KADİR HAS ÜNİVERSİTESİ
LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ
İLETİŞİM BİLİMLERİ ANABİLİM DALI

GLORIFICATION OF EVERYDAYLIFE: THE CASE OF INSTAGRAM

SERCAN GÜNDOĞAR

DANIŞMAN: DR. ÖĞR. ÜYESİ NEZAKET DEFNE KARAOSMANOĞLU

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İletişim Bilimleri Anabilim Dalı İletişim Bilimleri Programı'nda
Yüksek Lisans derecesi
için gerekli kısmi şartların yerine getirilmesi amacıyla
Kadir Has Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü'ne
teslim edilmiştir.

İSTANBUL, 02, 2020

Ben, SERCAN GÜNDOĞAR;

Hazırladığım bu Yüksek Lisans Tezinin tamamen kendi çalışmam olduğunu ve başka çalışmalardan yaptığım alıntıların kaynaklarını kurallara uygun biçimde tez içerisinde belirttiğimi onaylıyorum.

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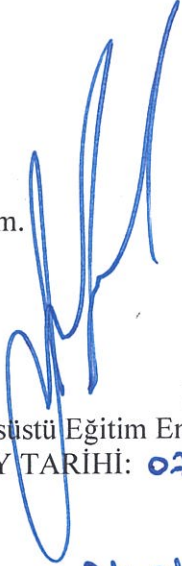İSTANBUL

KABUL VE ONAY

SERCAN GÜNDOĞAR tarafından hazırlanan **GLORIFICATION OF EVERYDAYLIFE: THE CASE OF INSTAGRAM** başlıklı bu çalışma **07.01.2020** tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından **YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ** olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Nezaket Defne Karaosmanoğlu   Kadir Has Üniv.

(Danışman)

Doç. Dr. Levent Soysal   Kadir Has Üniv.

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Tolga Hepdinçler   Bahçeşehir Üniv.

Yukarıdaki imzaların adı geçen öğretim üyelerine ait olduğunu onaylarım.

İMZA
Müdür
Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü
ONAY TARİHİ: 07. 01. 2020

Prof. Dr. Sinem Akgül Açıkmeşe

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURES

ABSTRACT

GÜNDOĞAR, SERCAN. *GLORIFICATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE: THE CASE OF INSTAGRAM*, MASTER THESIS, Istanbul, 2019.

This study investigates visual meaning making activities on Instagram and influence on these everyday lives of users. Instagram as a visual centered social network provides a fertile ground to depict users' everyday life presentations. Users prominently think that Instagram images are their identity, so images are prominently glorified in terms of symbolism, production and postproduction. Selected symbols as identity pegs generate self-identity and way of living in accordance with personal ideals and aimed to reflect a reputable persona within the society. In this regard Veblen's "conspicuous consumption" and "experiential purchases" are operative terms to explain users' engagement to symbolic value of commodities and experiences. I conducted semi structured face to face interviews with young Instagram users and also used semiotics to testify my anticipation. The invested interests, everyday life activities and personal taste are used as strong markers in posted visuals. Glorified visual narrative, in addition to symbolism is also motivated by editing/framing. The glorified signifiers of online persona are generated with the help of these steps. Also, users are also consumers of the glorified content, as it is known they are so called "prosumers". There are two outcomes of this study. The first is: In the light of participants of this study, glorified/embellished images of Instagram trigger users to replicate visuals in a similar way. In this regard content also glorifies everyday lives of Instagram users. Secondly, some users ignore glorified and enhanced quality of images and influencers since it is a paid job. They also do not work to embellish their images because they do not think these are markers of their online identity. Glorified images do not influence everyday life of users in the second group. In this regard, Instagram's heterogeneous atmosphere enables varyingly different utilization practices and Instagram's influence on everyday life changes accordingly.

Keywords: Instagram, conspicious consumption, experiential purchases, glorified content, digital identity, visual identity

ÖZET

GÜNDOĞAR, SERCAN. *YÜCELEŞTİRİLMİŞ GÜNDELİK HAYAT: INSTAGRAM ÖRNEĞİ*, YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, İstanbul, 2019.

Bu çalışma Instagram'daki görsel anlam yaratma çalışmalarına ve bunların gündelik hayata etkilerine odaklanmaktadır. Instagram, görsel bir sosyal ağ olarak kullanıcıların gündelik hayat sunumlarını yansıtması bakımından elverişli bir platformdur. Kullanıcılar genel olarak oluşturdukları imgelerin kimlikleri olduklarını düşünürler ve bu nedenle bu imgelerin kalitesi sembolizm, üretim ve üretim sonrası süreçlerle belirgin bir şekilde arttırılmaktadır. Kimlik temsilleri olarak görülen seçilmiş semboller benliği ve yaşam stilini kişisel idealler esas alınarak şekillendirir ve kullanıcıyı toplumun saygın bir bireyi olarak göstermek amaçlanır. Bu noktada Veblen'in "gösterişçi tüketim" ve "deneyime dair satın alma" davranışları kullanıcıların emtia ve deneyimlerin sembolik değeri ile ilişkisini açıklamak için etkin terimler olarak görünmektedir. Yukarıda açıkladığım öngörümü test etmek için ben bu çalışmada genç Instagram kullanıcılarıyla yarı yapılandırılmış yüz yüze mülakatlar gerçekleştirdim ve göstergebilimsel içerik analizinden faydalandım. Gösterilen ilgi alanlarına yatırım, gündelik hayat aktiviteleri ve kişilerin gusto kişilerin gönderilerinde kullanılan güçlü imleyicilerdir. Görsel anlatım ve sembolizme ek olarak içerik ve kadraj düzenlemeleri de bu sürecin önemli unsurlarıdır. Dijital benliğin kaliteli işaretçileri bu adımların bir sonucu olarak üretilir. Diğer yandan kullanıcılar üreticileri oldukları içeriğin aynı zamanda tüketicileridir. Bu bağlamda bu çalışmanın iki ayrı çıktısı bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın birincil sonucuna göre parlatılmış Instagram görselleri kullanıcıları bunları gündelik hayatlarına benzer bir şekilde uyarlamaları konusunda tetiklemektedir. Bu açıdan Instagram görselleri kullanıcıların gündelik hayatlarını daha kaliteli bir hale getirmeleri için bir rehber niteliğindedir. İkinci olarak bazı kullanıcılar arttırılmış kaliteyi ve maddi çıkar için bu işi yaptıklarından fenomenleri dikkate almadıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Diğer yandan kendi görsellerinin de kalitesini arttırmaya çalışmamaktadırlar ve ürettikleri içerikleri kendi kimlikleri olarak görmemektedirler. Bu açıdan Instagram'ın ikinci gruptaki kullanıcılar açısından gündelik hayata etkisi bulunmamaktadır. Bu açıdan Instagram'ın heterojen yapısının farklı işlevlendirme pratiklerine olanak sağladığı söylenebilir ve Instagram'ın gündelik hayata etkisi bu işlevlendirme biçimlerine göre değişmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Instagram, gösterişçi tüketim, deneyime dair satın almalar, içeriğin kalitelileştirilmesi, dijital kimlik, görsel kimlik

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all people who have helped me throughout this study. First of all, I am thankful to the academic staff of the Communication Studies and New Media graduate programs at Kadir Has University for their productive classes that helped me develop my theoretical background. Specifically, I am thankful to Defne Karaosmanoğlu, who incessantly helped me and encouraged me as my adviser to study in this field of social sciences. I am grateful due to her devoted support and considerations.

Moreover, I would like to thank Levent Soysal and Tolga Hepdinçler, who expressed their critiques and thoughts both and after the jury session. Their feedbacks enabled me to develop my arguments more profoundly. Also, I am thankful to Birol Şevki Tavlı for reading the whole text and helping me edit it.

Finally, I am thankful to my mother, who always supports and encourages me for all my future plans. I always felt her gracious support during this tough process.

1. INTRODUCTION

Instagram as a social network enables users to take, edit, circulate and follow others' digital visual content. Filters and adjustments are commonly deployed, and framing is a result of craftsmanship because as O'Donnell claims visual documentation of life is a motivation of preservation and presentation of personal identity (O'Donnell 2018: 131). Orchestrated visual narrative of the self is a presentation of identity mediated by digital screens. Self-generated content in social networking sites is commonly seen as reflective elements of lifestyles and gives some clues on personal identity. Associations between users and materials, followers and followees, types of textually or visually coded messages are central markers of identity, whereas network interface and the user profile are the key elements. In Web 2.0, social networks provide users a layout/interface to generate and/or share content that kept in their servers. Social networks might differentiate user profiles in response to varying expectations. As Poulsen and Kvåle mention, different platforms enable users to create different way of interactions and interpersonal meaning potentials (Poulsen & Kvåle 2018: 712). In this regard, Instagram provides a layout to compose constructed visual narratives about the self.

An Instagram profile portrays series of images at the same time. If an image is an identity peg, Instagram profile is a holistic gaze on personal identity. In a contrast to other social networking sites, an Instagram profile includes a small profile picture and a very short bio and series of images as a user generated content. The profile itself is designed to have an instant look to one's lifestyle. In this respect, I take into account permanent visuals in the platform, story images and videos will not be included as a primary limitation of this research.

In this research, I primarily aim to explain users' consumption and production logic to enlighten the ways of using Instagram and its influence on everyday life. Primarily I focus on the following research questions to ponder the relationship between Instagram depictions and everyday life: How do Instagram users construct their digital identity in a glorified way and which methods are used to glorify visual self-identity (content)? Why and how do users glorify digital content and is it possible to categorize the content as an

identity representation? What kind of images influence consumption motivation of users and more specifically do Instagram images trigger consumption motivation? How do users depict their associations with symbols of major lifestyles on Instagram? To what extend does Veblen's "conspicuous consumption" and "experiential purchases" (Bronner and Hoog 2018) play a role to reflect desired identities? How are users influenced by Instagram content that is constructed by others? I analyze image production and consumption patterns on Instagram with Veblen's term "conspicuous consumption" as an operational term. I also apply semiotics to analyze glorified visual narratives and influence of these to other users. Glorification is the key element in the case of Instagram because users tend to embellish their self-presentation to display their lifestyle in an idealized and aesthetic way. As Manovich claims Instagram is a platform for aesthetic visual communication (Manovich 2016: 41). Glorification of self-image or increased image quality is mediated by three steps. These are symbolism, production and postproduction. Symbolism step covers associated symbols with the online persona. I use "conspicuous consumption" and "experiential purchases" to investigate symbolic references of self-presentation. Production step is a way of framing, symmetry, patterns and how these are used to increase the image quality. Lastly the post production step includes all kinds of editing and manipulation activities. Contrast, saturation, sharpness, brightness, color etc. are visual elements that directly influence the way of self-presentation. Primarily, I investigate how these steps are used to increase image quality. I claim these three steps are used in different ways to generate glorified self-image. Edited images of desirable markers/symbols of lifestyles generate glorified self-image. These glorified images carry the potential to influence everyday life and consumption logic of other users. Three variables are obviously key elements to promote self in a desirable manner. Creating embellished, idealized and polished self-presentations that constitute aesthetic visual communication is a result of three steps of glorification. The glorified images of self possibly aestheticize everyday life if the aesthetic codes in the visual narrative is replicated by other users in their everyday lives.

I aim to analyze meaning making practices and influence of these to everyday life, so the thesis is conducted as a qualitative study and based on face to face semi-structured interviews with young users aged between 18-24 living in Istanbul. In the *Production and*

Consumption chapter, I aim to argue possible motivations of image-making and consumption processes in the light of semi-structured interviews. Without user comments, using logic and Instagram's influence on everyday life cannot be analyzed. Because of the pragmatic reasons, I reached eight faculty members from eight different universities in Istanbul. I visited them during their classes and told my thesis to their students and conveyed my request to talk about their experiences on Instagram. I made interviews with willing students from following universities: Istanbul University, Marmara University, Istanbul Aydın University, Kadir Has University, Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University, Istanbul Gelişim University, Istanbul Esenyurt University. I asked 14 questions to 32 participants and all questions are listed in the *Appendix*. In the *Production* chapter, I aim to enlighten logic of production and what kind of images are seen worthy to share with others and how the online identity is framed. Secondly, in the *Consumption* chapter, I aim to explain what kind of user profiles are followed and how these images influence everyday life of other users. Image consumption of individuals can guide users to spend their money accordingly, since I predict that users are exposed to the symbolic narrative that is relevant to their interests and this situation possibly triggers material consumption. If images are seen as desirable and related to spectators' interests, symbolic value of the visual content can impress users and can guide them to include similar symbols into their everyday lives. I accept the similarity between lifestyles and interests and the following definition of lifestyle;

> …lifestyles are features of the modern world or what I shall also call modernity. What this means is that those who live in modern societies will use a notion of lifestyle to describe their own and others' actions. Lifestyles are patterns of action that differentiate people. In everyday interaction we can employ a notion of lifestyle without needing to explain what we mean... Lifestyles therefore help to make sense of (that is explain but not necessarily justify) what people do, and why they do it, and what doing it means to them and others (Chaney 2002: 4).

Contextual information on lifestyle-related posts and interactivity ratings can be handled in many ways. Like and comments of subject-specific posts, follower statistics of subject-related Instagram profiles and finally the hashtag statistics. In this research, I choose

hashtags to analyze the most widely shared lifestyle depictions on Instagram. It is the best way to comprehend the quantity of lifestyle depictions. As Scott claims hashtags are used in online platforms to compensate lack of contextual information (Scott 2017: 58). The only contextual information on Instagram is hashtags so it is also the best way to categorize and explain its contextual statistics. Hashtags are also reliable than the other indicators, since following and like can be purchased. Moreover, hashtag statistics signify which lifestyle types are seen more relevant or desirable by Instagram users in the light of tangible sharing statistics. Hereby I shape the list of major categories in the light of hashtags statistics. Beauty, fashion, food, fitness, design, nature as content of *Major Categories* section are formed by this way. The images are selected manually to and their common symbolic references are visually analyzed. The associated symbols of lifestyles on Instagram are the markers of wealth and invested personal taste I randomly choose related images for certain categories and analyze these visuals in terms of cultural contexts and mental sets in the contemporary epoch. These categories possibly help to ponder how users frame and glorify their lifestyles. I use semiotics, Roland Barthes' book; *The Mythologies* and his article; *The Photographic Message,* have given me an insight to analyze the visual narratives, nexus of significations of images, connotations, denotations and possible motivations on posting and following these. *Major Categories* chapter is primarily motivated by my impressions on Instagram field and I try to analyze the factor of symbolism to reflect lifestyles in a desirable way. Depicting images are commonly portrayed in the best form in a stunning production quality and this improves the influencing potential of images. I aim to enlighten how idealized form of lifestyle representations influence other users' everyday life and this is an important question in terms of Instagram's influence on everyday life. In this regard, Veblen's term of "conspicuous consumption" and Bronner and Hoog's term; "experiential purchases" (Bronner and Hoog 2018) are used to analyze visual identity production of users, since it is constructed via creating associations with specific symbols and metaphors.

In the first chapter *Major Categories* I constitute a list of major lifestyles and analyze how users portray their lifestyles in a glorified way on Instagram. It provides a valuable foresight to ponder Instagram and its logic. On the other hand, in *Production* chapter I question my anticipation with users' production logic and finally in the *Consumption*

chapter I aim to demonstrate influence of glorified images to other users since they are also consumers of the glorified content.

I use "conspicuous consumption" to analyze symbolism in self-generated images and way of identity signaling. The term is coined by theorist Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929) as valuable symbols that mark reputability in the society. It is an operational term in this study, because symbolic visual narratives on Instagram can be seen as important elements of personal taste, lifestyle and wealth. Using certain items are seen honorific/evidence of wealth/superior status and not using them becomes a mark of demerit (Veblen 1899: 36). On Instagram, portraiture of selective symbols is similarly seen as simple motivation to mark superior status in the society. Selective posts on Instagram, framing and editing might necessitate time to construct the honorable digital self. As Veblen claims, nonproductive employment is honorific character of leisure. Daily habits in good form necessitates knowledge, refined taste as evidences of gentility requires time, energy and expenses. These provide a good reputation to the person in society (ibid: 25). The result of unproductive consumption of time is the consumption to exhibit tangible elements of gentlemen (sic.) of leisure signify honor (ibid: 22). I aim to testify the theory in the digital network of Instagram, but Instagram images are not only markers of honor and wealth but lifestyles. Symbolic markers of lifestyles are varyingly different, and I believe symbols are carefully selected to portray a digital narrative of lifestyle in its best form. Branded clothes, a well-decorated café atmosphere, scene of a domestic space are not only markers of honorific way of representations but also controlled markers of personal lifestyle with selected desirable symbols on Instagram. As Veblen claims, material and immaterial investments to self when individuals are staged, "conspicuous leisure has the greatest vogue as a mark of reputability..." (ibid: 23). On the digital stage of Instagram, personal association with symbols transmit messages of way of living and interests and symbolic value is in the foreground than the functional value. In this respect, symbolic value demonstrates invested digital persona in a glorified and honorific way. All life details are a process of elaboration and selection. Life within these trophies develops a system of titles, degrees and insignia in interpersonal relationships (ibid: 22). Property is the basis of the trophy and with the help of culture, more trophy means more success in the game of ownership. Certain standard of wealth is a necessary condition of reputability

and it requires more than normal amount of accumulation of goods (ibid: 15). This statement might be generalized, in addition to trophies on display, sociality level, places that are visited by the user; a muscular, well-trained body or well-flourished plants in a living room can be seen as success, since these are digital symbols of everyday investments and possibly seen as tangible elements of profession, personal taste and social success. These elements possibly trigger others to follow the content or replicate it. The selection of life, which is seen as invested with "conspicuous consumption", possibly help them to become reputable users in the digital network of Instagram.

Displayed ownership as associated symbols of lifestyles has a potential to reach millions of people through Instagram. It seems like an unbelievable success in the game of ownership. In the late 19th century, Veblen asserts that large gatherings as pecuniary strength for "conspicuous consumption". People judge others with their goods on display. In the modern community, it happens especially in large gatherings during everyday life, in the places like churches, theaters, hotels etc. When the person is staged, he/she impresses others with pecuniary strength as a central function of "conspicuous consumption" (ibid: 41). The transmission of symbols that mark merit within society via digital network on Instagram is an invaluable opportunity to generate desirable meanings and transmit these symbols to much broader environment. Honor and reputability are transmitted in the large context in the epoch of digital networks, but symbols are still significant as Poulsen and Kvåle claim "Materiality matters". It signifies how and what kind of meanings are made in both everyday life and social networks (Poulsen and Kvåle 2018: 707). Since this logic is well known today, I aim to question the relevance of material symbolism and its validity in the current epoch. Moreover, social success and wealth are not only demonstrated with "conspicuous consumption". Travelling to unknown countries, preference of a sport holiday, being an adventure lover are also served as similar identity pegs (Bronner and Hoog 2018: 93). I articulate users' depicted symbols in the *Production and Consumption* chapter in the light of "conspicuous consumption" and "experiential purchases". Since these symbols are seen as reflective signifiers of online identity, these are commonly glorified. Virtual base of digital networks helps glorified lifestyles spread to a broader environment, whereas production

and consumption motives foster the endless circulation of influential digital representations of lifestyle.

Moreover, way of editing might support the glorification of online identity. Colors, composition, smoothness of skin, sharpness of detailed compositions and adjusted harmony invite spectators all around the world to the digital networks. I presume that perception of perfection follows similar patterns and Instagram images transmit these coded visual ideas and ideals to millions of users. In this point, I aim to answer this research question: How do Instagram users construct their digital identity in a glorified way and which methods are used to glorify visual self-identity (content)?

Current studies on Instagram is primarily based on promotional/sponsored content, visual personal identity representation, personal experiences and editing habits of users. Semiotic identity representation, which is articulated in Poulsen and Kvåle's (2018) study, offers a new framework to analyze newly emerged social media sites visually. They also highlight that social media, especially Instagram, can be defined as a semiotic technology with its multimodal meaning potentials of embedded filters and materials. Moreover, they apply their offered framework to Instagram to explain their 'social semiotic multimodal framework'. The study gives an influential insight to analyze both production and consumption of Instagram images. In this respect, well-known studies of Roland Barthes, *The Photographic Message* (1961) and *The Mythologies* (1972), are still helpful to ponder visual meanings in the digital networks. However, my research does not only conduct semiotic analysis. It also implies interviews with young users. It is used as a method to analyze users' way of production and way to understand the influence of images to everyday life of young users. Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), especially his term "conspicuous consumption", is used as a key element while I articulate production logic of Instagram users and messages mediated with material associations and experiential associations are important. Hoog and Bronner's theory (2018) on "experiential purchases" (immaterial experiences), which is inspired by Veblen's, gave me also invaluable insight to ponder the key aspects of idealized production logic on Instagram. Idealized content triggers users to replicate similar acts or parallel consumption behaviors generally. Online identity related studies are also crucial for my

research, especially O'Donnell's study (2018). It represents an influential insight in the field of Instagram. He examines how users visually identify and share themselves on Instagram. The sharing frequency is motivated by personal visual identity needs. Positive association, self-objectification and self-confidence are analyzed to reveal motivators of online identity. Impression management theory and visual communication research are also used to discuss. Goodcase (2019) and Bigley and Leonhardt's (2018) studies are also relevant in this field.

Therefore, some academics link consuming decisions, social and economic capital of users and identity, which is also supported in my research. For instance, studies investigate the symbolic value of global brands and identity expressiveness function and material possessions of social media users are elements of extended persona, as Diana Zulli (2017), Makri, Papadas and Schlegelmilch (2018) investigate. This association between self and global brands provides group affiliation and promotes self in the eyes of others. And hedonic motivation of global digital brand usage as an identity is stronger in developing countries than developed ones. Also, Barbour and Haise's (2019) examine images that shared with #*home* hashtag on Instagram, since homes carry the essence of the self with the national and cultural identities. In their study, researchers focus on how user 'visibilise' their homes with others. Identity-related articles on Instagram primarily focus on representation of different personas, self and subjectivity in the online network (Schwartz and Halegoua's 2015; Smith and Sanderson 2015; Zhao and Zappavigna 2018). Additionally, narcistic representations of users are also investigated in studies (Jin and Ryu 201; Nardis and Panek 2018).

Instagram is surely regarded as a valuable marketing tool and diverse range of articles can be found in the literature. Marketing-related, and sponsored content are investigated in varyingly different studies (Johnson, Potacki and Veldhuis 2019; Carah and Shaul 2016; Laestadius and Wahl 2017 and especially Hardey and Ilich 2018). Their research conceptualizes Instagram as a self-promotional tool and rooted interpersonal symbolic communication mediated by brand and ownership.

Visualized experience on Instagram and its relation to identity is also analyzed by McKeown and Miller's study (2019). The study investigates how travelers construct their visual identity with their Instagram images. Parallelly, Blackwood's study (2019) also focuses on travel related posts. Blackwood's focal point is Instagram images that shared in Paris Orly Airport and research analyzes identity representation of travelers with depicted materials. Kim and Fesenmaier's article (2017) claims that posting travel content after the travel effects personal evaluation on travel. Sharing positive experiences in social media helps the portrayed experience be evaluated in a more positive way and decrease the negative effect. Moreover, posting unsatisfactory moments of the travel experience also helps users decrease negative perception about the travel. In the light of O'Donnell's comment on flexibility of online identity and Hoog and Bonner's (2018) claim that "experiential purchases" provide status, wealth and identity demonstration signify a glorification of everyday moments on Instagram. I generalize it in different lifestyles and aim to explain how users glorify and show their idealized way of living. On the other hand, idealized body standards as one of the common depictions show user motivation on being selective. Glorification of this production logic is mediated by idealized values. This situation is also one of the arguments in my study and I claim that idealized content trigger others to replicate in a similar way. For instance, #*fitspiration* hashtag and idealized body representation is an elaborated subtopic. Peng et al. (2019), Fatt, Fardouly and Rapee (2019) examine fitspiration content, body satisfaction, appearance-based/health-based, exercise motivation content, ideal-muscular body and does fitspiration content evoke ideal internalization or appearance comparison.

Instagram's integrated filters and editing mechanism necessitate a related literature to analyze its contribution to the content. Kleemans at al.'s research (2016) focuses on Instagram filters. The study reflects that girls aged between 14-18 voted the manipulated images more positively than the nonmanipulated ones. Moreover, editing and manipulation are noticed but reshaping is not noticed by research participants. Influence of edited images in the social media environment is the focal point of the research. Secondly, Youn (2019) asserts usage of Instagram filters is valuable in terms of expectations of patients from plastic surgeons. Objective of the research is determined which Instagram filters are considered as 'most flattering', 'most youthful', 'least

flattering' and 'least youthful' by patients. In the light of this research, some filters are used for practical benefits to portray self in more desirable way.

Actually, my argument investigates digital identity presentations to map content production patterns. This helps me to understand Instagram atmosphere and influence of enhanced quality of the content to other users. However, my research cannot be generalized since the context is based on activities of young users from Istanbul. I think a broader research that will cover different geographies, classes and age groups in the international scale might be helpful to explain Instagram's influence on everyday life and lifestyle of individuals. Specifically, I do not analyze certain materials and brands' influence on users and their way of decoding brand ownership but their relationships with certain lifestyle depictions. The certain brands/objects can be more valuable to portray lifestyle in a more desirable way. User reactions on specific brands and materials can be a great contribution to the lacuna in the field of the new media and everyday life studies. More specifically (as an example) materials and brands of a desirable dining atmosphere in the light of common perception is valuable. The portrayed ideals in the online atmosphere on Instagram trigger consumption motivations and these aspects should be interpreted more deeply in an academical level. Also, story images are excluded in this study, these images can be analyzed in further researches.

2. MAJOR CATEGORIES

Major categories chapter aims to classify Instagram content as seven subcategories in relation to major lifestyle presentations. Instagram prominently portrays users' associations with seven major lifestyles and lifestyle images with the visual connotations construct digital self in online networks. This chapter articulates visual narratives of common lifestyles, associated symbolism of lifestyles and their roles in the process of glorification of digital self. Digital self, its highlighted associations with symbols and consequences of these are articulated in this chapter. Instagram as a visual based social network, which includes all kind of images from approximately one billion users (Statista: 2018). In this regard, there are numerous possibilities to categorize its content. Initially hashtags seem quite useful to ponder what kind of images are worth to share with the

public, since keyword mechanism enables to view more homogeneous collection of images under a specific title. Therefore, algorithm of the platform arrays images and videos according to screening and like statistics by this way the more desirable visuals appear primarily. This way of categorization caters invaluable data to analyze user behavior, presentation of self, everyday life and their personal connection to a certain phenomenon. It also provides a trustful data in terms of interactivity statistics. Followers and likes can be bought, but hashtags that are characterized by user interests represent what kind of images are worth to share in a more reliable way. According to Adam Mathes, hashtag system function like a 'folksonomy' which is combination of folk and taxonomy (mentioned in Highfield and Leaver 2015: 5). As a contrast to traditional taxonomy system, it is generated and updated collectively. The lack of pre-determined context is its distinctive nature. Highfield and Leaver define hashtag function as grouping photos in a meaningful way with other photos that have the same tag. It enables users to organize and access specific visualizations (Highfield and Leaver 2015: 5). In this regard, user generated content is made accessible again by the same user. Undoubtedly, hashtags are pragmatic keywords to find specific visual data that created by others and make personal ones to access by others. Moreover, the system enables to analyze quantity of visuals about the certain keyword, but a certain topic possibly represented with a few or more hashtags. For instance, the most common hashtags for fashion are *#fashion, #instafashion, #fashionmodel*. Therefore, *#travel* is not the only hashtag to mark travel photography, in the platform, even country names are appropriate keywords to reach millions of travel-based visuals. Another significant point in terms of hashtags is untagged posts. According to Statista report, 29% of Instagram posts are untagged (Statista: 2018). For this reason, reliable information about quantity of categories does not seem possible but hashtags are still significant instruments to express which is more or less desired content in the platform. Quality of images, ways of representation, framing and visual language that are used in photographs and videos are more decisive than the quantity of them in this research. Primarily, users share their interests, everyday moments, way of living, what they love and their lifestyles in a glorified way on Instagram. In the light of hashtag quantities, I formulate a list that represent major lifestyles. Hashtags as well as semiotics possibly provide some hints about usage characteristics. Especially image characteristics under specific hashtags demonstrate that users work on to generate

images in their best forms via editing and symbol/framing preferences because these are seen as online identity. This list is aimed to address presentation of the most common contemporary lifestyles on Instagram. Moreover, users are able to follow hashtags like users to pursue more homogenous content in relation to their interests, therefore hashtags and location tags are significant indicators. Although there are no strong boundaries between categories on Instagram, there is a familiar visual communication in terms of glorified representation of identity-based interests.

In addition to hashtag mechanism, bio text also gives invaluable hints about shared images. Subject specific accounts generally specify keywords and short information regarding the visual data. Bio also can be helpful to categorize visual content and online identity more properly. On the other hand, some hashtags fit in more categories than one and accounts can share varyingly different content. This circumstance is because of the transitional character of the visual data. For example, the Eiffel Tower is possibly categorized as both an architecture and a travel photography. Instagram images are also invaluable lifestyle representations in terms of denotation and connotation preferences of users. Barthes defines denotation as the image itself (its graphic structure) and connotation is a second meaning of the visual (coded) message (Barthes 1961: 199). Instagram images in this chapter are visually analyzed in terms of their denoted, connoted messages, visual characteristics and significations.

2.1.   BEAUTY/MAKEUP

Traditional media norms and stereotypes on beauty seems valid on Instagram. Related hashtags like *#beauty* (345M), *#beautiful* (624M), *#makeup* (252M), *#skincare* (45M), *#instabeauty* (22M) etc. demonstrate interactivity in this topic is increasingly high. Thinness of woman body such as celebrities and models on magazine covers is an old phenomenon and caused to a big debate in terms of imposing unhealthy beauty standards within society. Mills et al. state media frames beauty ideals and also functions as a transmitter of messages about hair, skin and facial features and shape/reshape the idealized forms and features and advertise "thinness is beauty" (Mills et al. 2017: 146). New media is obviously doing the same; messages about so called 'beauty standards' are transmitted by Instagram and other social media platforms and thinness as a desired image

of beauty is illustrated by both celebrities and others especially young people on Instagram. Hashtags like *#thinspiration* who glorify extremely thin bodies was banned by Instagram because related hashtags cause self-harm (ibid: 153). This case is a clear emphasis on permanent role of media in terms of transmitting so called beauty standards. According to Mills et al. interactive nature of social media platforms makes possible to perceive, compare and internalize beauty standards. In mass media, media literacy guide audience to think critically about routinely edited photos of celebrities. Parallelly peers possibly submit their edited, enhanced and embellished idealized online self-images. Users take multiple selfies and choose to post only the cool/best one and use image filters to enhance outlook and edit these visuals to show themselves thinner. Moreover, the research of Mills et al. highlights that social media users take selfies when they are happy with their own appearance. The self-presentation techniques like editing obviously improve body-image and self-esteem via submitting their idealized image (ibid: 152). Way of presentation of self in the platform give some significant clues about users and their ideas, ideals on beauty. Hashtag results on *#beauty* refer to an ideal, a way of perfectionism since faces without makeup mask, bulky torso etc. are not considered as beautiful in the light of one of the most interactive hashtags. Idealized self-image is the central concept here and it is mediated by aesthetic selfies to attract others. Both male and female users tend to cover face dots, any kind of 'imperfectness' via editing/lighting conditions and they are also motivated to present their 'perfect' body to gain reputation. Obviously, beauty is a subjective judgement, but characteristics of Instagram content signify sustainability of normative values on male and female beauty.

Notion of beauty which is illustrated in various ways in user posts reminds Barthes examination on Garbo's face in the movie of *Queen Christiana*. Only reality on Garbo's face is its perfection and her 'extreme beauty'. Barthes defines her face smooth and friable and a thematic harmony. He articulates reasons of her admirable face. The first one is her "…makeup is like a snowy thickness mask, not painted set in plaster…" and perfection of her face that formed in the limpid light (Barthes 1972: 56-57). The notation of her extreme beauty is also the essence of Instagram profiles that influenced by beauty representations in social media platforms and other medias such as mass media, cinema etc. In addition to perfect lighting conditions and plaster like makeup, there are also digital

manipulation/editing techniques and self-reliant appearance play a significant role. Integrated editing tool, 23 filters and Photoshop are used to glorify the appearance to submit 'idealized self' on Instagram. Editing mechanism enables adjust contrast/lighting/color balance/sharpness/smoothness of images, in this regard Instagram trigger users to glorify personal images because of the content and integral editing tool. Also, other user-friendly 'face correction' apps such as Beauty Plus, FaceApp: Neural Face Magic, Looks etc. demonstrate a demand on glorification in social media.

Fig. 2.1 (series of images on beauty)

Sample images from different Instagram accounts possibly give more hints about beauty standards in relation to editing and posing. The soft lighting conditions and no visible skin imperfectness highlight common beauty ideals in the platform. In the first image a woman presents her muscular thin body and idealized body proportions in a domestic setting. Self-satisfaction with depicted body seems the main message. Also, warmness of colors and the fireplace on the right side constitute a harmony in the visual narrative. Flawless skin under soft lighting conditions and brightness on stomach, shoulders and biceps clearly highlights her coherence to beauty ideals. In the second picture left and right light sources reveal sharp facial details and soft front light eliminate imperfections and give front of his face a soften and balanced appearance. Lastly in the third picture, appearance of the skin evokes Barthes' examination about Garbo's face. Porcelain-like smoothness of her skin is like set in plaster. In addition to the soft feeling of the makeup mask draws contours of her eyes, lips and nose. Curved eyelashes, lips, highlighted chick

bones, healthy and smooth looked face and well-made hair are central features of represented beauty which is also exist in magazines, movies, makeup commercials etc.

Instagram users enhance visual quality via editing/replicating existential beauty norms and represent their lifestyles as an idealistic way. Digital networks especially Instagram seem adapted to traditional beauty norms and the content give invaluable hints about continuation of traditional beauty standards. Well-shaped thin body, smooth face, plump lips are well-known normative elements of female beauty in the contemporary epoch. These kind of visuals of models possibly influence other users and their daily habits and depicted bodies easily become a motivation photograph in terms of make up or healthy appearance. Barthes highlights coded elements of beauty standards in '*The Photographic Message*'. Image's 'embellished' character is a connotation in terms of technique, way of lighting, exposure and printing (Barthes 1961: 202). In accordance with technical characters of Instagram images his comment makes sense, portrayed 'beauty' on Instagram reflect users' obedience on traditional beauty ideals. Obviously, Instagram images are not just a basic representation of everyday life but also professionally generated series of images to advertise the self via online self with associated to certain codes of beauty standards/myths.

2.2. FASHION AND ACCESSORIES

Fashion and clothing preference as one of the most common depictions of glorified personal taste is tagged with #fashion 740M times in addition to other related hashtags like: *#instafashion* (120M), *#instastyle* (45M), *#style* (430M) etc. Fashion related images represent strong ties between commodity economy and Instagram. Style preferences of users especially celebrities/models possibly influence others' decision-making process and these style related posts are like a digital fashion catalogues that opened for everyone. Fashion perception is an indicator of clear potential of Instagram to attract other users both with constructed style and seductive representation of body. Parallelly, Mannis asserts that individuals might be defined as sign makers such as possessions and proximal objects as a presentation of self to become part of a desired group or community because of the absence of physical self these markers transmit via photograph and text (Mannis 2016: 24). In this regard, Instagram's visual basis provides a fertile ground to construct a

desirable self with clothing and digital markers of self-appearance. Style and possessions are not only markers of a group membership and wealth, but they also disclose contemporary fashion ideals because components of style are carefully selected and depicted style is not commonly random choices but representative elements of the online idealized self-appearance. Perthuis and Findlay suggest continuity and existence of hegemonic fashion ideal in the platform, it is a replication of fashion industry logic. In this respect, apart from the number of followers, we only see idealized body representations (Perthuis and Findlay 2019: 5-6). Edited visual representation of physical bodies are generally depicted in idealized forms. Especially, in influencers' Instagram accounts, color, attractiveness and symbolic choices like location and stylistic elements aim to advertise glorified lifestyle with the help of symbolic meaning of selected materials. Instagram's primary function is promoting idealized lifestyles in this sense. It is an integration of commodity economy into the digital atmosphere. In the time of globalism, visuals of varyingly different commodities and purchasing links are accessible at the same time so Instagram submits both idealized digital content and opportunity to purchase depicted possessions upon request for 1BN users.

Commonly, Instagram images are similar to glossy magazine pages and attractively decorated fashion stores to influence potential customers of brands. Mariott defines Instagram as 'a shop window' and influencers play a similar role like ones in mainstream media. Brand values and aesthetics merged, and influencers advertise commodities with their symbolic meanings. In this angle, content that is generated by influencers is a construction of idealized everyday life that reflect similarity of lived and material facts (Perthuis and Findlay 2019: 10). She also quotes that as Marwick claims (mentioned in Perthuis and Findlay 2019: 11) that there is a strong similarity between celebrity culture and influencers. Like images in magazines, each photograph of influencers in the platform demonstrate that how the norms of body should be in the contemporary epoch (ibid: 11).

Fig. 2.2 (series of images on fashion)

Users depicted in the images above are regarded as influencers and in each photograph, there is a representation of fashion ideas and ideals. Firstly, all models have recognizably 'ideal' body standards; the man in the second image has a muscular torso and his pose and confident glance, direct eye contact with the spectator, color harmony constitutes an idealized image of masculinity and desirable style. Moreover, the image like this, other images in his profile reveal his lifestyle that attracts millions of his followers, since most of the comments are associated with clear admiration to him. Moreover, the first and third images frame popular beauty ideals of woman. Thinness is conceptualized as the basic standard of beauty. Looking out their account is like looking at a fashion catalogue which combines dozens of different styles. Each photograph is depicted to transmit messages of idealized lifestyle and body standards. Reflecting stylistic and body ideals is like the central aim of fashion influencers. All users have a more or less potential to influence others but influencers who are popular in the platform have higher potential to influence with symbolic value of their choices. The portrayed symbolic value helps them monetize their glorified representations. As Perthuis and Findlay claim, rise of influencers is a key concept because these users that followed by a significant number of users both aestheticize and monetize their own lifestyles in different ways (Perthuis and Findlay 2019: 7). Variety of beautifully and professionally framed collage of images as digital commodities help influencers submit their aesthetic digital self to significant number of users on Instagram.

Celebrities and online celebrities share glorified photographs from brand photoshoots and make an association between their style and brand. In this regard, their presented lifestyle transforms to a signifier of the brand. The spectator is both a consumer of these digital commodities and at the same time target consumer of the products. If the depicted image is a signifier of 'perfection' in terms of desirable values, target consumers possibly tend to buy the product to reach the glorified lifestyle. This circumstance also motivates users to enhance their self-attractiveness. Glorified life representations of influencers have a larger impact area in the digital atmosphere, but users are also latent influencers. In Elmhirst's article (2019) she states high school influencers promote brands for free to show themselves like sponsored by certain brands which provide them social status and credibility. Furthermore, vibrant marketing atmosphere motivates to emerge more certain subcategories. Brands and styles carry signifiers of certain groups and social classes. As Weininger claims, all kinds of practices and commodities determinate components of different lifestyles. Aesthetic feeling that determines everyday practices of individuals in terms of food, clothing, art, music etc. serves as signifiers of social similarity or social difference among different subgroups. Consumption in everyday life endlessly classifies and identifies individuals in the society (Weininger 2003: 141). Thus, consumption both in digital and material way can be seen as an investment to social status that constitute a group membership and form ties between users who share alike tastes in the platform.

2.3.   TRAVEL

Travel is a prominent and one of the most represented categories on Instagram. Users commonly share their travel photographs to form an online visual diary or portray themselves as a permanent traveler. Sharing travel experiences especially under stunning setting and true lighting conditions in the platform arouse major interest. Number of hashtags that related with travelling like; *#instatravel* 82M, *#travel* 450M, *#travelgram* 111M, *#travelphotography* 95M, *#traveler* 31.3M, *#travelling* 59.4M, *#tourism* 29M significantly higher than most of other lifestyle categories. There are dozens of active travel related accounts that share their own travel photographs, some users share their own travel photos they like, and some users share professionally generated travel photos and tagged the owner of the photograph. This sounds like second cycle of participatory culture. O'Reilly claims that one of the most significant advantage of Web 2.0 -which

makes social media possible- is the value of user-based data. User participation adds value to the platform. (O'Reilly 2015: 16). Instagram users share their own images and videos and some of these posts with relevant hashtags are collected by brands or subject specific accounts and re-shared again by -in this context travel based- accounts. Both user and curator accounts benefit from participatory structure of the platform. It is also a valuable hint about what is more valuable to share in the platform with other users. O'Reilly also points out contrary advantage of this situation; participatory architecture of the platforms enables brands to learn more about users (ibid: 18). The platform both empowers participatory culture and helps brands learn more about various destinations. On the other hand, the content also provides a practical data to brands/institutions to analyze decisions and expectations of tourists. The travel-based Instagram accounts possibly assumed as interactive travel magazines since they provide information and stunning photographs about travelling and sponsored content.

Mainstream demand on travel content is less important than production motivation of travel photos in a glorified way. Tourist is an identity in travel-based posts and it refers to a desirable and idealized way of living. Exploring another culture or learning more about authentic tastes of other cultures and more importantly mobility makes life of tourists desirable in the light of high interactivity in travel related posts. Mobility signifies power and it is desirable and associated with wealth. Goffman articulates one of the most important signs in the class-oriented societies are the ones that express status symbols in relation to wealth (Goffman 1956: 24). Goffman also claims that within the social hierarchy higher classes are always idealized and replicate their behaviors by people from lower classes. Goffman explains this as a desire for prestigious life and a motivation to be close to the sacred center of common values in the society (ibid 23). This might be the possible reason of highlighted wealth related signs on Instagram and high reputation because wealth and fabulous life is a way of glorification and worth to follow/share. Power related signs in images are submission of desirable/glorified way of living. Image connotations of power can be depicted with signifiers of mobility, glass of champagne, bedroom with a jacuzzi etc. Positivity and desirability of the image of freedom give favorable character of mobility in the contemporary society. Bauman defines mobility as power. This circumstance is similar to the norms of the feudal age. A king who travelled

faster could claim more land to control it (Bauman 2006: 112). He defines capital as exterritorial, volatile and fickle and labor is dependent to the territory (work) to fulfill needs. The essence of freedom and being exterritorial are possibly the central signifiers of desirability in travel images.

Following images portray travelers in different cultural settings. Generally, Instagram travel bloggers tend to post different shots from different countries. Stunning production quality of these images influence users in many ways, users might follow these pages to specify holiday plans or just follow impressive lifestyle of others. "Capital can travel fast, and travel light and its lightness and motility have turned into the paramount source of uncertainty for all the rest. This has become the present-day basis of domination and the principal factor of social divisions." (ibid: 121). Mobility is the central differentiator here because glorified image of exterritorial, powerful and wise seems more admirable in terms of others' judgements of beauty. Instagram functions like a transmitter of these messages mediated by glorified travel depictions.

Fig. 2.3 (series of images on travel)

Generally, users appear in the middle of stunning settings such as a landmark, a cozy restaurant/café, vast symmetrical indoors, water reflection, rhythmic patterns and well-balanced lines etc. Especially well-known users share more professionally generated experience-based photographs. These images reflect travel moments that carry the essence of culture or nature are carefully captured and perfectly balanced. These images are far from being banal solely controlled and edited digital works. In the first image a

mountain depiction evokes Kant's sublime. The stunning view of the mountains suppresses any other feeling except total admiration to nature. In Kantian perspective; 'Sublime is what even to be able to think proves that the mind has a power surpassing any standard of sense' and that is sublime in comparison with which everything else is small (Kant 1987: 105-106). Highlighted aesthetic via editing and framed symbolism conveys this message. Nothing is in the frame except sublime nature, although there is a man appears at the center. Sublime nature is a way to glorify the first image. On the other hand, there is a parallel relationship between second and third images. Mirrored reflections create a beautiful symmetry in each photograph and this way of framing create an attractive experience in the eyes of the spectator. Figures are positioned at the center parallel to the first image. Lastly symmetry, pattern continuity, balanced brightness and darkness, framing as ways of glorification trigger users to view and follow the displayed personas.

Lifestyle and displayed commodity constitute a homology in both user and brand profiles on Instagram. For example, an Olympic swimmer possibly share the name of his/her swimsuit brand as a part of an endorsement and similarly a user can post an image of an expensive wine bottle on the dinner table as a sign of wealth. Objects are strong signs of personal interests and lifestyles. For example, Herschel's official Instagram account displays prominently travel related user shots. The brand as an accessory manufacturer constitutes a homology between travelers and its products and promote travelling via shared glorified images. In this respect, users are consumers of both image and possibly the product itself which is associated element of desired persona (traveler). Well-travelled online personas use Hershel so buying its products becomes a key motive to be associated to the desired life style. The homology between the product and the lifestyle is not a new invention in commodity economy, it is a basic result of it. The crucial point is new possibilities in terms of this homology in the time of network society. Oskay parallelly asserts a TV commercial of Sana butter and a happy family portrait that associated with the butter. The subtext is related with association between product and happy family portrait as the desired life style. While buying the product, customer also reaches portrayed lifestyle as parallel to aim of the commercial (Oskay 2001: 16). Similarly, consumers signify their interest with symbolic value of Hershel; travel. Moreover, a

suitcase/bag image is not only the image of a suitcase/bag, it also is a great finishing of style as a traveler. Without a suitcase an image is not regarded as a signifier of travel anymore, so it is a presentation of perfect integrity in every respect. Barthes also claims that 'posing of objects' are transmitters of meaning and associated symbols of ideas like bookcase equals to intellectuality (Barthes 1961: 201). In this case, series of images that each one is depicted in different countries is a message of being well-travelled or similarly an image with a backpack is also a connotation image of traveler. Barthes also points out that way of reading images can be both 'characteral' or based on historical and social perspectives (ibid: 216). In this regard, travelling as a way of ex-territorialized, sign of power is mediated by historical perspectives.

Symbolism in travel shots as a presentation of various attractiveness such as natural, historical, architectural setting and reason behind beauty of them is the central query. Dutton clearly asserts cultural background of being attractive or aesthetic in his book, *The Art Instinct*. Because of our instinctive existence, trees are aesthetic in the eyes of humanity because a tree is a basic signifier of protection from wilderness. Since Pleistocene epoch, humans climb trees to protect themselves from wild animals. Basic definition of tree sign is a shelter in this sense. Therefore, wilderness possibly arouse fear. Nature is attractive, but its attractiveness might be increased by some traces of domestication and human control. A small cottage and its smoky chimney or a path through the image possibly increase charm and attractiveness. Dutton states that reason of cliché visualization of domestic setting -traces of agricultural production, small houses etc. on calendars and postcards- is possibly to make the landscape seem less menacing (Dutton 2009: 31). Generality of this kind of images on Instagram is motivated by human instincts and a basic reference to persistence of aesthetic judgements in digital networks.

2.4. FOOD/DRINK

Food images on Instagram are a symbolic presentations of everyday life experiences. Food and its surroundings provide both information on way of presentation and displayed restaurant and persona. Experience with food as an investment to personal taste and "conspicuous consumption" is depicted in following hashtags: *#food* (361M), *#instafood* (157M), *#foodporn* (210M), *#healthyfood* (361M), *#dinner* (95M) etc. Bouvier claims

that food images as symbols of personal choice is like how we handle ourselves in the society. In addition to food choice, way of presentation of food and which platform is selected to share that give hints about identity of the user mediated by series of decisions (Bouvier 2018: 158). Social media images can handle either presentation of self-identity or desired self-identity, but Instagram is surely a platform to display one of these in a glorified way since commonly users extensively work on to generate glorified online personas. Bouvier also mentions the interactive nature of social media platforms and compare them with glossy and professionally made cookbooks and magazines. Cookbooks display mouthwatering and surrealistic world of food but in social media users communicate with food photographs as a way of interaction. She claims that food images in social media are like visual feast for eyes like models in magazines (ibid: 160). Cookbook images are professionally generated and controlled by various professionals similarly other types of magazines. Especially, magazine cover images are stunning and edited to attract market attention. Similarly, in Instagram, users express themselves with images, but some users generate their images with professional equipment and professionals. Profit here is different than magazines it is an investment to online self-identity or gain sponsors. For this reason, Instagram and other social networks should not be seen as an instant real-life interaction based digital networks. Instagram is probably a digital network strongly connected to market-oriented economy and follow similar paths like traditional media platforms. Existence of beauty norms and way of image making practices are attested in the light of image characteristics on Instagram. As Matalon-Degni claims, cook magazines bond mixed of visual opinions to transfer editorial messages and satisfy needs of their readers (Matalon-Degni 2010: 83). She explains her profession is something stuck between making food mouthwatering and fulfilling aesthetic demands of clients. A prop stylist carefully selects all ingredients and create an appetite appearance with artistic composition of ingredients. It is sculpting a masterpiece (ibid: 72). Stylistic appeal in terms of wearing, way of editing and composition preferences of Instagram images remind food magazine images. Generally, the most reputable Instagram user profiles are overcontrolled digital atmospheres, like tailored by a food stylist in magazines to glorify online persona in front of other users. Matalon-Degni explains how food styling profession emerged also in the corporate culture. In early nineties, food stylists also worked for Kraft Food, Campbell's, Cuisinart to create time consuming and eye-catching

garnishes. In other words, corporations demanded visual perfection from the food stylists (ibid: 74). The demand on 'visual perfection' is also clearly visible in digital atmosphere of Instagram. Some of food related content makers in the platform regularly share sponsored content. Food styling might be valid on Instagram because of market oriented nature and user interest on ornamental and attractive cookery in the light of food related content.

The platform emerged as a photograph based social network that enables users communicate via glorified everyday life images. Users glorify their own life both with symbols and technical quality, it seems it is essential. Just like food stylists who worked for multinational brands; Kraft Food, Campbell's etc. users also work to enhance quality and set the mood of the atmosphere because similar to magazines user possibly have opportunity to promote content related stuff. Instagram photographs are not just visual response of what users eat, Instagram is more related to how they eat. Not functional but symbolic value is highlighted. The adjustable identity representation is unique to social media. As O'Donnell mentions in her article, the antagonistic relationship between self-objectification and confidence has changed in a positive way in social media. Her research participants state that luckily controlling of their appearance in their hands. The young individuals tend to edit or frame their photos to improve their appearance (O'Donnell 2018: 133). The identity construction process seems one of the key elements in this sense. The symbolic representation of personal appearance is not limited to face and personal wearing style, also eating experience. Food preferences embody income, pleasure, social capital, personal taste and possibly world-view. As Bouvier mentions food photographs are the examples of "conspicuous consumption" (Bouvier 2018: 165) Individuals are entrepreneurs who work like an ad agent and it is essential to improve their image similarly to brands and magazines.

Fig. 2.4 (series of images on food)

Color balance, lighting as well as composition are meticulously arranged. Mouthwatering food and drink images are polished/glorified and appeared in festive settings like ones in food magazines and cookbooks. In the first image an Italian coastline, Neapolitan pizza and two glasses of wine are depicted. Pizza as the main dish is a typical signifier of Italianness. Ingredients of green mint leaf, white mozzarella and red tomato sauce illustrate the Italian flag. The cliché representation of Italian identity with pizza is coherent with an Italian coastline view and stone pine on the left side. Mediterranean essence is framed with both its food culture and flora. This is also a holiday image that visual reference to someone who afford a holiday abroad. Similar to Barthes analysis on press photography, these are objects that specifically worked on in the light of professional, aesthetic and maybe ideological norms as factors of connotations (Barthes 1961: 198). The third image is also a connotation of expertise of the producer of the image. Secondly, artful composition represents a glorified Instagram experience to everyday life. In the second image a natural surface, worksheet, arranged cups and plates and a succulent appear in a perfect harmony. The contrast between plates and wooden surface supports the glorified appeal. Instagram, because of its universe of controlled images, is where people generally share their bests.

The second and third images carry the essence of nature through both wooden surface and pots of plants. Food in the second image and the cocktail in the third image are

depicted under professional lighting conditions. Colors of ingredients and contrast between background and foreground in terms of lighting, color and balance between warmness/coldness are technical details that add photographs a professional and appetite appearance. Obviously, these images cannot be framed as social media images that aim to ensure visual communication between individuals. In the light of festive setting, balanced composition and technical details, these are images to reflect visual perfection just like images of cookbooks, magazines. Moreover, elements in the images can be regarded as identity pegs. In the third image, cocktail directly refers to bartender's profession. The café setting in the second image possibly give some hints about persona and his everyday lifestyle. Plants in all images and unreformed wooden surfaces in the second and third images refer to aesthetization of nature. Emontspool and Georgi claim that presentation of food with natural elements is more pleasing and novel. Plates are replaced with old piece of wood is a clear reference to closeness of nature (Emontspool and Georgi 2017: 315). The plates are not wooden in these images but unreformed entity of wooden surface and lively backgrounds as references to closeness to the nature reminds me Dutton's comments on aesthetic judgement on trees as it is a basic signifier of protection from wilderness in the mind of human being. He claims trees are aesthetic in the eyes of humanity because a tree is a basic signifier of protection from wilderness (Dutton 2009: 31). On the other hand, if a user attracts professionally generated image of the pink cocktail possibly follow his account to learn how to make good cocktails or to see more beautiful images daily. As it is known more followers means more sponsored content. In this context glorified images possibly accompany motivation of carrying glorified stuff to everyday life. It might be going to a depicted city and making depicted cocktail and training body to reach depicted body image etc. The depiction of all kinds of images that carry essence of "conspicuous consumption" possibly trigger others to consume.

Stylistic presentation of food experience with its symbolic meaning is actually a presentation of glorified lifestyle not only social communication mediated with images or identity pegs, it is also the investment to online persona. Designed ritualistic festive eating experience is a marker of digital "conspicuous consumption" and these images reach millions of users via mobile screens. Generally, recipes are not revealed but images

potentially teach users how to create a festive environment for an eating experience in a visual way. Central claim here is using Instagram is watching glorified images to glorify ordinary moments in this sense. Edited everyday life images that carry essence of strong harmony are conceivably attract thousands of users who wants to entertain or influence others around them by replicating similar visual codes in their actual and digital presentations of self. Appetite appearance is constructed both with lively colors and ornamental presentation of food.

2.5. FITNESS

Instagram is a platform of glorified lifestyle representations and it is a fruitful atmosphere to display muscular bodies. Athletes' investment and dedication to workout can be seen in the following hashtags; *#fit* (148M), *#fitness* (365M), *#workout* (148M), *#training* (93M), *#gym* (175M), *#fitnessmotivation* (72M) etc. Fitness as a lifestyle is displayed in different manners. Exhibiting aesthetic sculptural body forms in gyms is a marker of idealized body representation in the digital atmosphere. Muscular and well-shaped human bodies evoke widespread attention and strong appearance feasibly seen as a desired qualification. Self-representation with a muscular body is a basic digital signifier of health according to Schau and Gilly's research. Their research participants report positive responses about athletic bodies in social media and they have seen these images as representations of health and motivation. This kind of images not just a marker of self-identity but a construction of virtual one which is idealized version of the physical persona (Perthuis and Findlay 2019: 24-25). Since sculptural like athletic body is seen as a representation of health, motivation and attractiveness, idealized physical persona helps users to gain positive reputation and more followers. These users like I mentioned in other categories are commonly match their persona with some of the brands such as nutrition, supplement, sportwear, gym and their personal training program, diet routine etc. become part of their idealized version of the physical identity. In this way, users are both digital content producers, advertisers and entrepreneurs at the same time similar to other lifestyle-oriented profiles. Mannis claims that sharing workout images and photographs from a gym are self-identity pegs that mark a group identity (Mannis 2016: 24). Signifiers of digital self-representation constitute a visual group narrative and advertise sport-related products to offer 'idealized' appearance. In this regard, advertising the idealized

body image and images of related products is perfectly integrated so buying the displayed product is a step to reach depicted idealized appearance. In this respect, spectator might consume the image because it seems beautiful/idealized also possibly consume depicted brands because these are associated signs of the idealized body.

Fig. 2.5 (series of images on fitness)

Body here is a basic signifier of the certain lifestyle and personal dedication to physical activities. All visual elements in images such as clothing preferences, atmosphere, body appearance and personal association with materials are strong markers of the represented lifestyle. These depicted features convey identical elements to other users. Digital identity and personal taste are deeply adjustable on Instagram since the content is based on personal preferences. Fit body, barbell and basketball as digital identity pegs signify investment to personal interests and online identity mediated by symbolic meaning of objects. Commonly used identity pegs in fitness-based accounts are seen as features of health and motivation as Schau and Gilly claim in their research. Generally, fit body is a key concept for healthy appearance, that is why accounts that associated with fitness generally advertise healthy nourishment, training in addition to sportwear brands. Since a fit body resembles of health, muscular people commonly explain their own training routines and personal diet via their posts. Weather muscular bodies are seen as symbols of the good health or not, these are associated with aesthetics and personal dedication to athletic lifestyle. Linder draws attention to aesthetics of bigness and symmetrical harmony in bodybuilding in his article, *Life as Art and Seeing the Promise of Big Bodies*.

He defines bodybuilding contests are more likely a beauty ceremony than strength and power (Linder 2007: 454). Instagram is a platform that advertise all kinds of investments on beauty standards. In this regard, the platform embodies millions of different muscular body images because of common beauty perception on muscular body. Fitness and bodybuilding enthusiasts share their own sculptural bodies with their followers as markers of their lifestyle. Presentation of trained body is more general than other sports since it reflects desirable norms on physical beauty. Fitness is one of the most popular hashtags in the field of sport and shared 349M times, others like football and basketball are less popular according to network's taxonomy. Thus, the popularity of fitness among other sport visuals is because of its intimate association with beauty, physical ideal and aesthetics.

Since fitness, bodybuilding, workout refer to healthy appearance, athletes promote their own muscular bodies. Having a muscular body renders the digital persona as a health expert so their own training routines and diets are on sale. In this respect their way of wearing, their muscular bodies and their digital image are symbols of "conspicuous consumption". Instagram images prominently promote all kinds of elements and materials to its enthusiasts. Personal digital identity is constructed with "conspicuous consumption" to advertise their identical elements to others in its best form via production and post production. This mentality makes the platform one of the most privileged among other social networking sites in terms of commodity economy and consumerism. And that is why Instagram is a network which enables users to become an influencer. It is like perfume ads which display images of seductive male and female bodies. The product is for sale with signifiers of seductiveness, coolness, firmness, confidence etc. as an inseparable subsidiary of the perfume. Buying promoted workout/diet program or sportwear of a trainer because of glorified image of fitness professionals is similar to replication of codes of higher classes' wealth symbols.

2.6. DESIGN/ARCHITECTURE/DECORATION

This category appears in various different ways on Instagram. Furniture, plants, all kinds of home accessories, interior and exterior architectural details can be framed under the design category with the following hashtags; *#design* (199M), *#decoration* (30M), *#home*

(131M), *#house* (37M), *#architecture* (116M), *#furniture* (20M). Presentation of beautifully decorated interiors, designed materials, pets and plants in an everyday life atmosphere advertises various elements of domesticity. In this respect, presenting domesticity is not distinctly different than selfies because photographs of domesticity similarly signify self-identity and personal taste. Moreover, depicted materials in this kind of images constitute ties between materials and users. A Louis Poulsen lamb can be a signifier of Scandinavian simplicity and minimalism, fashion related books on a bookshelf signifies an investment to a specific interest, retro curtain as a signifier vintage way of living, a living room with countless pots of plants can be seen as a reflective of a green thumb persona etc. Home and design related content are basic representations of personal taste and lifestyle. Parallel to images of body and fashion, homes and decorative elements express ideas and ideals as Webster claims. Wallpapers, furniture setting and combination of these materials according to personal choice and budget actually signifies lifestyle. Media (in this case, user generated media) convey alternative meaning and information on symbolic habitat (Webster 1994: 155). The quantity of the visual data on modern life is even more heavily intensive in the current epoch in comparison to modernism. Digital signifiers of everyday life on Instagram strong highlighters of personal taste and desirable way of living.

Symbolic exchange can be the best definition of Instagram's network characteristics. Photographs and videos signify consumption and production logic of capitalist society. People use goods to mark social distinctions and personal dreams and desires are celebrated with consumer culture mediated by images that prompt aesthetic pleasures (Featherstone 2007: 13). Domestic space and its availability in the time of digital networks are sign of consumption logic and social distinction. Desirable frames of decoration which mediated by images. Harmony and stylistic elements do not simply manifest what is more desirable for users, they also serve as a signifier of identity and personal taste. Featherstone also asserts that images and sites in consumption economy make boundaries blurry between art and everyday life and endorse 'pleasures of excess' because of persistence of carnivalesque tradition and transformation of carnivalesque into media images, design, ads, cinema etc. (Featherstone 2007: 22). Blurriness between art and everyday life appears as images in the platform intensely. Instagram images promote

varyingly different decoration ideas. Videos and photographs on Instagram are new versions of decorated eye-catching shop windows or living room displays in IKEA stores. Especially, user generated professional images are hard to differ from artistic, well-made commercials. Therefore, the platform enables to purchase some of the displayed products. One click makes the price visible and second click opens the online shopping facility. There is a parallel usage characteristic between users and brands. Brands advertise their products similar to users who promote their lifestyles via images that show how they engage to the commodity culture.
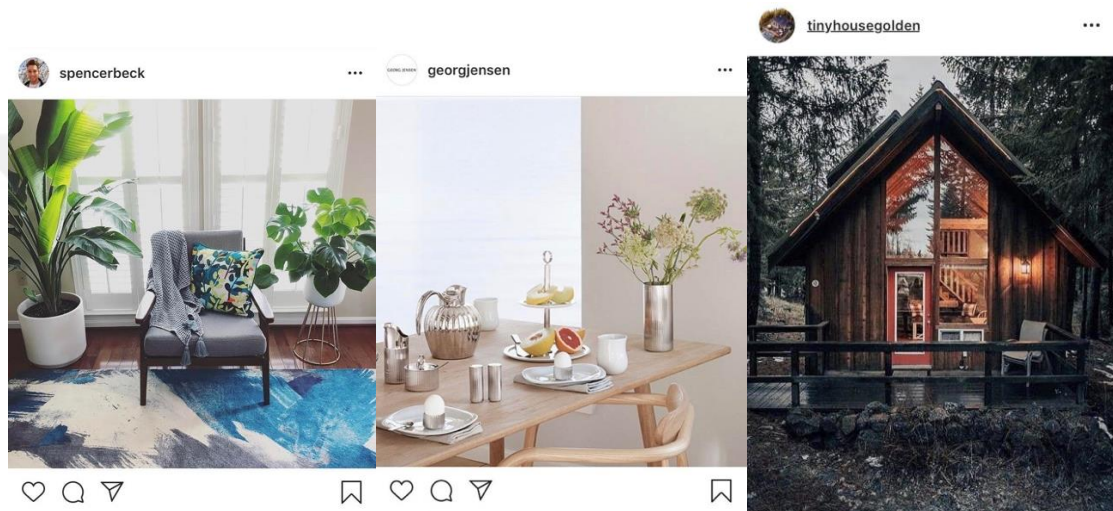

Fig. 2.6 (series of images on design)

Skyscrapers, desirable houses cozy interiors, architecture and decoration objects, electronic devices, cars etc. are all accessible in Instagram's visual network. Therefore, some accounts follow a specific pattern and share similar types of photographs. Similarly, brands frame stylistic way of living like in the second image. Iconic Danish brand Georg Jensen presents its graceful silver products in a Scandinavian minimalist setting. Silver objects are full of vivacious elements from nature that constitute a lively atmosphere. On the other hand, smooth and bright light makes silver surfaces more shinny and reflective. True lighting condition intensifies elegance of brand's craftmanship. Therefore, in the first image excellent direct light through window illuminate beautiful green shades on plant leaves. Pattern on the pillow and plants as well as pure white pots are representation of everyday life via framed interior setting. Oil painting on canvas like rug seems like an indicator of obscure boundaries between art and everyday life. Finally, the last image depicts a house. Idealized houses as a marker of personal taste or a displayed ownership

generally illustrated in a glorified way. These depictions are common elements of glorified lifestyle presentation and generate an association between user and a beautiful/cozy/well-designed house. This symbolic association because of its glorified characteristics present lifestyle of the user in a glorified way and possibly evoke positive responses and admiration. Way of presentation of the selected symbol is more important than the symbol itself. Glorified presentation of it make the image a positive identity peg. Instagram users are triggered to share their admiration, what they love in an enhanced quality, so beauty seems the key aspect in the production and consumption patterns. Trees, plants, classy and minimalistic furniture, balanced harmony, objects and luminous interiors present visual messages of stylistic life decisions of users as their online identity pegs.

2.7. PLANT/NATURE

Plants are integral component of both interior and exterior design, moreover it is presented as a lifestyle. Specific Instagram accounts are dedicated to experience of living with plants and nature. Instagram can be handled as a showcase of healthy, colorful, well flourished plants. Both professional and amateur green thumbs share various kinds of plants to attract other plant enthusiasts. Hashtags such as *#plants* (27M), *#nature* (468M), provide an opportunity to follow specific types of plants. Following these hashtags are aimed to be associated with visual symbols and way of display plants not to learn about taking care of them. YouTube provides deep information about care although Instagram as image and short video-based platform is not appropriate for it. Instagram is primarily used to express beauty of plants and these as markers of lifestyle sometimes used to express personal taste parallel to my argument in the design category. Also, users prominently share well flourished desirable plants, and this indicates what kind of plants worth to share on Instagram.

Fig. 2.7 (series of images on plants)

The first image illustrates a living room decorated with dozens of plants. The image as a digital presentation of the lifestyle convey aesthetically framed domesticity. Displayed domesticity is a global phenomenon in contemporary society. As Bauman claims in his book, *Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age,* public space is colonized and occupied by the private space (Bauman 2013: 109). The contemporary world mediated by digital networks where information is transmitted instantly one digital device to another. This circumstance makes boundaries between private and public blurry. Social media especially Instagram is full of signifiers of domesticity and markers of all kinds of personal taste and lifestyles of individuals. A grab of coffee, a dining table, living room decoration, a new underwear etc. material depictions mark online persona of users. The lifestyle as a personal data sometimes more clearly manifested like in the second image. The plant is displayed in front of the most identical feature of the body: face. It is a clearest manifestation of aestheticized representation of an interest. A woman body (physical identity) is behind her interest in a domestic setting. Terrarium and plant species are both curated and shared as everyday life beauties, and these also enlighten other users about caring and decoration tips, scientific names of plants etc. In this regard Instagram is a collective visual and textual memory of users that influence other users to create similar associations with depicted materials. Therefore, third image combines two different lifestyle categories, fitness and plants/nature. The account called *Boysandplants* curates user images that combine muscular male bodies and plants. Framed personal

investments, plants and trained body as a 'healthy and beautified way of living' are clear image connotations.

Instagram images pair up people and their interests. In case of plant related images plant pots as decorative elements possibly give some consumption hints to ones who exposed to these posts. Educative content in terms of caring tips and biologic classification can be find in YouTube since Instagram is a more practical tool to submit glorified scenes from material signifiers of everyday life. Therefore, depicted symbols on Instagram transmit desired meaning to others who follow accounts or hashtags with the help of digital network structure. Social class is mediated by various material symbols. Personal presence within material gadgets or cultural production (economic capital) and symbolic adaption and capability to these gadgets (cultural capital) specify collective classification of individuals (Bourdieu 2013: 295). Interaction between plants, materials such as pots home furniture, way of living and individuals convey social class and symbolic adaptation to materials and way of using these materials give invaluable hints about persona who frame his/her moments. In this regard the platform function like an educative tool to influence others as well as influenced by others.

3. PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

3.1. PRODUCTION

In this chapter, production logic is analyzed in the light of users' experiences. Users are producers of the glorified visual narrative, so their production logic and beauty perception directly form the content. I aim to analyze how users are frame their visual self and visual lifestyles in their profiles. Production step signifies a primary importance on Instagram because user motivation to enhance image quality can be enlighten with focusing on way of producing images. Production step of the visual content includes framing and editing which ends up with posting it. Digital image production and circulation of images on Instagram reminds Webster argumentation on living in media saturated environment in the information age is like living in a sea of signs (Webster 1994: 471). Users as constant content producers in social media platforms because content is formed as a result of continuous creative activity, social networking, communication process (Fuchs 2009:

82). It is not only for constructing group and dual communication activities but as Faucher claims there is a motivation to represent ideal self (Faucher 2018: 67). The circulation of billions of images are varyingly different presentations of glorified self. Everyday moments as visual stories professionally edited and framed and look like professional promotion images of various glorified life style settings. Manovich similarly highlights role of Instagram; it is a tool for aesthetic visual communication (Manovich 2016: 41). It really is since the platform looks like a collection of polished images in terms of digital edited and carefully selected relevant symbols of lifestyles.

Displayed self-identity on Instagram and other digital platforms is constructed, this is representation of either idealized or actual identity. The digital identity is transmitted via selected symbols of the certain life style, wealth or desired values. Identity representation in an idealized form possibly provide more and more followers to users and the unpaid creative content production possibly transforms to be a paid job. If the content attracts major interest it enables users to post sponsored content. An athlete who posts fit body photographs in a training room and daily nutrition, post sponsored contents that related with sport and supplements. A fashion model can be started to promote products of a fashion brand or establish his/her own fashion brand. Representation of identity with commodities as symbols of way of living make the platform a fruitful atmosphere for the consumer culture. As Miller et al. states online identity in social networking sites is constructed through networking than actual psychological state (Miller 2016: 110). This claim according to Miller reminds Giddens argumentation on modernism. Elements of identity are no longer stable but representations of dynamics of different situations of individuals. It is like preserving compatible narrative of self-identity. Social atmosphere is more scalable, and this circumstance provide an enormous flexibility to online identity. As Miller claims, in the social hierarchy people tend to create a totally different persona in the eyes of others through masquerade. The users possibly craft their online identity to reflect their attractiveness and power (ibid: 110) as it is seen in the comment of the participant 31 visual identity is shaped in accordance with user expectations. The platform steer users to share quality images -images with desirable features- with others. It primarily motivates glorified posts since it is regarded as reflection of identity. It seems like participant 31 and 26 are motivated to satisfy their self-signaling needs;

"(Instagram) Content is mostly aesthetic." "It is a digital identity and I love my own profile, it is beautiful and well-ordered. I post images if it is quality, if it is not that quality, I share it as a story. It captured our life. We do not steer it, it steers us."

(Participant 31)

"Users need to satisfy themselves and Instagram is the easiest way for it."

(Participant 26)

There are well-known symbols that associated with different life styles. Expensive or branded commodities possibly used as a marker of wealth or dozens of plant images on Instagram profile possibly seen as a marker of green thumb persona. Edgell highlights that expensive and rare commodities are used for social needs rather than utilitarian (Edgell 1999: 101). Not all images on Instagram portray expensive and rare commodities, but images are generated to fulfill social needs and aim to show desirable way of living of the producer I believe. Visual crafts on Instagram is constructed to represent self-identity more attractive/powerful. Glorified digital representations of everyday life is a result of flexibility and adjustable nature of digital identity. This follows the same pattern with glorified life of celebrities and edited bodies on magazines and TV shows.

Branded product is used as one of the ways of glorifying digital identity on Instagram. Personal affordability of expensive products can be regarded as an identity signal within digital networks. Shipman claims people possibly aim to become associated with some brands and show their capability to pay for the higher quality. It is highlighted privilege of being a member of an exclusive minority group where majority of others are excluded. People actually pay extra money to be differentiate themselves from people cannot afford to buy that brand. In this regard price of the branded material is a subscription fee (Shipman 2007: 283). In this respect using an exclusive brand/rare material is a motivation of differentiate digital self from others. Having a branded product is both a signifier of wealth and a clear reference to a lifestyle because of that "conspicuous consumption" 'Veblen Goods' are commonly portrayed on Instagram. As Goffman claims, within the social hierarchy higher classes are always idealized and replicate their behaviors by people from lower classes. This is a desire for prestigious life and a motivation to be closed to sacred center of common values in the society (Goffman 2009: 23) Replication of wealthy way of living in terms of dining in expensive restaurants, using expensive designs or wearing expensive clothes are clear reasons of enhanced self-image

production. Likewise, Jain asserts that consumption of luxury materials has both social and individual motives. Especially, consumers of emerging markets highlight social functions of luxury materials due to enhance their self-image with certain brands (Jain 2017: 26). In this regard, flexibility of online identity enables users to portray their ideals. Either ideal or actual as Goffman explains; individuals try to illustrate the best image of themselves to others (O'Donnell 2018: 132) and glorified self-representation is adjusted in accordance with this logic. Parallelly, Goffman claims presentation of self of individuals in the best form especially in front of the wider audience. TV and radio personalities are aware that their instant behaviors influence public impression about them and they work for a good impression (Goffman 2009: 212). This circumstance is also relevant for social media especially Instagram with its visual saturated environment. In front of gaze of others, like TV personalities, users extensively work on to appear in their best forms.

Since identity is flexible and quality is primarily important, users tend to adjust their self-image. Miller et al. mention "Social media is less real or more removed from lived realities" Social media is not just a communication technology that provide a platform for communication, fantasy and entertainment, it is somewhere a lived place for some people (Miller 2016: 111-112). Admirable image is a constructed identity, sometimes a form of desired identity. Selection of symbols and way of editing play major roles to generate it. Users seem likely prefer to mark their identity with more sophisticated and garnished way on Instagram as it is explained participant 8:

> "Ordinary people live the life that they deserve. Everyone is happy on Instagram because they have a posh and quality life there. Nobody eats chicken döner, I have friends that happy only in the platform"

(Participant 8)

Certain goods (pro-social goods) are used to display belonging to a desirable group similarly to Veblen's case consuming expensive products is an affiliation or a signal of belonging to the elite class. The motivation behind wearing a pink ribbon bracelet or a Toms shoes possibly have similar reasons with someone who wear a Rolex (Johnson 2018: 340-341). The idealized digital self is constructed varyingly different identity pegs like elements of wealth (Rolex), elements of social responsibility (Toms) or elements of beautification (represented clothes, food, makeup etc.). "Conspicuous consumption" as a

way of signaling identity is not always a status seeking in this regard but a belonging to a desired group or increasing visual quality of digital identity. Instagram profiles highlight motivation of representing desirable identity with symbolic markers and mental sets of social groups. As Faucher claims, social media profiles are immaterial products of users because it competes for attention and enhance user's social capital in the market of online social commodities (Faucher 2018: 76). This enhancement of image quality is conceptualized glorification acts in this study.

Leisure time activities and beautiful moments family/friend meetings, travel or just a simply beautiful landscape or an object are images primarily shared. Promotion of desire with glorified image of something desirable seems the primary logic of the platform because in the light of taxonomic hashtag characteristics and visual narratives users tend to share their glorified everyday lifestyles and selected moments like holiday images. Many images from 'cool' coffee shops, restaurants (see Food and Drink chapter) and travels are posted to show glorified way of living of users. Therefore, pots of beautifully flourished plants, well decorated interiors, fit bodies in gym saloons and worn branded clothes or smoothness of makeup are also framed to show which visual signals are more desirable and what kind of identity pegs are worth to share with others. Cultural meanings of objects are commonly used since the collage of objects is set to share personal identity with others. Symbolic value is more important than functional value in the context of Instagram. Featherstone asserts food and drink are commonly have a short life, but bottle of a vintage port can bring exclusivity and prestige that never actually consumed. The symbolic meaning of the wine produces a great deal of satisfaction that used as marker. It forms social relations in terms of the symbolic value (Featherstone 2007: 16-17). Symbolic value of objects and glorified representation of these are two central steps of digital identity signaling process. Regular consumption of champagne, routine travelling, extreme accessories, displayed objects give us some tangible clues about luxury consumption. Both branded and social (lavish way of living) luxury affect exclusivity. Instagram images used to impress other users (Wachenfeldt 2019: 16-18). The images are posted because users aware that framed experience/object is an identity peg and it is polished with editing tool because of the same reason. Whether it is owned material or not if it is portrayed, it is a transmitter of the identity.

"First, I check Instagram profile when I meet someone. Instagram profile is our identity. This is an outcome of our generation. It is like a context of a book. We deduce and read life of others."

(Participant 6)

"Instagram is a platform where people create a way of living for themselves."

(Participant 5)

Adjustable identity representation on Instagram is mediated by conspicuously consumed materials. Theorist Veblen claims consumption of products of minimum utility but high quality for personal comfort as an evidence of wealth. These markers are articulated by "conspicuous consumption" (Veblen 1899: 35-36). It is possible to claim existence of conspicuously consumed materials in the contemporary age both in digital and actual life. Constructed identity on Instagram posts clearly a representation of personal taste and lifestyle which possibly provide a higher status. Participants of this research prove that self-presentation preferences aim to construct something glorified.

"I see myself beautiful in my Instagram profile. It is a true satisfaction for me."

(Participant 6)

"Instagram is popular among young users because of campery. Desired way of life is presented to them by other users. It is because of perception of perfectness."

(Participant 23)

Users share images that represent their life as ideal/desirable since they are aware that their online identity is opened to public gaze. Thanks to the flexibility of online identity because it enables users to create a visual narrative (identity) with series of images that construct the ideal self. Symbols and way of editing constitute images and images constitute the ideal self. Participant 2 and 4 have similar views on way of identity construction in the platform:

"Instagram does not reflect real sides of users. It is more polished and packaged version of the self. I have an influencer friend, her beauty in the platform is much more different than her (real) beauty."

(Participant 2)

"It is popular among young people because it enables us to be a person that we want to be."

(Participant 4)

In the light of these comments it is possible to claim user tend to glorify their online identity. Abstracted representation of self in social networking sites is formed as a 'digital

object' with the help of user generated content and accumulative social capital (Faucher 2018: 73). In social media posts input hobbies interests and personal info and parallelly communication in digital networks is dedicated to products and services (ibid: 65-66) Association of products/services and person conducts desirable online identity.

Varyingly different identity marks are used on Instagram since certain materials are highly associated with certain lifestyles. Veblen claims in his influential book, *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), materials that signify luxuries and comfort such as certain beverages and items are reserved for the use of the leisure class. Consumption of these products help them to feel honorable and noble because of the costly etiquettes and these items are markers of their superior status in the society (Veblen 1899: 34). Consumed products are transformed to symbols of superior status of individuals. Similarly, on Instagram consumed materials, restaurant or cafes that users visit mark of status in the society. Users create associations to desirable class fractions with their displayed acts and materials. Bourdieu claims that 'taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier'. People classify themselves with their choices and separate others by using segregation they make. Difference between classes are appeared in presenting eating, serving in stylized forms that deny function (Bourdieu 1996: 6-7). The reflected symbolic value crates distinctions in the light of Bourdieu's comment is clearly valid on Instagram. Users frame themselves as they want in accordance with replicated desirable values. Way of clothing, places that visited, concerts, home decoration, travelling logic etc. are reflective in terms of personal taste, actively influence production logic and classify user in the eyes of other users. Vanity, imitation-like and glorified production logic and displayed "conspicuous consumption" are common on behalf of self. Users are work on to make their images more beautiful and more desirable.

The permanent symbols are opened to peers as well as other users and these symbols are markers of both superior status and shared values among young users. User posts can be conceptualized as "conspicuous consumption", but it is not always carrying the essence of luxury in Veblen's context. Shared moments in the platform carry the associated symbols with users' identity and lifestyle as it is marked in the following quote of participant 32;

"I follow Cristiano Ronaldo, Aykut Elmas, Aras Karafil, Babo Films, Reynmen to be updated. Ronaldo does not share just himself, he also shows Nike products that he uses. he shares places that he visits. He visits weird places like holiday destinations and nightclubs."

(Participant 32)

Users decide how their visual identity is constructed with certain elements. Moreover, a muscular body, training accessories reflect investment to fitness related products, travel is again an investment and require paying bunch of services, home decoration, clothing, technology related stuff are surely investments and displayed these investments is "conspicuous consumption". Surely symbolic power of materials and experiences are varyingly different and some materials relate/express certain lifestyles in a better way. For example, having a Chinese food in its authentic setting can be seen more positive than having a chicken döner. Differentiated and lavish investments on online identity seems more desirable. Glorified online identity representation does not have to be externalized self, it is a polished version of the self.

"Instagram content is aesthetical because users specifically work to make their images beautiful. For example; I saw a very beautiful image of a café with beautiful pink flowers. I saw the exactly same image several times in terms of framing and angle. Everyone goes there and taken the photo in the same chair."

"Beautiful places, combinations and latest fashion trends are depicted in the platform. Users strive on way of presentation of their outfits and food they eat. Not so simple outfits are presented like a blue jean and white shirt. All elements in images are framed to demonstrate different and branded."

(Participant 5)

"Instagram content is beautiful, it is different and eye-pleasing. A view under a beautiful lighting conditions, photos of travelers and architects…"

(Participant 29)

As the participants mention, users are motivated to display themselves not with simple, ordinary outfits and not in ordinary restaurants. Representation of self with certain brands in a beautiful way seems like a common logic among young users. Moreover, it influences others' decisions; a beautifully decorated café becomes a desired hotspot for other young users. Users are aware that identity on Instagram is constructed so they work on to make it more desirable. Actually, this mentality is beyond the logic of Instagram. Photograph as an eternalizing method has always seemed significant. Bourdieu similarly asserts that especially in the old ceremonial photographs it is important to submit the most honorable image possible in front of others' glance. Self-reflection in images was something like

inflexible stance of a soldier who is 'standing to attention'. Posture and wearing best clothes with a proper pose in photographs are regarded as a respect of oneself and claim of respect from the spectators. Similarly, portrait as object of self-image that motivated by conventional norms invite spectators follow the same courtesy and great respect. Bourdieu imparts that figures of photographs arrange their posture attempt to appear as they want to be seen. It is a motivation to make the appearance the most dignified and the soberest in images. It is regulated and primed to be seen in the best form possible because of ideals of dignity and honor (Bourdieu 1985: 611-12). The production logic was similar to the time that limited access to photography. Persuasion of merit, dignity, reputation is still similar on Instagram. The production logic has a parallel logic. Eternalized version of primed self is generated to reach the personal ideals especially in the time of digital networks since visual identity representations pervades all digital screens and seem as the identity in general.

> "Instagram profile is now our identity. In the past, others have asked our name, now people are asking our Instagram profile. People judge others with their Instagram profiles. …Instagram profile and posts are pieces of the whole presentation to generate desired qualifications and everything is set by the user. It is an autobiography that submitted to interested users."

(Participant 25)

In the light of comment of participant 25 social media experience is a set of identity. Materials that selected to display for other users generate it. As Grewal et al. mentions brands commonly tempt users to engage their lifestyles in social media platforms. Similar to the actual life product interactions in social networks are used to reflect self-identity (Grewal et al. 2019: 197) The controlled identity reflects personal taste in a desirable manner, nonetheless plausibility of Instagram posts is negotiable. As it is clearly seen in most of the participant comments, they are aware of production logic in terms of glorification. Specifically following user comment reveals imitation on posts. Participant 15 claims that Instagram is not even a digital identity presentation since they use it when they are happy so some of the users reject Instagram's relations with identity. Intensive glorification is not always demanded by young users. In this regard like participant 9 users tend to ignore posts/profiles that 'situated on lies.'

> "Instagram posts are situated on lies. I do not care everyone's posts but there are some people's posts that I examine."

(Participant 9)

"Instagram is not a digital identity presentation. No one can be happy all the time. Generally, we use it when we are happy."

<div align="right">(Participant 15)</div>

Production logic creates similar association between users and materials. Well edited image of a traveler or a dining in a luxury restaurant etc. carry similar essences. These are favorable and influential according to participant comments hence some of the users tend to distort common production logic. Generality of 'crafts of beautification' with happy faces become boring because of endless circulation of similar images.

"Each user has own criteria to post an image. I post images of myself and my girlfriend. I do not like to share photos from very beautiful places. I am bored this kind of posts… I do not post images in my car."

<div align="right">(Participant 8)</div>

"I use Instagram to communicate with my close friends."

<div align="right">(Participant 11)</div>

Desired qualifications in this case; showing material (car) ownership as the participant 8 states depictions of "conspicuous consumption" is boring. Signs of material wealth or quality way of living is demanded in general but not always. Social ties and sociality may become more important in these cases. Mainstream standards of glorification on Instagram are neglected and serve a communication tool or an online dairy. However, this case can be enlighten the common logic of Instagram and desire on glorification in the platform.

"In Instagram users are well-traveled, fit, beautiful and rich." and "I do not want to follow people like me. I try to be influenced by life of others, but these are (displayed pieces) expensive, it creates value."

<div align="right">(Participant 6)</div>

"I use Instagram because I like posted photographs and videos in there. We can see places that we cannot go and see. I see life of celebrities, time goes too fast. It is a reason of jealousy."

<div align="right">(Participant 26)</div>

"Primarily people show off each other. Showing off around streets ended, now users conspicuously show off with places they go (café and restaurant), way of wearing, food and asset etc."

<div align="right">(Participant 8)</div>

Generally, participant comments in this research reflect similar opinions. The first comment articulates user characteristics. Desired way of living becomes more concrete in the light of the sentence. 'Well-traveled, fit and rich' in this regard represent desired features and give some clues about what kind of characteristics are worth to share and what kind of self-constructions are worth to invest. As Faucher claims user display their personal status with images of an expensive materials, luxury travels etc. to demonstrate that they have a good taste, wealth and privileged position in the society. (Faucher 2018: 71) User images visually convey invested characteristics in a glorified way that necessitates "conspicuous consumption". Dining in a beautifully decorated restaurant, worn branded clothes are both presentation of wealth and personal taste. In addition to representation of self with materials, Instagram enables to convey these messages to a greater environment than actual life. As Faucher claims social media images of food, luxuries, acts as unproductive time and leisure is a marker of their conspicuous presumption and these visuals reach wider audience. In the offline world these have limited validation but sharing it in a social networking site this possibly increase personal social capital (Faucher 2018: 80) Displayed commodities are not purchased because of the functional benefit, proper symbolic value is also playing a role. Selected self-relevant products that constitute identity possibly fulfill identity-signaling needs (Grewal et al. 2019: 198). Content consumption helps users to decide which identity relevant products are useful to construct desired self-identity. Vanity defines endless material manifestations in the platform. Therefore, conspicuous experiences like staying in a luxury hotel or dining in an expensive restaurant or "conspicuous consumption" are beautifully framed in the platform. Vanity is licit for the 21st century because material manifestations on social media is a repetitive activity (Wachenfldt 2019: 2). Mediatized luxury makes Instagram a tool to make online identity more admirable. Parallelly, users extensively work on to make their profiles more glorified with the help of luxury and desired symbols.

> "I think young people use Instagram because of their admiration to some users. They emulate them, they wish to be like them or to be informed about them."

(Participant 11)

> "Instagram is popular among young users because we love vanity."

(Participant 14)

"It is a tool to be a wannabe, established and loved in the social life."

(Participant 17)

"Young users feel themselves valuable and confident (by using Instagram)."

(Participant 18)

Admiration or curiosity towards glorified digital representation of lifestyles motivate users to enhance their self-identity. Participants explain that Instagram profile seems like one of the key elements to become established in the society. Instagram's flexibility provides various opportunities. Desirable way of living can be easily represented via well edited images of their clothing, holiday, food and drink choices. Instagram enables orchestrate online persona in their own way.

"Instagram posts are situated on lies. I do not care everyone's posts but there are some people's posts that I examine. (because) Everybody shows themselves as they want."

(Participant 9)

In the light of this comment central questions are "what kind of everyday life activities are worth to share on Instagram?" and "how these are posted?" Instagram seems not situated on lies but Instagram images are surely well-selected. Posts are situated on desirable and these are glorified both in production and post-production/editing process. Because of widespread values, images are polished in accordance with desire on beauty. Therefore, Instagram image refers to the digital 'self-objectification'. It is an object that carved with varyingly different identity pegs. Image of the producer is enhanced online identity that communicate with others on behalf of the user. The digital self that carved with "conspicuous consumption" is honorific and brings confidence. As O'Donnell mentions in her article, the antagonistic relationship between self-objectification and confidence has changed in a positive way in social media. Interview participants state that luckily controlling of their appearance is in their hands. The young individuals tend to edit or frame their photos to improve their appearance (O'Donnel 2018: 133). Similarly, Jain claims that association between self and object, ownership, consumption pattern in images establish 'extended self', it can be framed extended body (physique), experiences etc. (Jain 2017: 31). Both symbols (depictions in the image) and also editing (manipulation) are used to enhance quality of self-representation since users believe that these basic variables provide reputable position in social life.

Enhanced self-image may include various symbols in accordance with messages of culture industries that they are exposed and desired values, income, interests of user, peers' posts etc. The representations are well-packaged, well-edited and include desirable symbols like cars, branded clothes, travel, ornamental food/drink in enhanced quality. Coexistence of materials and user in the same image is portrayed visual identity as well as personal interests of the user. Whether it is real or pastiche, posted images are framed desirable visual messages for others. As Hearn mentions mediatized self as a 'self-branding' is a digital self-conscious construction that replicate the visual codes and narratives of the culture industries (Wachenfeldt 2019: 4). Desirable personas in social media, real life or in culture industries are possibly replicated. Endless representation of a natty and fit person is in a stunning café atmosphere with an ornamental dinner on Instagram is more likely a scene from a movie set because of the replication of visual codes I believe.

Glorified images with the help of editing and symbolism, replicated codes as a digital presentation of self, neither desirable nor ideal for a few participants in this research. Images that reflect family orientation and values possibly desirable for some users both as a producer and a consumer, but it can be also a reason to stop using the platform. Instagram images are representations of publicized private lives of individuals, in this regard it can be boring to follow pictures of others.

> "I use Instagram to be updated about my friends, we are unconsciously influenced by their posts, that is why I tend to stop using Instagram."

(Participant 14)

> "I stopped using Instagram. There is no contribution to my life. Why do I need to know my friend is having a cup of tea with her aunt? I do not care it all."

(Participant 23)

Therefore, commonly users tend to develop strong ties between some brands and depictions because these are seen as essential components of certain lifestyles.

> "In Instagram I observe my peers, it is like backyard of them, there is a strange imitation in their photographs."

(Participant 5)

> "It is not a platform to submit personal identity. Instagram is a platform for showing desired information to others."

(Participant 19)

"There is no correlation between Instagram and real life. Someone who has a monetary pressure might show a rented Ferrari car."

(Participant 21)

"It is popular among young people because it is popular in their fields. They depict their lives more beautiful and posher. It highlights their individualism and freedom. It is a motivation to escape from pressure and creating their own worlds."

(Participant 24)

Digital world representations with glorified images of "conspicuous consumption" is an endless phenomenon on Instagram. Irregular relationship between digital and actual way of living is observable because of familiarity of production logic that demand prestige among young users. The motivation of replication and beautification to reach ideal online identity reminds Veblen's "conspicuous consumption". Veblen articulates that the ideal way of living is pursued to reach another higher-class stratum and people live for that ideal (Veblen 1899: 40). Parallelly, Goffman also claim within the social hierarchy higher classes are always idealized and replicate their behaviors by others from lower classes. This is a desire for prestigious life and a motivation to be closed to sacred center of common values in the society (Goffman 2009: 23). It is not only relevant in wealth related symbols; this situation also motivates way of representation of family orientation and everyday choices of users. Common desire on glorified presentation with "conspicuous consumption" is more likely a motivation to gain reputation/popularity/honor in different contexts. It possibly cannot work in some cases if the both sides are aware of the fundamentals of construction of online identity. Users share images of valuable moments as an investment to online identity, so it does not seem like a 'strange imitation'. Thus, Instagram is used to glorify lifestyle and interests by young users and this situation is caused to series of beautifully generated images. I claim central motivation is becoming a reputable person with the help of editing and desirable symbols. Social success and wealth are not only demonstrated with "conspicuous consumption". Travelling to unknown countries, preference of a sport holiday, being an adventure lover are also used some other similar identity pegs (Bronner and Hoog 2018: 93).

In addition to "conspicuous consumption", positional experiences are also used to glorify online identity on Instagram. Travel choices or a dining experiences are also simply manifestations of self-identity for good reputation and social status. Bronner and Hoog

state that "conspicuous consumption" can play a significant role in all kinds of human consumption practices. First group includes materials like cars and secondly and observable experiences like going to a concert or dining in a restaurant. These experiences according to Yang and Matilla signify a growing importance in the society. This importance over material consumption in the new cultural climate is regarded as "experience society" where feelings are more significant than utility (Bronner and Hoog 2018: 89). In the light of their emphasis on holiday and dining decisions, these are identical representations in everyday life. Distribution capability of social media makes accessible in socially visible atmosphere for an unlimited time period. In the past experiences were hard to visible but social media saturated environment make social experiences much more visible than in the past. According to hashtag statistics travel/experience related content is one of the more demanded topics among other lifestyle presentations. Motivation can be impressing others or forming a visual diary with travel photographs but the content eventually a guide as it is asserted in the following research participants;

> "I use Instagram because there are more young content producers in the fields of travel, entertainment fashion and it is easy to use. Instagram can be a guide, I visit places that they go. I try to take different photographs from different angles." "They are pioneers. A couple of times I saw images of some places and I went…"

> (Participant 30)

> "Before a summer holiday, I check holiday images in other profiles to be informed. For example, I learned Ölüdeniz on Instagram and I went there afterwards."

> (Participant 32)

Choice of individuals reflect desire to show economic success and status to impress other users with their prestigious or luxury travel destinations (Bronner and Hoog 2018: 90-91). Moreover, not just the portrayed image, hashtags are also complementary elements of the photograph and it is a marker of the conspicuous user experiences. Background and clothing decisions are inseparable cooperation to reflect desired identity in a glorified way. In this regard conspicuous experiences like dining, travels are used together to enhance online self-image. Conspicuous experiences are not just showing of personal wealth but also a kind of symbolic reference to their belonging to prestigious reference groups (ibid: 92). Shared travel pictures as markers of "conspicuous consumption" demonstrate that disposable income for more attention. (Faucher 2018: 74). Materials that

displayed by the user are signs of someone's purchasing power in the presumption modal of digital networks and reputation and advanced interactivity in digital networks is assign of someone's 'commodified social power' (ibid: 77).

There are several ways of self-branding and satisfaction through constructed physical persona. Wachenfeldt's example seems valid in this case; A Russian billionaire's daughter who is not happy with her face says that fillers that she used give herself confidence and parallelly more followers. She defines that it is something that gives her power. Since body is a representation of self, all communication is mediated by the body in addition to status commodities (Wachenfeldt 2019: 7). Selfies and body representations are not basic images but a well-orchestrated one possibly with branded clothes or costly drinks (ibid: 9).

Using certain items are honorific and evidence of wealth and superior status and not using them becomes a mark of demerit. "Conspicuous consumption" of valuable goods that marks superiority is a marker of reputability in the society (Veblen 1899: 36). It is peculiar logic of Instagram in the light of hashtag and interview results. Representation of everyday moments are framed to express conspicuously consumed materials and association of these materials with the online persona makes it desirable. Bourdieu claims that things that must be photographed are photographed and the photographs are not portray only individuals but their social status as it is clearly explained in Bourdieu's example; an emigrant daughter sends a photograph of her husband to her family, but it is not just a picture of her husband, it is also the symbol of his social success (Bourdieu 1985: 606). I strongly believe that glorified everyday life representations on Instagram are aimed to mark their conformity and exclusive way of living mediated by primed images. Social success and social capital are associated with product ownership or "conspicuous consumption". Social media in this regard enables to send virtual identity signals to other users and these signals reinforce connections between user and materials to reflect a self-perception (Grewal et al 2019:199). This is clearly visible in the Hershel's Instagram profile. Some brands are more desirable and more associated with certain lifestyles and in addition to utility, these are also transmitter of status (in terms of affordability) and lifestyle (in terms of utility). Public display in social media can be

regarded as conspicuous production. In "conspicuous consumption", consumption motivation is not primarily utility but status display. For example, a silver spoon is softer than metal than steel, but it is transmitter of the status (Faucher 2018: 71). Similarly, bag's symbolic validity is highlighted in posts, not its utility.

Instagram is dominated by images of trendy restaurants, new looking clothes and beautifully decorated interiors, and travel in sum; representations of costly etiquettes of personal desires. Liquidity of desired representations of individuals, are never stable. Flexible identity of users is conceptualized with various different materials. In this regard each lifestyle representation in the digital atmosphere are signifier of their "conspicuous consumption". Going to a gym, consuming supplements and following athletes as their social capital is served as an identity peg of an athlete. Stunning food and drink images on a beautiful dining/breakfast table setting, posting endless images from all corners around the globe or just posting images from the last summer holiday, are also setting of identity in this regard. Online identity is never stable in Instagram profiles because it is constructed to generate positive impression among user and others. In this respect participant 6 explain the platform as a platform that everyone tries do their best to be seem beautiful;

> "It would be great if my actual identity is switched with my identity on Instagram". "I feel myself beautiful. People promote themselves in there. I feel beautiful on Instagram. I am not always beautiful in real life."

> "Instagram is a platform for the digital identity representation. It is important that way of wearing and attitude. Profile picture is also important. Personal profile provides dignity and reputation."

(Participant 3)

It is parallel to Wachenfeldt's example. A young girl in Dubai says she is so beautiful while her hair is brushed and with heavy makeup. And her appearance in the image confirms her words (Wachenfeldt 2019: 9). The makeup and beauty as a way of enhancement of online identity is articulated in the beauty chapter.

> "Instagram images are not identity presentation, it is a desired identity representation. It is like a film studio and you have your own scenario, it is where you want to shine."

(Participant 24)

> "It is not a presentation, Instagram is where users want to be cool."

(Participant 26)

In addition to this research participants Miller et al. also clarify that their research participants seek to submit their best or idealized version with others (Miller 2016: 156). Thus, submitted images are commonly polished and constructed to reflect idealized self. It reminds commercial images since Instagram images are codded to express only positive sides.

Instagram posts as 'crafts of beautification' which is called 'strange imitation' enables young users to reframe themselves for their peers and other users in the platform. Image depictions of conspicuously consumed materials are consistently transmitted encoded messages to other users. As Johnson et al. claim in addition to desirable items that markers of individual wealth green stuff are parallelly serve less utility but social prestige to the holder of these products, but it is not a materialistic wealth but pro-socialness (Johnson et al. 2018: 339). It is possible reason is not neglected by others or to become part of the social environment. "Conspicuous consumption" and serving desirable identity signaling is the motivator of posting this kind of images. This susceptibility helps users to be a faithful member in the subgroup and also enables to spread the environmental messages to broader environment. It is presentation of self with "conspicuous consumption". Production logic depends on desired values. Defining symbols of desired way of living to glorify Instagram profile is varyingly different. A photograph of a brand-new technological device, a stunning car, an ornamental cookery or a green bag as (performative acts of lifestyles) different identity pegs help users signal their self in the digital atmosphere in a desirable manner.

"It is a place to informed and observed."

"Everybody shows themselves as they want."

(Participant 9)

Adjustable nature of digital identity is similar to everyday roles which is articulated by Goffman in *the Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1954). Living in the contemporary society is more complexed since flexible digital roles are included to actual roles. It is more liquid because mental sets are used in images mediated by digital screens. The production logic seems still follows a similar pattern. Imaginary wonderland like depictions of personal associations with experiences and materials are glorified via editing and symbolism, this pattern can be seen in the 'Major Categories'. In sum,

symbols of lifestyles are clearly selected and improved digitally via editing tools to portray online identity in its best form. This pattern in the production logic discloses the reason of embellished quality of Instagram content.

Editing tool is vastly used to increase quality of images and it is also a way to give images some identical features like bluish hues in *romaincosta,* unity of contrast black and white in *abu888* and yellowish and greenish tones in *bradleyseymour.* It also enables to make the colors softer, make the image darker to emphasize bright colors on the foreground or adjust symmetry in a photo of a building etc. In accordance with personal taste, editing mechanism allow nonprofessional photographers to enhance image quality, manipulate imperfectness and change its features. Miller asserts that social media users see visuals reflection of cultivated appearance rather than distorted version of authentic self. Users extensively work to represent their dedication to 'craft of beautification' (Miller 2016: 160). People tend to glorify everyday moments and their appearance. Beautiful face is more beautiful, colors are brighter, comfort zones look more comfortable with the help of editing mechanism and way of framed symbolism. Editing mechanism and filter preferences to enhance quality of images are integrated to some social networking sites that aim to make visual appearance more glamorous than the actual version. In Veblen's sense these acts as a kind of 'reputation management' and 'self-curation' are conspicuous display that seek public attention and positive status (Faucher 2018: 71).

> "I do not know how they do it, but each single pixel is quality in the platform… It is too hard to select an image to post. Sometimes I take 300 images of myself and I eliminate them. I ask ideas of 5-10 friends. I examine images if I am beautiful. My friends' comments are also very important… Instagram profile is a digital identity. I do not reflect the perfection, it is not totally real, but perfection is in the foreground."

(Participant 26)

Way of beautification can be varyingly different person to person or generation to generation. However, since young users see their images as identity representation, glorification of posts is surely important for them. Similarly, participant 12 defines way of beautification as follows:

> "It is an aesthetical platform because it is edited and worked on. Lighting is the key aspect. A person looks beautiful under the sunlight, background and clothing are also important (elements)."

> "My posts are on my personal life. I aim to reflect my personality with a good angle and clarity."

"I am always online on Instagram. Posting when I feel myself beautiful is a requirement. The important point is to compound true pieces at the same time in the image. I edit it of course, I adjust colors and the atmosphere is suddenly changed."

"I share a new post when I think it is beautiful. I share myself. Sometimes I share where I travel and what I do."

Production and post production steps of images aim to personalize and increase image quality in accordance with personal perception. Filters as one of the central features of the platform are important which give photographs to desirable technical appearance like nostalgic, B&W, bright, cold colored, hot colored, soft, sharp etc. Photograph filters help users adapt Instagram aesthetics via making their photos beautiful (Poulsen & Kvåle 2018: 713) and they also point out that persistence of normative values. Instagram preserves basic features of photography to make photographs good so structured existence of resources are still valid and it secures aesthetic qualities of the edited photograph (ibid: 711) not just with edited symbols, dedication to body beauty selection of food investment to furniture in domestic setting and travel preferences. In this respect editing can be seen as symbolism and it is investment to craft of beautification. The enhanced beauty is also highlighted in the following statements of participant 23 and 16;

"Once I planned my trip in accordance with an Instagram account. I went places that displayed in the account. It was somewhere in Aydın. It was unlike its images on Instagram. It is tricky. Dream and utopia like, things are expressed in the best form on Instagram."

"Instagram content is exceedingly aesthetic and it does not reflect reality. Filters and Photoshop are used a lot. Many of them become famous by using way of editing. There are some applications that show how an image appears on the profile. My mother bought a carpet fabric, but It was entirely different than its Instagram depiction."

Following comments possibly give some hints about production logic of Instagram. Digitally glorified content is constructed to improve demand and frame desired self-image.

"Photoshop is heavily used on Instagram and Instagram camera has taken images in better quality. Instagram serves existing beauty norms. …Instagram images are eye-pleasing, images are very bright, colorful well-edited. (because) People claim better quality."

"I use Instagram when I am bored. I assume I am connected an hour, but actually I spend three hours. Generally, content is beautiful, basic things in daily life are aestheticized with a good post. It depends on the shooting technique."

(Participant 13)

"Instagram content is aesthetic because photographs are taken to look beautiful and high demand."

(Participant 14)

"The platform is aesthetic; a headscarf is (always) on head of beautiful models. Aesthetic is the primary factor on Instagram. …I share beautiful images. It is also important that what I feel when I see that image in my profile. …Instagram is not a digital identity representation. No one can be happy all the time. Generally, we use it when we are happy."

(Participant 15)

"Instagram content is beautiful because everything is illustrated in a beautiful way. Pastel colors and visual symmetry are aesthetic I believe. I love minimal and hot colored things."

(Participant 23)

"Instagram is an eye-pleasing and aesthetic platform. When I submit a photograph on Instagram, no one question my motivation. Users question the same thing on Facebook. There is a logic of 'I like it and submit it' there."

(Participant 24)

According to interviewees the general reason of using the platform is spending time. It was the most common answer, but they tend to use in addition to pragmatic reasons the platform is beautiful and give them a valuable flexibility to represent their lifestyles as more desirable.

"Instagram is definitely eye-pleasing. Generally, I share nature and food related images, not myself."

(Participant 4)

"I use Instagram to spend time. Another reason is content; it is very beautiful."

(Participant 21)

"I find Instagram content aesthetic." "Images should be edited with Instasize, it looks more aesthetic with it."

(Participant 27)

Instagram is eye pleasing because of applied norms of beauty which are explained in the categorization chapter. In addition to the existential beauty norms on Instagram, some users challenge to edits and manipulations and define it as unreal. Editing is a component

of polished perfectness of many Instagram images but there are also users that find nonfiltered images aesthetic. Filters and editing are not always key elements of enhanced beauty according to participants. Unreal appearance and extensively edited versions of digital identity are far away from being desirable for participants below.

"Non-exaggerated and less filtered profiles are aesthetic."

(Participant 2)

"My Instagram profile is natural, calm and nonfiltered. Instagram is a digital identity presentation and my profile is straight as a die, natural, calm and nonfiltered."

(Participant 29)

"I think emoji and text on video ruin aesthetic character and edited images. Content and text are incompatible, and it ruins transparency. The real (natural) is beautiful, if you put something adorned, it is not beautiful."

(Participant 3)

"I do not like sharing. For example, someone posts a too edited image. I think it is not real. Hence Twitter is different, everyone behaves more natural (in there)."

(Participant 32)

3.2.   CONSUMPTION

The visual narrative of Instagram is generated with users' visual production activities. These visual narratives are commonly results of stages of glorification (symbolism, production and postproduction stages). These stages help users to increase influential capacity and exquisite view of Instagram images. The exquisite capacity and influence of Instagram images necessitates a deep articulation. In this chapter I argue how users consume the glorified content and how these images influence their everyday life in the light of participant comments. Instagram users are also consumers of the glorified digital content as "prosumers". Interpersonal ties on Instagram help users to be increasingly more familiar with other or similar cultural activities with the help of expressive consumption. In this regard users are more exposed to various identity representations and social groups that give them an opportunity to learn more about varyingly different tastes (Warde&Tampubolon 2002: 158) This situation in digital networks gives some other opportunities. In accordance with desired interests, users follow other users and specific hashtags like #travel, #plants, #london, #fitness, #history etc. In addition to these two ways, 'discover' section also enables to explore recommended images within 'the

sea of sign'. These section function like advertising since recommended posts requires storing and assessing personal information. As Fuchs asserts advertisements in digital networks are personalized because it necessitates accessing (surveillance) private information to store and asses by computers and databases (Fuchs 2009: 82). In this regard users access related posts about their interests and possibly find deep information of products they want to buy. Users tend to glorify their self-image and this motivation makes the platform like a digital universe of ideal representations. This universe - collection of images- is possibly used as a guide to make social media experience more beautiful. As Featherstone claims pleasure of consumption and dreams and desires that celebrated in consumer culture imagery generate direct aesthetic pleasure that inherited from mass culture theory (Featherstone 2007: 13). Similarly, aesthetization of everyday life in big cities in terms of products of the creative industries art and everyday life switched their places and create 'aesthetic hallucination of the real' (ibid 23). The liquid character of wonderland like consumer culture imagery on Instagram make it easier to reach of more desirable images in accordance with personal interests.

Using Instagram is more than producing an ideal content, users are also exposed others' ideal self-representations and as participants mention they tend to replicate these or influenced. In this regard Instagram motivates users to share glorified self-image as I claim and follow also glorified posts to be influenced. Quote of participant 28 is a valid case here:

> "I search on Instagram to buy, I search on Google to be informed."

> (Participant 28)

In this regard, Instagram is not only a product of the information technology, but it is a platform to influence and steer to portrayed desires. Type of posts, motivation and relation to consumerism are connected because motivation to have something glorified can be framed as motivation to make everyday life more beautiful. It is not just possible trials of aesthetics, ideally represented images can provide pragmatic information like learning new things about plant care, tips for home decoration, announcements about sales etc. but I strongly believe that the platform has an educative function to teach them way of glorified representation with editing and symbolism. That is why Instagram posts are not

only informed users about plant care but also depicts beautifully planted healthy plants and polished beautiful plant pots to steer to consume (both the image and product itself) accordingly. There is a limited information about caring ill plants but there are endless representations of well-flourished plants in beautiful pots in different styles (plant as a decoration item) as a part of someone's lifestyle. In this situation post as crafted beautifully because it is an identity peg of the producer and makes consumer's social media experience more beautiful and steer consumer to be influenced. Portrayed symbols also induce spectator about expertise and competence of the producer in the selected field. Training room with full of gym materials or a green thumb who shares greenhouse and plants in pots are clear visual references of personal dedication to different interests and speaks on behalf of the person in the frame. Users also aim to be informed and updated so selected symbols of expertise are important for the consumer. The self-portrait like images are both representation of level of profession and also way of glorification of these symbols motivate users to follow both for development of their own tastes and being updated in the field.

First cycle of beautification is process of beautification/representation of self both with symbols relates life style and way of editing. Therefore, in the second cycle, consumption also refers to a beautification of everyday life. Digital universe of beautified images on Instagram carry a significant potential to direct users to consume. As Fuchs mentions it is a learning process of buying goods and spend their earnings in accordance with the followed content in social media (Fuchs 2009: 81). Glorified images as crafts have a significant potential to steer users to consume displayed goods and services. These products and services either their interest or not, influencers possibly play a role in the decision-making process. Consumer driven nature of social media determines media synergy in the current epoch. In a contrast to traditional media it is not driven by marketers but the user. Way of interaction and visual messages are selected by Instagram users in accordance with their lifestyles and interests. Various forms of media which are decided to be exposed by users influence personal consumption behaviors (Shultz et al. 2012: 174). The synergy between the content and the user enables to learn more about personal interests while they are exposed to selected messages. Visual saturated atmosphere of Instagram and glorified representations create a similar synergy and users follow others

in accordance with their interests and influenced and adapt depictions to their own life. Moreover, possibly replicate polished depictions to their own life. The media synergy on Instagram follows this pattern. Glorified everyday life depictions are followed to be exposed. In addition to pragmatic motivation, beautification also motivates users to follow them in the light my research participants. Glorified images make Instagram experience more beautiful since almost all participants report they find the content beautiful. The media synergy on Instagram steer young users to replicate craft of beauties into their own life. It is important that it does not just polishing the product, it empowers/glorified life of the user, that is why it influences product choice.

There are varyingly different everyday life representations in the platform, but basis of visual content is related with personal taste. It is more likely a representation of interests, hobbies, style and way of living. In the light of quantity of hashtags, it is possible to map major interests of Instagram users which is analyzed in the Major Categories section. Hashtags also provide data to what kind of images are worth to share. Hashtag and following characteristics of subject specific accounts also give invaluable clues about demanded topics and media synergy. Primary reasons of Instagram usage as follows;

> "I follow influencers because I think corporations sell products through influencers. I am also included to their target group."

> (Participant 11)

> "I follow some influencers. Elif Taştekne travels the world, it is enjoyable. I also follow ZARA, Adidas, Beşiktaş because I am a target consumer of these brands. It causes to buy new products. Also, I try to do similar combinations like ones in the images. There are some places I saw on Instagram than visited and I saw a t-shirt and bought."

> (Participant 12)

> "I do not follow so many brands, but I follow some that sympathetic for me like; Nike, Footlocker, Sezgin Yılmaz. I can be informed about a new model of Nike or a sale in Nike stores."

> (Participant 7)

> "I learn, visualize also I reach images about my interests. I follow Les Benjamins, Shopigo, WUNDER, Supreme, Adidas, Yasy. I do shop and actively following. It directly affects me."
> "Pre-launch campaigns are broadcasted live. It is in our hands and very easy to reach. I am thinking to buy a new design shoes which designed by Puma and Benjamin. I saw it on Instagram."

> (Participant 13)

"I follow travel related pages like earth focus and clothing like efbutik and food related accounts like Bengi Kurtcebe. When I buy a new product, I check related accounts for inspiration. Also, I follow sales in the discover section."

<div align="right">(Participant 14)</div>

"Instagram posts (maybe have influenced) influence my life …subconsciously we are influenced brands like Starbucks and H&M."

<div align="right">(Participant 18)</div>

As it is seen in the comments, users motivate to follow sponsored content and brand pages because glorified appearance and trends are commonly framed in an influential way. Obviously, because of technical capabilities and high interaction level, young users submit themselves primarily on Instagram and this circumstance creates a fruitful synergy. In this regard Elif Taştekne with her desirable lifestyle becomes a role model. H&M, Starbucks, ZARA, Adidas, Nike, etc. and local/online sellers like WUNDER, Shopigo, Lesbenjamins etc. are followed to be informed about new styles and products. Pragmatic reasons play roles in addition to beautified experience in this sense. Aesthetic perception is also applied which is articulated in beauty and fashion sections in *the Major Categories*. As Schultz claim users/consumers regulate which channel is followed and used, not the marketing professionals (Shultz 2011: 177). Personal expectations seem primarily important but similar production logic makes this process desirable because of polished and beautified content. Parallelly the comment of participant 12, users tend to buy depicted products and try to make similar combinations (as an attempt to carry digital glorification to the actual life). Following travel related content similarly influence users and similar production logic/positional experiences are followed. Paradoxically these influenced ones will influence others in the network as it is stated in the following research participant;

"I use hashtags and location marks, I can go a depicted place when I learn the location. I saw images of Hidiv Pavilion, Galata Konak Cafe, Saklı Göl in Şile (district) and I visited."

<div align="right">(Participant 30)</div>

Similar to "conspicuous consumption" positional experiences can be seen as an investment to digital self. Featherstone also asserts that products of culture industry such as arts entertainment tourism and heritage increase the symbolic products and experiences with the increasing role of culture industries (Featherstone 2007: 24). Intense quantity of glorified travel photos in terms of symmetry, angle and image quality influence majority

of users in the light of hashtag results. Sezgin Yılmaz is like a good example in this context, collage of beautiful images from various locations make the account more attractive. Production logic of travel related images and de-territorialization as a presentation of power are highlighted contemporary values are analyzed in the travel section. It is also an identity construction since he portrays glorified experiences to influence other users. Hogg also claims travel images influence travel choices of others (Hoog 2018: 100). Moreover, like other influencers these accounts are aimed to monetize their personal interests with the glorified content. Therefore, as Grewal mentions product utilization is not only functional, there is also a symbolic value and there is no difference between virtual and real products in this sense. As an outcome of Shultz study sharing identity-relevant materials on social media cause a decrease interest purchasing these products to satisfy identity-signaling needs. (Shultz et al. 2019: 207). Digital symbols are not functional in a traditional manner nevertheless fulfill identity signaling needs. Identity signals of individuals seems like one of the two consumption logics of users. Symbols are identity pegs and Instagram as the transmitter of these pegs enables users to produce meaningful and desired images while they fulfill identity signaling needs. Brands and influencers seem work hard to be depict diverse images because too much "conspicuous consumption" of identity relevant materials by different users and too much similarity possibly caused to avoid the content (Shultz et al. 2019: 208). In addition to providing information on user interests, following case (Participant 30) also demonstrate that too much similarity and ordinariness is neglected by some of the young Instagram users;

"Order and color harmony in photographs are important. If someone trains in the same place, it is boring and not aesthetic. It has to be unordinary."

"I like making cake. I follow Bengi Kurtcebe. I am also interested in motor sports, so I follow Keremahero. I have a dog, so I follow catsofbird and dogsofworld. I like following their posts. I am learning new things about dog training. Also, I follow fashion related content in iremakdemir, Zara and Bershka. These accounts possibly influence my preferences."

(Participant 16)

"The content of the platform can be defined as a guide. I follow health related content; Merve İpek Öztürk." "I follow Barış Özcan, furniture, fashion and food related contents. Especially nefisyemektarifleri inspires me, I generally use the recipes to prepare meals."

(Participant 20)

"I follow some brands and influencer accounts. I follow Rolls Royce, Airbus, Boing, Air Fighters, Wunder Bay; it shares images of well-designed expensive products from 80s, SS Motors… a luxury car gallery... Content is quality, nice and unlike an ordinary commercial."

"It is more likely a guide. I adapt cafe, restaurant, fashion, clothing preferences, motivation (sport) images to my life. I go (displayed places) if I like. Perhaps I have similar clothes in my wardrobe, if I love displayed cloth, I buy it, if it is relevant for my style."

Following characteristics are differentiated in accordance with personal interests. Each influencer account focus on a specific interest. Bengi Kurtcebe as a patisserie owner shares images of her ornamental cakes possibly influences users who loves to make a cake. Keremahero as a motorcyclist user is targeted motorsport enthusiasts and similarly animal related accounts are worth to followed by pet lovers. Merve İpek Öztürk and Barış Özcan who shares desirable representations of their everyday lives possibly be guides for thousands of users and food and design related contents possibly affect way of preparation of meals and way of wearing of followers. The desirable content that followed by participants of this research demonstrate that personal interest is the central motivator of following habits on Instagram. Boyd similarly claim that users personalize the content on digital networks to fulfill their needs and desires, publicness of the powerful information is not targeted the whole but a limited group of people who find it relevant for them (Mandiberg 2012: 75) Categories provide more information on users' interests in beautifully framed images or videos. Since almost all users report that these accounts are influential for their everyday life. Parallel to production logic glorified experience is also exist in the consumption of desired information. Followed users, brand accounts or hashtags are seen as representations of the ideal since most of them are replicated by their followers. It does not have to be regarded as beautiful by all users but factor of glorification and finding the content beautiful is a central motivator for the following logic. Secondarily, as Faucher mentions consumed content (following) becomes conspicuous and a kind of status display. Thus, following celebrities in networks becomes a peg of status of the user because users are choosing to be associated that celebrity and their values (Faucher 2018: 71) Instagram content is formed to beautify both everyday life and social media experience similar to production. Even the faces are perfected like Garbo's face (which is explained in the beauty section) in Instagram posts. Therefore, design materials are followed by its enthusiasts and the platform enables brands to actively communicate with enthusiasts. In this regard Instagram with the help of mediated

images educate users while portraying the ideal or beautiful representations of user interests as well as desirable elements of these interests.

Brand pages, influencers and their extensively glorified atmosphere sometimes does not motivate users to consume both digital and material content. Commercial relationship between account owners and brands are celebrated most of the users and it is seen as a way of informed and entertain. Consuming content on Instagram in this regard seems like an investment to self and personal interests hence this kind of posts are defined less trustworthy by some users. They think glorified content make influencers less reliable. Most of them seem do not like consumerism related imagery and motivate to use the platform to be informed about political and intellectual content. Secondly Influencers are paid because of their performance and their association with brands. This circumstance can be a cause unfollow users even the content is desirable. According to participants that sees content less trustworthy especially influencer accounts users tend to follow more intellectual content rather than polished representations of everyday life.

> "I do not follow influencers. I follow IKSV, filmhafizasi, nature photographers and culture and art related content."

(Participant 23)

> "I do not follow influencer posts, it is meaningless. I follow culture an news related content such as; tarihibilgi, günlükkültür,ingilizcegram, türkiyegençkemalistler…"

(Participant 25)

> Instagram content is so popular and most of it is unnecessary. Influencers are unnecessary in terms of humanity and science.

(Participant 2)

Unexpectedly some of the users use Instagram as a news platform. It is a tool to be informed but news about harassment or assault are followed on Instagram. It might be because users spend significant amount of time in the platform so formulate their use to fulfill multiple needs. As I mentioned in the categorization chapter news is significantly limited than other social media platforms since it centrally personal camera and integrated editing tool-based application to primarily submit enhanced image of self.

> "I follow news on harassment. It is more practical than news portals."

(Participant 14)

Market oriented character of Instagram content alienates some users from the sponsored content and influencers and more importantly these users do not think this kind of content is desirable. In this regard, digital consumption cannot motivate users to material consumption. This means glorified content do not glorify material life since way of glorification in sponsored content is ignored. Skepticism towards influencers is not common, most Instagram users define that they are influenced and informed in terms of pragmatic and lifestyle although as it is seen above some users ignore influencers not to be influenced. These participants define influencers as sided and less trustworthy so some of them value comments, some value their friends and some of them find brand pages more trustworthy. User can be unfollowed influencers nevertheless influential capacity may be valid in all cases because of the common production logic.

"I do not trust influencers because it is a paid job, comments are more trustworthy."

(Participant 2)

"Influencers cause consumption motivation. They are frauds, I do not trust them. I buy when I see products in brand pages."

(Participant 24)

"I do not follow influencers, so I am not influenced. I do not trust them (influencers). (Brands) offer them money to advertise (products)."

(Participant 27)

I do not follow corporate accounts because these accounts are always sided. I follow independent accounts, people that does not have any profit with their shares.

(Participant 20)

Users are aware of production logic and technical manipulations on pages that have higher interactivity. Users guess or experienced in the firsthand as it is seen in the following comment;

"Instagram content is exceedingly aesthetic and it does not reflect reality. Filters and Photoshop are used a lot. Many of them become famous by using way of editing. There are some applications that show how an image appears on the profile. My mother bought a carpet fabric, but It was entirely different than its Instagram depiction."

(Participant 16)

The material looks different because it is a desirable virtual product that aimed to sell the material product within the digital network. This circumstance can be similar to materials that depicted in Influencer accounts, that is why some users are sceptic towards these accounts and neglect it. Yet significantly high number of users prefer to be influenced by these although they know the production logic.

Embaded Pragmatic and aesthetic values and common demand of trends and high interactivity on Instagram demonstrate that following role models in order to glorify everyday life is still valid. Most of the users assert that they use Instagram to be influenced, happy and entertained in the digital wonderland like atmosphere. Instagram's distinctive easy to use interface and heterogenous content make easier to access particular influential images as it is explained in following comments. Central motivator of this unpaid work which produces glorified representations is both for pragmatic information like travel, science, plant related and symbolic information. The visual information regards to plants also represent different ways to living with plants which is articulated in plants section. Networking on Instagram is an investment on positional experiences and personal taste which are valuable for users.

> "Discover section makes me happy because I feel that I watch universal thought. I broaden my horizon and some of my decisions have changed. I check travel, science, music topics and plant care instructions for my aloe vera. I can reach desired information for a short time."
>
> (Participant 14)

> "Instagram is popular among young people because they think that their everyday life/holiday images and comments that they received are valuable for them. Also, trends and brands that relevant for teens are linked to Instagram."
>
> (Participant 7)

> "Young people use Instagram because it is an open world and easy to access."
>
> (Participant 19)

> "I watch romantic architecture of Italy and, then I walk streets of the US."
>
> (Participant 6)

Instagram provides a fertile atmosphere for digital experiences or observing these experiences mediated with images. Following Instagram posts can be framed as a discovery that controlled or framed borders of the journey by content producers and because of the production logic it is commonly beautiful. In addition to beauty as

Featherstone mentions circulation of dozens of weird juxtapositions hinder viewers in a stable sense (Featherstone 2007: 15). The weird juxtapositions and multiplexed atmosphere make the platform suitable to seek varyingly different content almost in all genres. Participants specify they use Instagram also because of their curiosity to life of celebrities. Physical beauty and fabulous life style can be central motivators to follow and following provides direct information about a certain figure and his/her lifestyle or at least direct representation. The specific user comments below possibly make easier to understand user motivation to follow popular figures. Therefore, following statistics also give invaluable hints to portray concern on specific figures and lifestyle that associated with them. Images of handsome or beautiful models are commonly visual references on beauty, fashion and fitness related are worth to follow since their life and appearance are desirable for their followers and Instagram as a visual centered platform is a perfect tool to display their glorified representations. In this respect, quote of participant 6 highlights represented beauty and its influence of her everyday life.

"I aim to learn more about private lives of celebrities like Kıvanç Tatlıtuğ."

(Participant 17)

"I follow Sephora, Bobby Brown and influencers that I like their lives, like; Rachel Aras - she has an enjoyable and pleasant life-, Jason Mamoa -He makes my day beautiful-, Melisa Ayça, Cansu Akın."

(Participant 6)

"I use Instagram to learn about life of others and sharing mine. Instagram is not a guide but something to emulate. I follow Reynmen, Şeyma Subaşı, Duygu Özaslan… Şeyma (Subaşı) travels locations that I want to see and Duygu (Özaslan) make up beautifully. I follow her to learn techniques."

(Participant 26)

"I follow Duygu Özaslan and Görkem Karman. After a review I buy recommended products. Instagram influence my everyday life in every respect."

(Participant 4)

"I check posts of Danla Bilic to learn about skin care."

(Participant 32)

"I am not totally influenced but I make a few shifts. For example, in clothing… What kind of belt I can wear with a fashionable trouser."

(Participant 27)

Moreover, other users and their depicted way of living steer other users to certain lifestyles or fashion trends because as users mention glorified images have more or less influence on their everyday life. Makeup tricks and recommendations of influencers, celebrities, athletes etc. that mentioned above have strong potential to make everyday life of consumers and their visual content more beautiful. As Wachenfeldt states while users observe others they have a possibility to form their own self-identity if they want to be associated with the displayed identity. Because of exposition of Instagram images, users tend to present their self in a favorable light that they learned. (Wachenfeldt 2019: 14). Common Symbols of social status shows us that prestige economies are still persist that requires investment to time, money and knowledge to handle them in an appropriate way. These are seen as classifiers of the status (Featherstone 2007: 27). Instagram's influential and personalized content can be classified as a deep information on learning desirable symbols and how to use them in their everyday life and skin care products belt and other stuff are tangible cases. Thus, users replicate some symbols or experiences in their life, hence glorify their both digital and actual life.

> "Our interests become our lifestyles, we complete our deficiencies in Instagram. When we see an image of something that we want to do, we do it. I saw recipes and prepare meals."

(Participant 31)

Following characteristics are invaluable, it is a selection of which messages are desirable to be exposed because either pragmatic or not it is an investment to themselves. As participant 31 manifests, Instagram can be defined where interests become a lifestyle since it educates users to do it Restaurants, food, design, beauty related trends as valuable symbols among young users are endlessly circulating -produced and consumed- The outcome is a gusto (way of living or a new taste). And they possibly easy to learn desired information and replicate it and represent it in a glorified way like their peers. Similarity of Instagram content demonstrates that paradoxically users are producer and consumer of trends and desired identity pegs etc.

> "I follow Marvel. It gives me some ideas about the new movie before watching it. … Instagram posts have influenced my everyday life in terms of style. My role models can inspire me. I follow athletes and get advice on camping or exercise."

(Participant 17)

> "Discover section is useful in terms of everyday life. I follow skin care, decoration related content. I saw a skin care brand. I read comments (user experience) and I bought the product afterwards. Also, I follow recommendations about restaurants. I do not follow corporate

accounts because other accounts are more reliable. I follow accounts that share not profit oriented posts."

"I follow Oğuzhan Uğur, Aykut Elmas Barcelona, GS etc. I follow dizifilmreplikleri to get movie and TV series recommendations. I follow mymoda to see beautiful clothing combinations and yemekyerdeyenir (to learn about restaurants). If I like the images I visit."

"Once I went a restaurant that I learned on Instagram." "Restaurants appears in the discover section somehow."

Lifestyle of athletes is also influential as it is highlighted by the participant 17. Their ideal image is a guide and maybe the motivation image among other athletes. Similarly, 31st participant talks about media recommendation accounts, athletes, fashion and food related accounts etc. All of these have a significant potential to transform everyday life. Therefore, algorithm and sort of images in the 'discover' section depends on the following pattern, thus more related images may be increased influence on self-identity. This situation reinforces to submit desirable content to user and it means more similar visual content to be informed, replicate/adapt desired "conspicuous consumption" or "experiential purchases". Users' desired/glorified images are more likely promotional than everyday representation and the visuals help them to gain followers to share sponsored content and maybe the possibility to sell their training and diet programs with their followers. The representation of body aesthetics and personal dedication to fitness as a construction of digital-self and production logic is explained in the fitness section.

"I adapt actors' training programs to myself. … Young users love to share/show their lifestyle to other users. Posts of famous bloggers are related with their lifestyles. Lane Hunters and The Makine share about cars. I follow Vin Diesel, The Rock, Oğuzhan Uğur because sport is my interest. I am looking what they do during training and I bought a shirt that worn by Vin Diesel." "I try nutrition and training advices, but I cannot try advices on cars."

"I learned many things on Instagram like personal care, sport, training etc."

It seems Instagram's glorified representations influence users and this circumstance triggers acts because Instagram brings someone's ideal to another one's everyday life as it is seen above. This is paradoxically a factor to make other's life or experience beautiful.

Desired representations of acts are sometimes replicated by others. Buying the same product or going to the same place, taking the same photograph in the same corner. Users promote their glorified "conspicuous consumption" and conspicuous experiences. This situation as I mentioned aimed to make social status higher and advertise places and products.

Consumption of digital content possibly becomes a material consumption because Instagram posts are commonly identity constructions to influence others. Ornamental and mouthwatering cookery is for example commonly portrayed on natural wood surface under soft lighting conditions or polished images of colorful drinks in front of exact darkness give hints on eye-pleasing production logic. These depictions are similar to professionally generated images in cook magazines that aims to attract the audience in shopping malls. Similarly, in the digital market these images are also posted to attract attention, the marketing logic is also embedded (see; food section). This situation causes a demand on depicted materials, food etc.

> "Possibly it directs me a closed cafe or a restaurant. When I make my travel plans, it can be a guide. … In accordance with Instagram, breakfast concept is transformed to rolled oats with chia seeds. I have friends who eat egg with avocado. That kind of images are varyingly shared, so I started to demand that."

(Participant 24)

Shared food images like other images trigger demand to displayed products. In this regard new trends or authentic tastes possibly, chance perception on meal and everyday experiences. Ornaments and working on to enhance image quality can empower the influential capacity of Instagram images. This is the most common type to influence other since food and travel related content are varyingly tagged than various other categories. Also, Jain (2017) claims users generate their own image in accordance with recommendations of their 'reference groups' in social networking sites.

Influence and impression on Instagram visuals shape everyday acts in four steps; following (1), finding the content beautiful (2), being influenced or updated (3), acting/replicating (4). The replication of submitted materials or experiences are a clear reference to glorified character of Instagram. If users love the displayed way of living, they prefer to embed it to their everyday life. Its adaption to everyday life to make

everyday life more desirable while following various of different role model as guides. Being informed or updated by Instagram is possibly followed by mirroring real life activities.

> "Content sometimes steer my life. … Ezhel, Adamlar, Duman also people that I watched their stories and I imitate them. Their styles are different, everyone can be applied different strategies. They show their lifestyles and improved life standards."

> (Participant 32)

> "I use Instagram to be informed, to keep my good photographs and to follow different restaurants and burger restaurants." "I do not follow influencers. I follow a few of hamburger restaurants, the Grungy, Istanbul Modern to be informed about announcements."

> (Participant 29)

> "I check images of a restaurant if I go there for the first time."

> (Participant 16)

> "I use location marks, when I go to a place, first I check images by using location marks. If the images are beautiful, I go there. If not, I do not go there."

> (Participant 25)

> "Instagram is like a guide, I see a destination on Instagram and possibly go there. It actively influences my everyday life."

> (Participant 8)

> "I aim to communicate others and influenced by designers' works. I am influenced by their designs."

> (Participant 10)

> "I used Instagram to be updated. I learn where my pears going for holiday. Travel posts inspire me while I make my holiday plan. It is absolutely a guide for me."

> (Participant 4)

> "Private lives, natural and human-made historical beauties are in the platform. I saw images of Dolmabahçe Palace, Süleymaniye Mosque and I visited."

> (Participant 12)

> "I learn about sales. I take notes during visiting travel related pages. For example, I visited Yoros Hill ones."

> (Participant 14)

Desirable depictions in the glorified atmosphere have a strong potential to steer users to displayed places/products. This can be searching the name of restaurant or cafe as a hashtag or taking notes about posts while making a holiday plan. The central difference

in here is this step is material consumption of digitally glorified in addition to digital consumption.

> "It is both a communication platform and a tool to know more about other users. Also, I am inspired some topics like fashion and decoration.
>
> (Participant 16)

> "When I am wearing, an inspiration that I learned from Instagram comes to mind."
>
> (Participant 4)

> "I am influenced by Instagram posts. Sometimes I try recipes and follow sales."
>
> (Participant 5)

> "I continuously use the platform, so I say myself; Duygu (Özaslan) has done this once, I can do the same thing."
>
> (Participant 26)

> "Sometimes I watch cake and cheesecake ornaments to inspire. If Instagram does not exist, maybe I have never known St Sebastian cheesecake. I saw it İdil Tatari's page for the first time and tried. Also, I saw akali burger and ate afterwards."
>
> (Participant 16)

Clothing preferences of influencers, a mouthwatering cake in a gourmet cafe, a customer who portrays a new cheesecake in a restaurant, a hotel pool that surrounded by palms as a travel representation actually applicable by other users. Inspiring activities in glorified frames are pragmatic since these are representations of real-life experiences.

Desirable representations such as a symmetrical travel photograph of an elegant building evoke desire to observe it at the same time. Way of representation play a major role since it is seen as a digital identity that is why users are extensively work on to enhance beauty of their images. Since users are exposed to these visual messages they are possibly learned how they beautify their posts to fulfill their own symbolic needs, this means also beautifying their experience in social media and more importantly their actual life while learning more about commodities. As Chaney highlights aesthetization of every life and rising interests on decoration and design. He explains most of the people cannot afford the help of interior designers. Thus, they learned in magazines and furnishing shops to frame their design tastes/product choices and this framing is a result of interaction between tastes of their reference groups and their own (Chaney 2002: 155). Peers and influencers play a similar role and signify the current reference groups and guide users to

frame their own tastes in their everyday life similar to Chaney's consideration in the past. If the image is seen as glorified, replication of it in everyday life means glorification of everyday life.

4. CONCLUSION

Visual narratives on Instagram are commonly frame users' expertise and dedication in selected fields in a glorified way. The way of glorification necessitates money and time to depict lifestyles in a desirable manner. This motivates users to follow the beautified content and replicate it in similar ways. The admirable image of someone transforms to a guide image for another user. This is a simple evidence of validity of "conspicuous consumption" because commonly users work on to increase their self-image with symbolic value of commodities that they consumed. Since the symbolic value of commodities is seen as an important element during the identity signaling process, digital nature of Instagram provides a flexibility to control it via editing, framing and symbolism. Embellished digital identity is orchestrated in accordance with personal beauty perception and enhanced image quality in Instagram profile is a tangible result of intention on glorify the self-identity. Certainly, selected symbols are not just markers of wealth but strong references to lifestyles and personal tastes. Clothing, home decoration, muscular body, touristic experiences, nature etc. are seen as common categories of symbols on Instagram and provide endless possibilities to create desirable meanings. For example, as I mentioned in the Travel category, Hershel bag can be seen as an associated symbol of good taste (because of its glorified images), a good choice for traveler (because it is associated symbol of travels to different countries) and active life (because it is used by young users on Instagram). Moreover, endless depictions of symbols as identity pegs is the first step of Instagram structure. According to participants of this research, Instagram is a guide to learn more about lifestyles and relevant trends and sometimes this circumstance triggers them to consume accordingly in everyday life. Partially participants verify my central anticipation in this research but there are also users who do not glorify their own appearance and do not care others' glorified presentations. I have two outcomes in this study. First is Instagram is based on user communication with glorified symbolic markers of their lifestyles both for impressed and impress. Secondly, Instagram is a

platform to communicate with others. In the light of participants, this group does not care glorification patterns and do not trust glorified content, so they neither impress nor impressed on Instagram. This group also mainly does not glorify their images since they do not see Instagram profile as an identity presentation.

The first outcome of my study is material and experience preferences in the light of "conspicuous consumption" and personal associations with these on Instagram are powerful elements to construct online identity in a desirable way. These online identities carry a potential to influence everyday life of others. Instagram images are seen as a way of identity presentation so user generated posts commonly motivated by personal ideas and ideals and majority of users extensively work on to glorify and increase quality of their visual content. On the other hand, personalized image flow in the user feed pairs up others' glorified online identity presentations and this flow guides users to act similarly. In terms of production and consumption of the visual content, these three steps of glorification are important: symbolism, production and postproduction. Depicted associations of glorified experiences and symbols are the key aspects of Instagram and self-presentation pattern on Instagram. The glorified everyday life depictions in production and consumption steps are key features to influence and influenced. Symbolism refers to depictions of selected symbols to enhance quality of lifestyle depictions. Semiotics in the *Major Categories* section primarily reflects possible symbolism examples on Instagram photographs. In addition to visual narratives, I also explain these with "conspicuous consumption" and "experiential purchases" as operational terms. Symbols can be a grab of coffee in front of a city scape/garden, a painting in an exhibition, a muscular body in a gym saloon, a worn dress or a castle behind a user. These refer to varyingly different personal investments. The painting can be seen as intellectuality or an art lover persona, a dress or a comfortable living room setting are other references to aesthetic taste in different design categories and a castle or an ancient city can be read as active way of living of a traveler. These symbols can be seen in many ways actually, but as I mentioned earlier, these symbolic narratives are commonly coded to evoke positive responses in society. Series of images in this respect are more meaningful than a single image. For example, if each image in the profile depicted in different countries, symbols can be read in a different manner. An image depiction in an

ancient city can refer to a desirable/active life of a traveler, interest on culture/history or personal wealth. In addition to symbolism, framing and editing as the postproduction step provide an opportunity to glorify and enhance users' online personas.

The Instagram experience is motivated by production and consumption of the content. Obviously the first step is production of identity with materials and experiences in the image and selected bunch of experiences and materials constitute online identity in the profile. Instagram users submit their identity in a glorified way with conspicuously consumed materials and desirable experiences for social reputation and credibility. This induces positive responses, admiration and popularity among their peers. Second step is observing the glorified persona in user feeds evoke positive impression. Fit bodies, festive dining atmospheres, beauty norms, fashion related posts in addition to popularity of influencers in these fields mirror users' desire on certain lifestyles and idealized representations. Thirdly, since users are exposed to glorified content in the online atmosphere of Instagram, this circumstance triggers them to follow other users whose visual identity is 'beautiful/ideal'. Depicted glorified lifestyle representations with symbols/experiences sometimes trigger users to consume products and services accordingly in most of the cases as the forth and the final step. In sum, Instagram as a global network spread/transmit trends, commodities and services in the light of the research participants and visual references. The first logic that exist on Instagram in the light of participant comments is explained in the following list:

1. Users create glorified content with the help of "conspicuous consumption" and "experiential purchases" because Instagram profile is seen as an identity presentation.
2. Intention on generating glorified self glorifies the Instagram content so production step glorify social media experience.
3. Glorified content cause admiration and following motivation (digital consumption) to be updated about desired lifestyles.
4. Being updated sometimes triggers material consumption. In other words, glorified representations on Instagram are transformed to real life experiences so Instagram has a potential to glorify everyday life experiences.

Users follow content in accordance with their needs and lifestyles on Instagram because it can be educative to learn new possibilities of meaning making and glorified their own

representations in everyday life and to reach desirable look with coded meanings that they are exposed to.

However, glorified character is not always favorable for all Instagram users. Generally, users are aware that stunning images do not reflect reality but the embellished versions of everyday life. This circumstance verifies the glorification but decreases the influence potential of the platform. Especially, users who share sponsored content are seen as frauds because of this reason. Similarly, a tourism experience can be much more embellished than the actual experience because of way of production and post production. In these cases, influential capacity of the platform is limited. More importantly as the second outcome of this research, these users do not frame their "conspicuous consumption" and "experiential purchases" since they do not dignify this way of identity presentation. Moreover, influencers are paid to post glorified content, so their messages are ignored and does not influence everyday life or consumption logic of these users. They also do not care their own digital identity in the platform and glorification logic does not work because of the both sided ignorance. These users do no work to glorify their own visual narrative and they also state that they are bored because of mainstream motivation of glorification and vanity in the platform. In this respect, "conspicuous consumption" and "experiential purchases" are not operational terms to analyze the platform's logic. If the image is only the seen as a photograph of a relative, Instagram lost its influential potential.

According to the second outcome of this research, editing is neglected by some users and it is seen as vanity and these are not simply desirable for them. These users use the platform as a simple communication atmosphere or a news platform mediated by news images. At the beginning of this research, I presumed that almost all users use the platform to embellish themselves but unexpectedly some users use the platform as a news source. Because of the updated and privatized interface help users get informed instantly about news that they are interested. Table of small square images in the discover section that shaped in accordance with user interests, can be transformed to a news portal and possibly depicts e.g. human rights related news. It does not have to display glorified lifestyle depictions like English gardens, fancy restaurants or modern architecture. Instagram is not just a platform of make everyday life glorified or exposed glorified life

of others, it is more than these two central functions, it is a social platform with a functional layout to fulfill diverse demands.

Therefore, glorified self-presentation is not always seen as a positive marker. Some users state that they do not increase their image quality or do not work to beautify their content on Instagram. A user state that this kind of post are boring because of the generality of this kind of posts in the platform. Since this common logic is well known, it decreases their influential capacity. These posts contrarily seen as unreal, lie or imitation like by users. At this point stunning depictions do not promote lifestyles or materials. Users are varyingly different user motivations in the platform give its hybrid character to Instagram. It is a visual platform to fulfill multiple needs of its users.

Views on Instagram are varyingly different because users, their expectations and needs are different. Watching glorified posts can be both a central motivation to use or stop using Instagram. The technology of Instagram is conceptualized in different ways. Some users define themselves as target group of influencers and some neglect their posts. Moreover, and maybe the most important ambivalence is that: some users with the help of "conspicuous consumption" and "experiential purchases" glorify/invest their digital self and allow themselves to influence glorified choices of others whereas other group see these posts as fake, undesirable and evidence of vanity and do not glorify/invest their representation in the online atmosphere of Instagram. In the light of this, Instagram similar to other social media platforms, empowers user and it serves in accordance with their needs so technological determinism cannot be an interpretation of Instagram's logic. It can either trigger to replicate depicted lifestyles or not. Users, their expectations and utilization of Instagram are more heterogeneous than I expected so different ways of utilization practices as an evidence of flexible character of Instagram are possible and it is a sophisticated communication tool to fulfill varyingly different user expectations in the light of this research.

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6. APPENDIX

A-Interview Questions

1. How much time do you spend daily on Instagram?
2. How do you define Instagram content? Is this content differentiated from other social media platforms?
3. What is the most important reason to use Instagram?
4. Do you use the platform to learn more about other users or to communicate with others? The posts (visuals) of others can be defined as a guide for everyday life. True or false, why?
5. Why is Instagram popular among young users?
6. Do you follow Influencers/corporate accounts? Why? Please give some examples.
7. How the content influences you? Do you think about posts except using Instagram?
8. Do you think Instagram content aesthetic?
9. How do you define aesthetics and beautiful?
10. How do you decide posting an image in your profile? What kind of posts do you share in general?
11. Is your Instagram profile a kind of digital identity presentation? If yes, what do you think about your own identity presentation in the platform.
12. If you have other social media accounts, what kind of posts do you share? Do you think the platform determines posts?
13. Do you use hashtags? If yes, does it help you to find something you want?
14. Have you ever learned something on Instagram that directly influence your everyday life?

7. CURRICULUM VITAE

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