extremely difficult to maintain (Khamis et al., 2017) as the real identity a point of time take over which become a problem for the brand and the influencers. As when the ideal self is taken away brand does not want to work anymore with the influencers and the domino effect arises. The point is that uniformity requires awareness, authenticity, and the absence of unforeseen hurdles all of which are extremely difficult for humans to ensure (Khamis et

al., 2017). Influencers are then forced to have an ideal self to detriment of their real self in order to be credible to work with brands.

Conclusion

The performance of the ideal online self has a detrimental effect on an influencer's offline identity. Influencers have only one identity allow online which is the ideal self- having detrimental effects on their real identity. Canceled culture use as a tool to destroys many influencer's life for no valid reasons. And finally, the damage that self-branding can make on an influencer's identity to the extent that it is the brands who tell them what behavior to have. Influencers are a new idealized profession nowadays, but there are still many flaws to it. But influencer's position in time and space, while unrealistic, remains to brace up by commercial logic that reinforces the hegemonic aesthetic. (De Perthuis & Findlay, 2019)

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