

Digital Simulacra Construction of a Digital Product Creator: A Study of Lynk.id Utilization on the Instagram Account @abdulaziz.writer

Ina Yatun Khoiriyah^{1*}, Merlia Indah Pratiwi²

¹⁻²Departement of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences and Cultural Sciences, Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Indonesia

Email: ¹⁾ inayatunkhoiriyah@email.com, ²⁾ merlia_842003@yahoo.com

Received:	Revised:	Accepted:	Online:
November 17, 2025	December 15, 2025	December 16, 2025	December 18, 2025

Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital platforms has transformed how identity, authority, and economic value are constructed within the creative economy. This study examines the construction of digital simulacra by a digital product creator through the monetization platform Lynk.id on the Instagram account @abdulaziz.writer. Drawing on Jean Baudrillard's theory of simulacra and hyperreality, this research aims to analyze how symbolic representation, personal branding, and platform architecture shape audience perception and economic legitimacy. A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed. Data were collected through online observation, documentation of digital content, and in-depth interviews with the account owner and six digital product users. The findings reveal that the creator strategically constructs a professional digital identity through consistent educational and motivational narratives, minimalist visual design, and testimonial-based validation. These symbolic strategies generate a condition of hyperreality in which audiences perceive the digital persona as more authentic and credible than empirical reality. Lynk.id functions not merely as a transactional tool but as a simulation space that amplifies symbolic capital and economic value. This study contributes to digital sociology by demonstrating that in contemporary platform capitalism, economic legitimacy is increasingly produced through the circulation of signs rather than material verification.

Keywords: Digital Identity, Digital Product Creator, Platform Capitalism, Simulacra, Hyperreality

1. Introduction

Digital transformation has profoundly reshaped labor structures, particularly within the creative economy. Social media platforms such as Instagram have enabled individuals to monetize symbolic production through content creation, personal branding, and digital products (Palumbo et al., 2015). Unlike traditional professions that rely on institutional validation, digital product creators operate within decentralized ecosystems, where authority is constructed symbolically rather than institutionally (Belanche et al., 2024).

The emergence of monetization platforms such as Lynk.id facilitates direct economic transactions between creators and audiences (Erwin et al., 2023). Beyond their economic functionality, these platforms also shape perceptions of professionalism and legitimacy, allowing creators to project authority and credibility in the digital space. This phenomenon reflects Jean Baudrillard's concept of simulacra, in which representations no longer merely reflect reality but become reality itself, producing a hyperreal environment where perception drives value (Baudrillard et al., 1983).

Previous studies have examined aspects of digital identity construction, influencer economies, and symbolic capital in social media environments (Franke & Groeppel-Klein, 2024). However, research remains limited regarding how local monetization platforms function as simulation spaces that amplify hyperreality in emerging digital markets (Rusmanto et al., 2024). Understanding these dynamics is



essential, as creators not only present products but also curate narratives, aesthetics, and social proof to convert symbolic authority into economic value (Gu et al., 2024).

This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how a digital product creator strategically constructs a professional digital identity, leverages symbolic capital, and utilizes a local monetization platform to generate economic legitimacy within the social media ecosystem. By doing so, the research contributes to digital sociology and platform capitalism studies, offering insights into the ways symbolic production and hyperreality shape contemporary creative economies.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Simulacra and Hyperreality

According to Jean Baudrillard, simulacra refer to representations that detach from their original referents and become self-referential systems of meaning. In hyperreality, distinctions between the real and the symbolic collapse (Hendra et al., 2025). In digital environments, curated images, testimonials, and metrics function as autonomous signs of credibility (Januar, 2024).

2.2. Digital Identity and Symbolic Capital

Research on digital labor emphasizes the commodification of identity. Influencers and creators accumulate symbolic capital through authenticity performances. Joel- Edgar, S. (2025) Algorithms and platform metrics reinforce perceived authority .

2.3. Platform Capitalism

Nick Srnicek argues that platforms restructure capitalism by extracting value from data and user participation (Santosa, 2023). Monetization platforms do not merely facilitate transactions but shape visibility hierarchies and trust economies (Langley & Leyshon, 2017).

2.4. Research Gap

While previous research focuses on global influencers, limited attention is given to micro-level digital product creators in emerging economies and how localized monetization platforms function as symbolic amplifiers (Yuniarti et al., 2023). This study contributes by integrating simulacra theory with platform capitalism in the Indonesian digital context (Liu et al., 2021).

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences and meaning-making processes involved in the construction of digital identity by a digital product creator. Phenomenology is particularly suited for understanding subjective experiences, as it emphasizes the perspective of participants and how they interpret their interactions within digital platforms (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By focusing on the Instagram account @abdulaziz.writer and its use of Lynk.id for monetization, this research aims to uncover the symbolic strategies used by the creator and how audiences perceive authenticity, authority, and value in a digital context.

3.2. Participants

The primary informant of this study was the owner of the Instagram account @abdulaziz.writer, who actively engages in content creation and digital product monetization. In addition, six users who had purchased digital products from the account were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that participants had direct experience with the phenomena under investigation (Abdussamad, 2021).

The selection criteria focused on users who actively interacted with the Instagram account, made purchases via Lynk.id, and could provide reflective insights on their perception of authenticity, credibility, and symbolic value. This sample size aligns with qualitative research principles, emphasizing depth over breadth to gain rich and detailed data about participants' experiences.

3.3. Data Collection

Data were collected using triangulated methods to ensure both credibility and comprehensiveness of the findings. First, the researcher conducted online participatory observation of the Instagram content of @abdulaziz.writer, including posts, stories, and highlights, as well as the corresponding product pages on Lynk.id. This approach allowed for a detailed examination of content strategies, visual design choices, narrative framing, and engagement patterns that contribute to the creator's symbolic authority. In addition, in-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out with both the account owner and six users who had purchased digital products. These interviews provided flexibility for participants to share their perceptions, motivations, and experiences, while allowing the researcher to probe deeper into specific responses. This method captured both the creator's intentional strategies for constructing a professional digital identity and the users' interpretations and emotional responses to the digital products and narratives. Finally, documentation of relevant digital artifacts, such as screenshots of posts and stories, user testimonials, and digital product catalogues on Lynk.id, was collected to complement the observational and interview data. These artifacts served to validate findings, demonstrate consistency in symbolic strategies, and provide additional evidence of how the digital identity was constructed and perceived.

3.4. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves coding, categorization, and the identification of patterns and themes across multiple data sources (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes were developed inductively based on participants' experiences and deductively in alignment with Baudrillard's framework of simulacra and hyperreality, focusing on symbolic representation, authenticity, and audience perception. Triangulation was applied across observation, interviews, and documentation to strengthen the validity of interpretations and ensure a coherent understanding of the digital identity construction process (Pujadas-Gómez et al., 2025). Themes were organized to reflect the strategies of professional identity building, visual aesthetics, testimonial validation, and platform-mediated symbolic capital.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical procedures were strictly followed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, ensuring they were aware of the research purpose, procedures, and potential risks. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by assigning pseudonyms for interviewees and avoiding the disclosure of sensitive personal information. Digital artifacts were stored securely and used solely for research purposes. The study adhered to ethical guidelines for qualitative research, prioritizing participant autonomy, privacy, and voluntary participation (Orb et al., 2001).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Research Results

4.1.1. Symbolic Construction of Professional Identity

The transformation of the account from a personal profile into a professional brand identity represents the first stage of simulacra production. The addition of the label “writer” on the Instagram profile functions as a symbolic signifier of expertise. For instance, the account frequently shares educational content about writing techniques and digital product creation, which reinforces the image of professional competence. One user stated during the interview: *“I trust the products because the account consistently shares educational content about writing and digital marketing.”* This perception illustrates how repeated symbolic representations construct credibility in the eyes of the audience. In the framework of simulacra proposed by Jean Baudrillard, such representations gradually replace the need for formal institutional validation.

4.1.2. Testimonial-Based Hyperreality

Testimonials posted on the Instagram account function as symbolic proof of product effectiveness. Several screenshots of customer feedback are displayed as evidence of user satisfaction. One testimonial states that the digital product helped users start selling digital templates online. Although these testimonials represent individual experiences, they are presented as collective validation of success. As a result, audiences interpret them as indicators of credibility without directly verifying the product outcomes. This condition reflects Baudrillard’s concept of hyperreality, where symbolic signs of success become more influential than empirical verification.

4.1.3. Lynk.id as Simulation Space

The monetization platform Lynk.id plays a significant role in reinforcing symbolic legitimacy. The platform displays digital products within a structured catalog format, complete with product descriptions, pricing information, and payment integration. This interface resembles a professional online store, which strengthens the perception of institutional credibility. Observational data show that users tend to associate the structured display of products on Lynk.id with professionalism and reliability.

5. Conclusion

This study examines the construction of digital simulacra by a digital product creator through the use of the monetization platform Lynk.id on the Instagram account @abdulaziz.writer. The findings demonstrate that professional authority in the digital creator economy is constructed through symbolic strategies such as consistent educational narratives, minimalist visual aesthetics, and testimonial-based validation. These symbolic elements shape audience perceptions of credibility and expertise. Furthermore, the platform Lynk.id functions not only as a transactional medium but also as a simulation space that reinforces symbolic legitimacy. Through structured product displays, pricing systems, and integrated payment mechanisms, the platform strengthens the perception of professionalism and institutional credibility. This study contributes to the development of digital sociology by extending the concept of simulacra and hyperreality in the context of the creator economy. It demonstrates that in contemporary digital platforms, economic legitimacy is increasingly produced through the circulation of symbolic representations rather than through direct empirical verification. Therefore, hyperreality becomes a key mechanism shaping trust, identity construction, and monetization practices in digital creative labor.

6. References

- Abdussamad, Z. (2021). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. CV. Syakir Media Press.
- Baudrillard, J., Foss, P., Patton, P., & Beitchman, P. (1983). *Simulations*. MIT Press.
- Belanche, D., Casaló, L. V., & Flavián, M. (2024). Human versus virtual influences, a comparative study. *Journal of Business Research*, 173, 114493. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.114493>
- Erwin, E., Pasaribu, A. W., Novel, N. J. A., Thaha, A. R., Adhichandra, I., Suardi, C., Nasir, A., & Syafaat, M. (2023). *Transformasi Digital*. PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia.
- Franke, C., & Groeppel-Klein, A. (2024). The role of psychological distance and construal level in explaining the effectiveness of human-like vs. cartoon-like virtual influencers. *Journal of Business Research*, 185, 114916. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.114916>
- Gu, X., Zhang, X., & Kannan, P. K. (2024). Influencer Mix Strategies in Livestream Commerce: Impact on Product Sales. *Journal of Marketing*, 88(4), 64–83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00222429231213581>
- Hendra, A., Sardjono, S., & Ramadan, D. (2025). Digitalisasi UMKM Desa Tunggilis melalui Pemanfaatan Lynk.id sebagai Solusi Etalase dan Transaksi Online: Studi Kasus pada PKK dan Karang Taruna Desa Tunggilis, Pangandaran. *Jubaedah: Jurnal Pengabdian Dan Edukasi Sekolah (Indonesian Journal of Community Services and School Education)*, 5(3), 766–773. <https://doi.org/10.46306/jub.v5i3.408>
- Januar, J. (2024). Produktivitas Kerja Generasi Z Di Industri Manufacturing Furniture Kabupaten Jepara. *Jurnal Industri Furnitur Dan Pengolahan Kayu*, 2(2), 72–81. <https://www.jurnal-jifka.com/index.php/jifka/article/view/320>
- Langley, P., & Leyshon, A. (2017). Platform capitalism: The intermediation and capitalisation of digital economic circulation. *Finance and Society*, 3(1), 11–31. <https://doi.org/10.2218/finsoc.v3i1.1936>
- Liu, X., Shin, H., & Burns, A. C. (2021). Examining the impact of luxury brand's social media marketing on customer engagement: Using big data analytics and natural language processing. *Journal of Business Research*, 125, 815–826. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.04.042>
- Palumbo, C., Volpe, U., Matanov, A., Priebe, S., & Giacco, D. (2015). Social networks of patients with psychosis: a systematic review. *BMC Research Notes*, 8(1), 560. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13104-015-1528-7>
- Pujadas-Gómez, A., Jiménez-Morales, M., & Montaña-Blasco, M. (2025). Mapping the rise of virtual influencers: A bibliometric analysis. *Telecommunications Policy*, 49(10), 103071. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2025.103071>
- Rusmanto, J., Neneng, S., & Ulfaritha, M. P. E. S. (2024). *12 Paradigma Dan Anatomi Teori Sosial Modern*. Pustaka Saga Jawadwipa.
- Santosa. (2023). *Efektivitas Content Creator dalam Pengembangan Personal Branding dan Branding Product UMKM di Era Society 5.0*. Uwais Inspirasi Indonesia.
- Song, X., Lu, Y., & Yang, Q. (2024). The negative effect of virtual endorsers on brand authenticity and potential remedies. *Journal of Business Research*, 185, 114898. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.114898>
- Yuniarti, T., Rustanta, A., Purnamasari, O., Maryam, S., Tanti, D. S., Febriani, E., Marta, R. F., & Aminudin, A. (2023). *Merangkul Ragam Capaian Akreditasi Unggul di Era 5.0*. Salemba Humanika.