Identity Processing Styles as Predictors of Instagram Use Motivations[1]

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Abstract

Media platforms are used by individuals to meet various psychosocial needs, and their social media engagement is shaped by the specific gratifications they aim to obtain. On these platforms, people not only display aspects of their existing identities but also construct idealized versions of themselves in virtual spaces. Instagram—built around visual sharing—has become an extension of users' identities within the digital environment. During psychosocial development, individuals may move across different identity statuses, and when they encounter identity-related challenges, they tend to adopt one of three approaches: an information-oriented, a norm-oriented, or a confusion-oriented pathway. These preferred ways of handling identity conflicts correspond to their identity styles.

Within this framework, it is expected that individuals' identity styles may be associated with their motives for using social media. The study aims to investigate how Instagram users' identity styles relate to their motivations for engaging with the platform. Using an online survey, data were gathered from 388 Instagram users in Türkiye. Since the dataset did not meet normality assumptions, Spearman Rank Correlation Analysis was employed. The findings revealed meaningful associations between the level of the information-oriented identity style and social interaction motivation, between the information-oriented identity style and surveillance motivation, and between the confusion-oriented identity style and escape motivation.

Keywords: Identity Styles, Identity Processing Styles, Instagram, Instagram Usage Motives.

JEL Codes: M37, L86, D7

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1. Introduction

Individuals who use media tools with specific intentions likewise engage with social media to fulfill particular needs. When motivated by psychosocial factors, people turn to social media to obtain the gratifications they seek for personal purposes. Following the rise of Web 2.0 technologies, social media has taken on a central role in everyday life, offering users opportunities such as accessing information, entertainment, and participating in communities that facilitate interaction. Numerous platforms serve these purposes, yet Instagram continues to stand out as a visually driven social network. The platform's core features shape users' motivations for using it, and in this regard, Lee et al. (2015) identify social interaction, archiving, self-expression, escape, and surveillance as the primary motives associated with Instagram use.

Beyond the identities individuals present in their daily lives, social media environments allow them to exhibit diverse identity performances in the digital sphere. Users may reflect their existing identity or construct a more idealized version online. Throughout the psychosocial development process, identity is subject to change and transformation. Marcia (1966, 1980) suggests that individuals experience four identity statuses as a result of progressing through processes of exploration and commitment: diffuse identity, foreclosure, identity and moratorium achievement. These statuses correspond to the strategies individuals employ to resolve crises and conflicts that arise during transitions between identity phases. The three pathways that characterize these strategies are the information-oriented identity style, the norm-oriented identity style, and the confusion-oriented identity style.

This research begins with the question of whether an individual's conflict resolution tendencies—namely their identity style—relate to their motives for using social media. Taking Instagram as the primary focus, the study sought to examine the association between users' identity styles and their motivations for using the platform. To achieve this, data were collected through an online survey using two established instruments: the Instagram Use Motives Scale developed by Lee et al. (2015) and the identity style scale developed by Berzonsky et al. (2013). A total of 388 Instagram users participated in the study. The hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Correlation Analysis, through which the main findings of the research were obtained.

2. Literature Review

Bocock (2014) emphasizes that identity should be understood not as a fixed condition but as an evolving and dynamic process. Similarly, Atak (2011) highlights that the concept of identity formation is central precisely because identity is continually shaped and reshaped over time. In this sense, while identity formation refers to the processes through which identity develops, identity itself represents the cumulative outcome of these processes. The theoretical foundations of identity styles lie in Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory and Marcia's Identity Status Theory. Erikson (1963) conceptualizes psychosocial development across eight lifelong stages, each marked by a specific crisis or conflict. Building on this framework, Marcia (1966, 1980) proposes four identity statuses, based on individuals' experiences of crisis and commitment: identity achievement, foreclosure, moratorium, and identity diffusion. Oskay (1998) describes these statuses as follows:

- **Foreclosure:** Often referred to as the dependent identity status, characterized by individuals adopting the standards and expectations of significant others—particularly their parents—without engaging in personal exploration.
- **Identity Diffusion:** A status in which individuals may or may not have experienced an identity crisis but show limited commitment. They often experience confusion, indifference, and uncertainty when making identity-related decisions.
- **Moratorium:** Known as the identity-search status; individuals are in a state of active crisis, exploring alternatives but have not yet made definitive commitments.
- I**dentity Achievement:** Represents individuals who have resolved identity crises by making informed choices and establishing a stable sense of identity.

Identity status reflects the form of identity an individual currently holds. Berzonsky & Barclay (1981) argue that Marcia's (1966, 1980) four identity statuses correspond to three distinct pathways for managing identity-related conflicts, referred to as identity styles (Soenens et al., 2005; Berzonsky, 2010). As individuals engage in different socio-cognitive processes, they also undergo various experiences in constructing their identities. The strategies used to cope with challenges encountered during identity formation reveal their identity styles (Berzonsky, 1992. There are three primary styles: informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant (Berzonsky & Barclay, 1981; Berzonsky, 1989; 1992; 1999; Soenens et al., 2005; Berzonsky, 2010; Demir & Derelioğlu, 2010; Berzonsky et al., 2013).

- **Informational Identity Processing Style:** Individuals classified under Marcia's moratorium and identity achievement statuses typically display an informational style. They actively seek out and evaluate information when confronted with uncertainty or conflict, value feedback, and make decisions based on deliberate assessment.
- **Normative Identity Processing Style:** Associ-

ated with Marcia's foreclosure status, individuals with this style tend to internalize the expectations and norms of reference groups such as family or peers. They rely on these internalized norms when navigating conflict, exhibit low tolerance for ambiguity, and prioritize preserving the existing identity structure.

- **Diffuse-Avoidant Identity Processing Style:** Linked to Marcia's identity diffusion status, this style is characterized by disorganization, avoidance, and emotional reactivity. Individuals delay or avoid decision-making, postpone evaluative processes, and are guided more by immediate feelings than by rational or utilitarian considerations.

The first scale developed to measure identity styles was originally designed for adolescents (Berzonsky, 1989) and later adapted for other age groups. Previous research has examined identity styles in relation to gender (Soenens et al., 2005), language learning ability (Mohamadi & Mokhtari, 2016), the personality traits of youth (Demir & Derelioğlu, 2010), and internet addiction (Morsünbül, 2014). Findings show that identity styles play a meaningful role in shaping behavioral regulation (Soenens et al., 2005). Thus, identity styles—closely tied to identity statuses—also influence how individuals present themselves.

Overall, identity styles represent the pathways individuals adopt in resolving identity conflicts. Some rely on information-seeking and careful evaluation; others avoid confronting the conflict altogether. Another pathway involves adherence to norms, where individuals accept solutions offered by their families or reference groups without personal exploration. Because identity styles are part of an individual's broader character, they shape various aspects of life, including motivations for using social media.

Instagram, founded by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger (Instagram, 2016), was introduced in October 2010 as a platform designed for sharing visual content (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014). After its acquisition by Facebook in 2012, the platform's functionalities expanded considerably, contributing to a rapid increase in its user base. This growth has attracted scholarly attention (Oloo, 2013; Gunnarsdottir, 2014; Ting Ting, 2014; Jang et al., 2015; Ting et al., 2016). Oloo (2013) notes that users primarily share photos to make them visible to friends, while Ting Ting (2014) demonstrates that users also express themselves through posts, thereby engaging in identity presentation. Jang et al. (2015) show that younger users are particularly active on the platform. According to Gunnarsdottir (2014), Instagram users frequently post images related to loved ones and personal moments, while also browsing content shared by the accounts they follow.

Media use is rooted in psycho-social needs (Katz, Gurevitch & Haas, 1973), which positions the audience as active participants (Katz, 1959). Social media engagement occurs when individuals are motivated to obtain certain gratifications. Motivation is commonly defined as the set of internal and external factors that drive individuals to develop interest in specific activities for particular purposes. It may arise through conscious or unconscious mental processes (Gürçay, 2015). As a mechanism that directs behavior, motivation both initiates action and shapes how it unfolds (Solomon, Russell-Bennett & Privete, 2012).

As a social media platform functioning within broader media ecosystems, Instagram use is similarly shaped by socio-psychological motivations. Numerous studies have examined the reasons why individuals use Instagram (McCune, 2011; Lee et al., 2015; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). These studies identify a range of motivational factors. Through qualitative interviews, McCune (2011) identified sharing, documenting, seeing, community, creativity, and therapy as key motives (McCune, 2011). Lee et al. (2015) identified social interaction, archiving, self-expression, escape, and surveillance, while Sheldon and Bryant (2016) identified surveillance, documentation, coolness, and creativity. When considered together, the motivational categories proposed by Lee et al. (2015) appear to provide a more comprehensive and explanatory framework.

In developing their scale to measure Instagram use motivations, Lee et al. (2015) first compiled motives associated with Internet, social network, and blog use, generating an initial list of 60 statements. After removing repetitive items, 20 Instagram users selected the expressions they found most relevant to the platform. Using the survey data collected, the researchers concluded that five core motivational dimensions best described Instagram use: social interaction, archiving, self-expression, escape, and surveillance.

In the context of identity styles and social media use, the studies referenced reveal crucial insights into how different identity processing styles affect adolescents' engagement with digital media, the way individuals navigate their self-expression online, and the broader implications of social media on identity development. Sebre and Miltuze (2021) highlight the complex relationship between media activities and identity processing styles, showing that individuals with an informational identity processing style tend to use media in more adaptive ways, such as for academic purposes, while those with a diffuse-avoidant style engage in more maladaptive behaviors, like excessive gaming and media preoccupation. This suggests that social media use and other digital platforms are not merely passive experiences but are intricately tied to the individual's ongoing identity development, where different processing styles can determine the quality and nature of online engagement.

Yang's (2021) study further extends this understanding by exploring how social media comparisons impact identity processing. The research suggests that social comparisons, particularly during critical identity-forming periods such as the transition to college, can lead to less adaptive identity processing styles, such as the diffuse-avoidant style, marked by rumination and disengagement. The negative impact of social comparisons on identity formation underscores the role of social media in shaping not just self-perception but also how individuals navigate their identity processing, revealing that social pressures and online comparisons can exacerbate feelings of insecurity and confusion about one's identity.

Choi, Hong & Kwon (2024) contribute to this discussion by focusing on how different motivations for social media use can influence how individuals present themselves and engage with social issues. Their identification of distinct user profiles—lurkers versus reciprocal communicators—provides valuable insights into how social media platforms like Instagram offer spaces for not just personal expression but also political and societal discourse. While lurkers may engage passively, reciprocal communicators, driven by information-seeking and social interaction, are more likely to use the platform to discuss current social issues. This aligns with the growing recognition of social media as a platform for active identity negotiation, where users' motivations influence how they participate in online communities and discuss pressing matters.

Finally, Nurrachmah (2025) sheds light on how Generation Z's self-expression strategies on platforms like X (formerly Twitter) contribute to their digital identity formation. As digital natives, Gen Z users craft their identities through varied communication styles, such as authenticity, humor, and visual storytelling. These styles are not only instrumental in managing online personas but are also linked to higher levels of engagement, underscoring the strategic nature of self-presentation in digital spaces. For Generation Z, social media is a tool for both personal and collective identity expression, highlighting the intersection of identity construction and audience interaction in shaping their digital selves.

Social interaction refers to the desire to stay connected with acquaintances, strengthen relationships, meet new people, and remain informed about current events. Archiving involves documenting everyday life through photographs and constructing a personal digital space. Self-expression captures individuals' desire to share aspects of their lives, present elements of their identity, and gain acknowledgment from others. Escape reflects the wish to distance oneself from reality, disengage from problems, and relax. Surveillance involves browsing content related to one's interests, observing the lives of people from different regions, or following celebrities.

3. Hypothesis Development

Identity styles, conceptualized within Berzonsky's (1990) social–cognitive model, refer to the strategies individuals use when interpreting identity-relevant information and making self-defining decisions. The three styles—informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant—represent distinct patterns of motivation, self-regulation, and interpersonal orientation, all of which can shape the ways individuals navigate digital environments such as Instagram. Existing research indicates that identity styles influence perceptions, behavioral tendencies, and patterns of media engagement (Berzonsky, 1990; Berzonsky, 2011). Accordingly, these styles are expected to predict differences in individuals' motivations for using social media.

Individuals with an information-oriented identity style actively seek out, assess, and reflect on self-relevant information (Berzonsky, 1990; Berzonsky & Ferrari, 1996). They tend to be more open to exploration, critically engage with identity-related cues, and maintain heightened levels of self-awareness. Prior findings show that informationally oriented individuals approach social media use more intentionally and cognitively (Soenens et al., 2005). For such individuals, platforms like Instagram may serve as spaces to express the self, archive meaningful moments, or pursue social interaction that contributes to identity exploration. Given that information-oriented identity style is characterized by reflective processing and active engagement, it is plausible to expect associations with a broad range of Instagram use motives—including social interaction, archiving, self-expression, escape, and surveillance.,

Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: The level of information-oriented identity style is associated with individuals' motivations for using Instagram.

The normative identity style is characterized by reliance on established norms, the expectations of significant others, and adherence to social conventions (Berzonsky, 1990; Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000). Individuals with this style tend to internalize the beliefs and values of their social environment with limited personal exploration. Previous research shows that those with a normative orientation place considerable emphasis on social approval, conformity, and behaving in ways that align with prescribed roles (Berzonsky et al., 2013).

Within social media environments, such individuals may use Instagram primarily to maintain social connections, adhere to group expectations, and keep track of activities within their close social circles. Motivations such as social interaction, surveillance, and archiving socially meaningful moments may therefore be particularly relevant. Existing evidence further suggests that normative identity processes are asso-

ciated with approval-oriented and socially regulated online behaviors (Crocetti et al., 2008).

Based on this conceptual perspective, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: The level of normative identity style is associated with individuals' motivations for using Instagram.

The diffuse-avoidant identity style reflects a tendency to delay identity-related decisions, avoid confronting personal issues, and react primarily to immediate situational demands (Berzonsky, 1990; Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000). Individuals who adopt this style typically demonstrate low levels of internal regulation, limited long-term planning, and a preference for short-term emotional relief. Such characteristics make them more inclined to seek environments that offer distraction, avoidance, or temporary disengagement from daily responsibilities.

Empirical research shows that diffuse-avoidant individuals often use digital platforms in ways that support escape, mood regulation, and passive browsing. For example, Valkenburg and Peter (2011) found that adolescents with avoidant tendencies are more susceptible to emotionally driven or problematic patterns of social media engagement. Studies focusing on Instagram similarly report that avoidant users are more likely to engage in passive consumption, time-killing activities, and avoidance-oriented motives rather than active self-presentation (Kircaburun & Griffiths, 2018). Beyens et al. (2020) further argue that habit-driven and emotion-regulatory motives may be particularly salient for individuals high in avoidance.

Given these tendencies, diffuse-avoidant identity style is expected to align with Instagram use motivations related to distraction, emotional escape, and passive engagement.

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: The level of diffuse-avoidant identity style is associated with individuals' motivations for using Instagram.

4. Methodology

This study focuses specifically on Instagram to examine how individuals' identity styles may relate to their motivations for using social media. Instagram was selected as the focal platform due to its highly visual structure, its widespread popularity in Türkiye, and its capacity to meet a wide range of psychological and social gratifications—including self-expression, social interaction, archiving, escape, and surveillance. Because identity styles influence how individuals process information, make decisions, and engage in social environments, Instagram provides an especially relevant context for exploring how these identity-related orientations translate into platform-specific motives for use.

The study utilized a quantitative design, and data were gathered via an online survey. A total of 388 Instagram users residing in Türkiye participated in the study. Online data collection was well suited to the aims of the research, as it enabled efficient access to active social media users across diverse regions. On the other hand, the use of online survey as a method introduces certain limitations in terms of sampling. Social media users in Türkiye, particularly Instagram users, inevitably differ in terms of geographical and demographic characteristics, as well as age and educational level. The social media usage habits and identity styles of individuals living in different regions of Türkiye can vary significantly. For instance, the social media usage patterns of young people in large cities differ greatly from those of individuals in rural areas, with differences in content preferences and identity construction. While social media usage is generally more widespread among the younger population in Turkey, factors such as age and education level also influence identity styles and usage motivations. The demographic differences also have the potential to alter the cultural context, and social media usage and identity styles may vary within the framework of societal norms. It is important not to overlook these limitations.

In line with these objectives, the following hypotheses were tested:

H1: The level of information-oriented identity style is associated with individuals' motivations for using Instagram.

H1a: The level of information-oriented identity style is associated with individuals' level of social interaction motive.

H1b: The level of information-oriented identity style is associated with individuals' level of archiving motive.

H1c: The level of information-oriented identity style is associated with individuals' level of self-expression motive.

H1d: The level of information-oriented identity style is associated with individuals' level of escape motive.

H1e: The level of information-oriented identity style is associated with individuals' level of surveillance motive.

H2: The level of normative identity style is associated with individuals' motivations for using Instagram.

H2a: The level of normative identity style is associated with individuals' level of social interaction motive.

H2b: The level of normative identity style is associated with individuals' level of archiving motive.

H2c: The level of normative identity style is associated with individuals' level of self-expression motive.

H2d: The level of normative identity style is associa-

ted with individuals' level of escape motive.

H2e: The level of normative identity style is associated with individuals' level of surveillance motive.

H3: The level of diffuse-avoidant identity style is associated with individuals' motivations for using Instagram.

H3a: The level of diffuse-avoidant identity style is associated with individuals' level of social interaction motive.

H3b: The level of diffuse-avoidant identity style is

associated with individuals' level of archiving motive.

H3c: The level of diffuse-avoidant identity style is associated with individuals' level of self-expression motive.

H3d: The level of diffuse-avoidant identity style is associated with individuals' level of escape motive.

H3e: The level of diffuse-avoidant identity style is associated with individuals' level of surveillance motive.
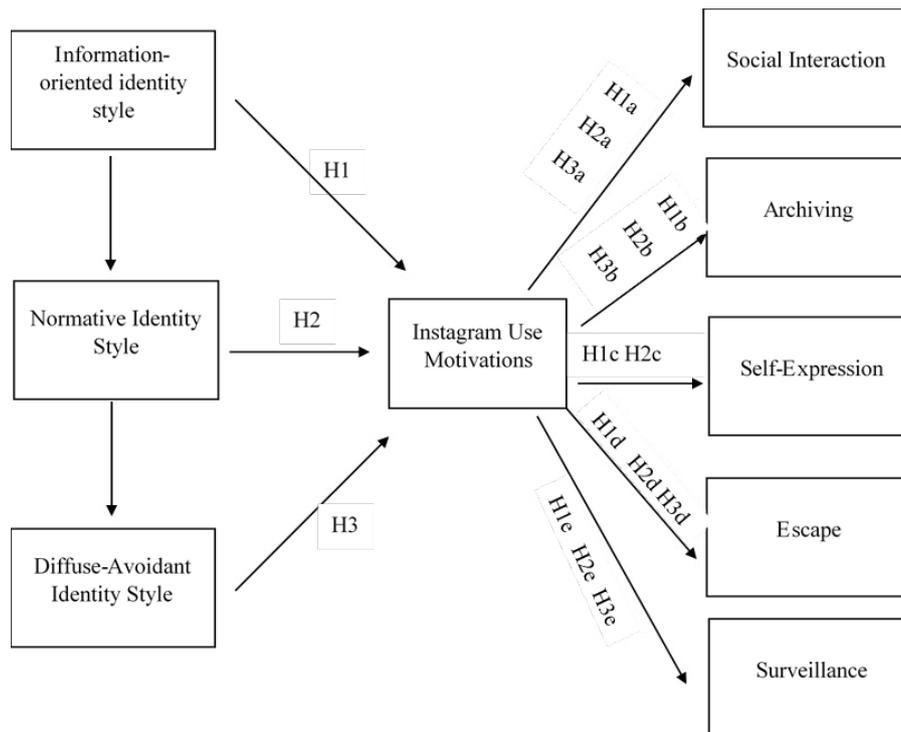
Figure 1. Schematic diagram (Autors' own development)

The questionnaire consisted of demographic items and statements designed to measure Instagram use motivations and identity styles. The items assessing Instagram use motivations were adapted from Lee et al. (2015), while the items measuring identity styles were adapted from Berzonsky et al. (2013). Participants responded to all statements on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Data analysis was performed using SPSS Statistics 21 and SPSS AMOS 24. Because the dataset did not meet the assumptions of normality according to Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, Spearman's Rank Correlation analysis was employed.

Reliability analyses were conducted for the subscales measuring Instagram use motivations, yielding the following Cronbach's alpha values: social interaction motive α = .828; archiving motive α = .766; self-expression motive α = .792; escape motive α = .732; and surveillance motive α = .725. For the identity style subscales, reliability coefficients were: diffuse-avoidant identity style α = .832; information-oriented

identity style α = .866; and normative identity style α = .827. All coefficients exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of α ≥ .70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

CFA was employed to examine whether the adapted scales exhibited a factor structure consistent with the original studies. In line with the literature, Hoyle (2000) suggests examining fit indices such as x^2/df, GFI, CFI, and RMSEA (Criteria: x^2/df ≤ 5; p ≤ .05; CFI ≥ .90; GFI ≥ .85; RMSEA ≤ .08). For the Instagram use motivations model, the initial fit statistics were x^2/df = 4.126, p = .000, CFI = .757, GFI = .769, and RMSEA = .090, indicating an acceptable model fit. After model refinement, the improved fit indices were x^2/df = 2.669, p = .000, CFI = .873, GFI = .853, and RMSEA = .066.

For the identity styles model, the initial CFA produced values of x^2/df = 4.701, p = .000, CFI = .767, GFI = .752, and RMSEA = .098. Following model adjustments, the revised fit indices improved to x^2/df = 2.624, p = .000, CFI = .901, GFI = .858, and RMSEA = .065.

The research population consisted of Instagram users in Türkiye, and convenience sampling—a non-probability sampling method—was used to determine the study sample. Individuals who were readily accessible and voluntarily participated were included, in accordance with the definition of con-

venience sampling (Erdoğan, 2012). Given that Instagram has approximately 38 million users in Türkiye, the minimum required sample size for a population exceeding 500,000—based on a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error under normal distribution assumptions—is 384 participants.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Informations

		Frequency	%
Sex	Women	206	53.1
	Men	182	46.9
Age	Mean Age: 30,65 Min.: 18 Max.: 64		
Education Level	Primary School	5	1.3
	Middle School	7	1.8
	High School	30	7.7
	Undergraduate	256	66
	Graduate	90	23.2
Household Income	Low	8	2.1
	Lower-middle	58	14.9
	Upper-middle	283	73.5
	High	39	9.5
Total		**388**	**100**

A total of 388 Instagram users participated in the study. Of these participants, 206 were women (53.1%) and 182 were men (46.9%). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 64 years, with a mean age of 30.65. In terms of educational attainment, 5 participants had completed primary school, 7 had completed secondary school, 30 had graduated from high school, 256 held a university degree, and 90 had completed postgraduate education. Regarding household income levels, 8 participants reported belonging

to the lower-income group, 58 to the lower-middle-income group, 283 to the upper-middle-income group, and 39 to the upper-income group.

5. Findings

Based on the findings of the study, the descriptive statistics for the scales measuring Instagram use motivations and identity styles are presented below.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Instagram Usage Motives

	M	Std. deviation	N
Social Interaction	4.1021	.68877	
Archiving	3.9433	.78426	
Self-expression	2.5180	.85374	388
Escape	2.3670	.75994	
Surveillance	3.8189	.84368	

The table above reports the mean scores for participants' responses to the items measuring Instagram use motivations on a 5-point Likert scale. The highest mean was observed for the social interaction motive (M = 4.1021), followed by archiving (M =

3.9433), surveillance (M = 3.8189), self-expression (M = 2.5180), and escape (M = 2.3670). These findings suggest that social interaction is the primary motivation driving participants' use of Instagram.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Identity Processing Styles

	M	Std. deviation	N
Diffuse-Avoidant Identity Processing Style	1.8817	.73654	
Informational Identity Processing Style	4.2285	.59455	388
Normative Identity Processing Style	1.6466	.60309	

The table above reports the mean scores for participants' responses to the items assessing identity styles on a 5-point Likert scale. The highest mean was recorded for the information-oriented identity style (M = 4.2285), followed by the diffuse-avoidant identity style (M = 1.8817) and the normative identity style (M = 1.6466).

5.1 Hypothesis Testing

To address the primary aim of the study, the relationships between Instagram use motivations and identity styles were examined by employing Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation. The findings from this procedure are presented in the table below.

Table 4. Spearman's rho Table of Identity Processing Styles and Instagram Usage Motives

		Information-oriented identity style	Normative Identity Style	Diffuse-Avoidant Identity Style
Social Interaction	r_s	.126*	.023	-.023
	p	.013	.657	.652
Archiving	r_s	-.001	.097	.063
	p	.988	.055	.219
Self-expression	r_s	.055	.048	.028
	p	.276	.351	.587
Escape	r_s	.045	.096	.147**
	p	.380	.058	.004
Surveillance	r_s	.125*	-.051	-.022
	p	.014	.319	.668

**. $p < .01$ level (2-tailed), *. $p < .05$ level (2-tailed)

A very low but statistically significant relationship was found between the level of informational (knowledge-oriented) identity style and the level of the social interaction motive (r_s = .126, p = .013). This indicates that as individuals' information-oriented identity style scores increase, their social interaction motive also tends to increase. Accordingly, the H1a was supported. This result is in line with prior research, which similarly reports a positive association between informational identity processes and socially oriented online behaviors. Individuals characterized by an information-oriented identity style are generally skeptical, curious, exploratory, evaluative, and responsive to feedback. They are also described as acting in accordance with utilitarian principles (Berzonsky et al., 2013).

The social interaction motive reflects individuals' desire to engage, communicate, and maintain connections with both familiar and unfamiliar others. In the literature, this form of online interaction has been described through constructs such as social information seeking, social research, and social browsing. Social information seeking refers to efforts to learn more about known individuals, whereas social research involves using the platform to gather information about acquaintances. Social browsing, on the other hand, refers to using social media to discover or meet new people (Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2006; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2010). No statistically significant relationship was found between the level of information-oriented identity style and the archiving motive (r_s = –.001, p = .055). Therefore, H1b was not supported. Likewise, the relationship between information-oriented identity style and the self-expression motive was not statistically significant (r_s = .055, p = .276), and thus H1c is not supported. In addition, no significant relationship was found between information-oriented identity style and the escape motive (r_s = .045, p = .380), leading to the rejection of H1d. A very low but statistically significant relationship was found between information-oriented identity style and the surveillance motive (r_s = .125, p = .014). This implies that as information-oriented identity style increases, surveillance motivation also rises. Therefore, H1e was supported. The surveillance motive relates to individuals' desi-

re to stay informed about their surroundings, view content that captures their interest, and monitor the lives and activities of acquaintances, ordinary users, or celebrities on the platform. This motive is fundamentally driven by curiosity and exploratory tendencies and is thus closely linked to information-seeking behaviors (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Consistent with the literature, the surveillance motive aligns with the inquisitive, investigative, and exploratory characteristics of the information-oriented identity style. Monacis et al. (2017) further suggest that individuals with an information-oriented identity style may frequently check their social media accounts to remain updated and monitor their environment, a pattern that may contribute to problematic or addictive use.

No statistically significant relationship was observed between normative identity style and the social interaction motive (rs = .023, p = .657). Thus, H2a was not supported. Similarly, the relationship between normative identity style and the archiving motive was not significant (rs = .097, p = .055), and therefore H2b was not supported. The results also showed no significant association between normative identity style and the self-expression motive (rs = .048, p = .351), leading to the rejection of H2c. Likewise, there was no statistically significant relationship between normative identity style and the escape motive (rs = .096, p = .058), so H2d was not supported. Finally, no statistically significant relationship was found between normative identity style and the surveillance motive (rs = −.051, p = .319), meaning that H2e was also not supported.

The literature on normative identity style indicates that individuals with this style tend to adopt the values and expectations of significant others, such as family members or peers. As a result, they generally avoid deviating from established patterns and show little interest in exploring alternatives. Because they adhere to predefined structures, they also tend to experience discomfort in situations involving uncertainty. Monacis et al. (2017) note that individuals with a normative identity style may limit their internet use because they seek to preserve their existing identity and avoid environments characterized by ambiguity. Since online platforms host numerous identities, perspectives, and choices, they may be perceived as unpredictable spaces. In this regard, the findings of the present study align with existing theoretical explanations.

No statistically significant relationship was found between diffuse-avoidant (confused) identity style and the social interaction motive (rs = −.023, p = .652). Therefore, H3a was not supported. Similarly, diffuse-avoidant identity style showed no significant association with the archiving motive (rs = .063, p = .219), leading to the rejection of H3b. The relationship between diffuse-avoidant identity style and the

self-expression motive was also not significant (rs = .028, p = .587), meaning that H3c was not supported. However, a very low but statistically significant relationship was identified between diffuse-avoidant identity style and the escape motive (rs = .147, p = .004). Thus, H3d was supported. Individuals with a diffuse-avoidant identity style tend to avoid problems, withdraw from conflict, and postpone decision-making. They often seek immediate pleasure to reduce the confusion they experience and may make impulsive choices because they avoid cognitive evaluation of their difficulties. The escape motive—which includes disengaging from daily life, avoiding responsibilities, relaxing, having fun, and filling free time—is closely linked to these tendencies. Van Dijk (2016) also notes that the escape motive can emerge as a response to identity confusion. Thus, theoretical perspectives directly associate diffuse-avoidant identity style with escape-oriented behaviors, a relationship that is confirmed by the current study. In addition, Monacis et al. (2017) report that individuals with a diffuse-avoidant identity style use social media to escape from real life and that this escape motive may contribute to problematic or dependent use.

No statistically significant relationship was found between diffuse-avoidant (confused) identity style and the surveillance motive (rs = −.022, p = .668). Accordingly, H3e was not supported. Individuals with a diffuse-avoidant identity style generally avoid situations that may involve conflict or discomfort. In the literature, the surveillance motive is frequently linked to social comparison processes. Through social comparison, individuals may evaluate themselves in relation to others, which in some cases could trigger conflict; however, Yang, Holden, and Carter (2018) argue that social comparison may also enable individuals to identify potentially conflict-inducing situations and strategically avoid them.

6. Conclusion and Discussion

Social media has become an integral component of daily life, and individuals use these platforms to obtain gratifications tied to their psycho-social motives. Instagram, a visually oriented social network that attracts substantial user engagement, is similarly used to fulfill such motives. Lee et al. (2015) define these motivations as social interaction, archiving, self-expression, escape, and surveillance.

Throughout psycho-social development, individuals evaluate alternative identity options and make choices accordingly. Marcia (1966, 1980) identified four identity statuses associated with these stages of identity formation. These statuses correspond to three distinct pathways for resolving identity-related conflicts, which in turn constitute identity styles (Berzonsky & Barclay, 1981). The informational

(knowledge-oriented), normative, and diffuse-avoidant (confused) identity styles reflect the cognitive strategies individuals employ as they navigate transitions between identity statuses. Individuals with an information-oriented identity style typically rely on research, exploration, and problem-solving; those with a normative identity style tend to make decisions that align with the expectations of their social environment or reference groups; and those with a diffuse-avoidant identity style generally avoid confronting or resolving conflicts.

The present study examines whether individuals' identity styles are related to their Instagram use motives. Social media serves not only as a medium for identity presentation but also as a context in which users' existing identity orientations shape their online behaviors. In this regard, the primary aim of the study is to explore the relationship between Instagram users' identity styles and their motivations for using Instagram. A total of 388 Instagram users participated in the online survey conducted for this research. Because the data did not meet normality assumptions, the associations between identity styles and Instagram use motivations were examined using Spearman's rank-order correlation.

The findings indicate statistically significant relationships between information-oriented identity style and the social interaction motive, between information-oriented identity style and the surveillance motive, and between diffuse-avoidant identity style and the escape motive. Within the framework of H1, the sub-hypotheses H1b, H1c, and H1d were not supported, whereas H1a and H1e were supported. Consistent with prior research, individuals with an information-oriented identity style tend to approach challenges by engaging in research, critically evaluating alternatives, and incorporating feedback into decision-making. Characterized by curiosity and a strong inclination toward exploration, they are also motivated by information-seeking behaviors. Social interaction and surveillance motives are frequently conceptualized as utilitarian motives focused on obtaining information and remaining informed. Thus, the significant associations between information-oriented identity style and both social interaction and surveillance motives align well with previous findings in the literature.

None of the sub-hypotheses under H2 were supported, indicating that normative identity style is not significantly related to Instagram use motivations. Individuals with a normative identity style typically internalize the values of significant others and tend to avoid making changes to their existing identity structure. As a result, their Instagram use may be shaped more by the expectations of important social groups than by their own personal motivations. The literature similarly suggests that normative-oriented individuals often feel discomfort in online environments due to their preference for stability and their reluctance to encounter diverse or conflicting identities, which they perceive as sources of uncertainty.

For H3, the sub-hypotheses H3a, H3b, and H3c were not supported, whereas H3d received empirical support. Individuals with a diffuse-avoidant (confused) identity style tend to avoid confronting problems and often refrain from making deliberate efforts to resolve them. Because they do not engage in decision-making through research or reflection, they are more likely to act impulsively and seek immediate pleasure as a way to distance themselves from stressors. The escape motive—defined as the desire to relax, withdraw from daily pressures, and momentarily escape from problems—aligns closely with these behavioral tendencies. Therefore, the finding that diffuse-avoidant identity style is significantly associated with escape is consistent with theoretical expectations and prior literature.

In conclusion, the informational (knowledge-oriented) identity style was found to be significantly associated with the social interaction and surveillance motives, both of which are oriented toward information seeking. This suggests that individuals with an information-oriented identity style are more likely to engage with Instagram for purposes related to connecting with others and staying informed. Conversely, individuals with a diffuse-avoidant identity style tend to withdraw from conflict and defer decision-making, making their heightened use of Instagram for escape consistent with the behavioral patterns described in the literature.

For future research, incorporating more diverse socio-demographic characteristics in sampling procedures may yield deeper insights and broaden the generalizability of findings. Additionally, the use of qualitative methods—such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions—is recommended, as these approaches may provide richer and more nuanced understandings of identity processes and social media motivations.

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