

From Urban Pavements to Digital Platforms: Social Media, Running Communities, and the Construction of Urban Lifestyle Identities in Makassar

Silatul Rahmi¹, Jumadi², A. Octamaya Tenriawaru³, Idham Irwansyah Idrus⁴,
Najamuddin⁵, Arlin Adam⁶

¹Department of Physical Education, Health, and Recreation, Faculty of Sports Science and Health, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar 90222, Indonesia.

²Department of History Education, Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar 90222, Indonesia. ORCID: 0000-0003-0958-8472

³Department of Sociology Education, Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar 90222, Indonesia. ORCID: 0000-0003-2199-3147

⁴Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar 90222, Indonesia. ORCID: 0000-0002-7844-1522

⁵Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar 90222, Indonesia. ORCID: 0009-0001-8606-9310

⁶Doctoral Program in Public Health, Faculty of Health, Universitas Mega Buana, Palopo, South Sulawesi 91911, Indonesia. ORCID: 0000-0001-8368-0563

ABSTRACT

Urban running activities in Makassar, particularly those organized by the IndoRunners community, have developed beyond physical exercise into digitally mediated social practices that shape and communicate urban lifestyle identities. This study examines how physical public spaces and social media platforms function as interconnected social arenas in constructing the collective identity of urban running communities. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation of IndoRunners' activities in both public urban spaces and digital platforms. The analysis was informed by Erving Goffman's dramaturgical perspective and Guy Debord's concept of the spectacle to capture the performative and representational dimensions of running practices across offline and online contexts. The findings indicate that public spaces such as pedestrian corridors and city parks, together with social media platforms, operate as complementary stages where the community performs and negotiates its identity as healthy, active, and socially cohesive. Digital representations of running activities enhance public visibility, reinforce group solidarity, and contribute to the continuous reproduction of urban lifestyle identities through curated visual and narrative content. These results highlight the central role of social media and digitalization in transforming embodied sporting practices into visible and symbolic expressions of contemporary urban life.

Keywords: social media; digitalization; social identity; public space; running; urban lifestyle.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has profoundly transformed the social meaning of sport, shifting it from a predominantly physical activity into a digitally mediated socio-cultural phenomenon. In contemporary urban contexts, sporting practices are no longer confined to physical public spaces but are increasingly performed, documented, and circulated through social media platforms and activity-tracking applications. Sport has thus evolved into a form of cultural performance that encompasses social, economic, and political dimensions, extending well beyond embodied participation into the digital public sphere. As Ellis & Abdi, (2017) argues, digitalization has intensified the representational and performative aspects of sport, enabling individuals and communities to construct and communicate social identities through online visibility. In Indonesia, this transformation is particularly evident in the

growth of urban lifestyle sports communities such as running, cycling, and yoga. These communities not only utilize physical urban spaces but also actively engage with digital platforms to share experiences, track performance, and maintain social interaction. Running communities, including IndoRunners Makassar, exemplify how urban sport practices are increasingly hybrid, combining offline collective activities with continuous online engagement. Prior studies indicate that urban sports communities in major Indonesian cities have shifted from purely health-oriented practices to lifestyle-oriented social formations, where identity construction is deeply embedded in digital representation and online interaction (Kati & Jari, 2016; Eldik et al., 2019).



Figure 1. Physical Activity Meets Digital Engagement in Makassar

Digital public spaces—such as social media platforms and sport-tracking applications—have become central arenas for urban sporting practices, functioning not merely as tools for recording physical activity but as sites for social interaction, symbolic consumption, and collective identity formation. While public physical spaces traditionally serve as arenas where social identities are negotiated (Schmiz, 2017), digital public spaces extend and amplify this function by enabling constant visibility, audience engagement, and narrative control (Sarikaya, 2023; Liu & He, 2021). Figure 1, illustrates this phenomenon by highlighting how running communities in Makassar actively occupy both physical spaces—such as coastal promenades and urban parks—and digital platforms, where curated images, statistics, and stories of running activities are shared to reinforce collective identity. Urban sport as a lifestyle practice is increasingly associated with symbolic meanings related to modernity, health consciousness, and social status; in the digital era, these dimensions are reinforced through online self-presentation and mediated consumption, making the documentation of achievements an integral part of self-branding and identity construction (Black & Veloutsou, 2017).

Moreover, digital platforms facilitate the reproduction and circulation of social identities beyond the immediacy of physical encounters (Irsyad et al., 2025). The identities formed within running communities are continuously reinforced through online documentation, visual storytelling, and algorithmic visibility. Posts featuring running routes, performance data, and community events contribute to the normalization of running as a desirable urban lifestyle and position community

members as active, disciplined, and socially connected individuals. Bredvold (2016) emphasizes that sport operates as a site where identity and power relations are negotiated, and in digital environments, sport increasingly functions as a medium for sustaining and communicating these social distinctions. Running communities in Makassar therefore represent a broader process of social transformation in which physical public spaces and digital platforms are mutually constitutive. Participation in running is no longer limited to shared bodily experience but extends into virtual interaction, enabling communities to transcend spatial boundaries and connect with wider audiences. This hybridization reflects a broader shift in urban social life, where collective practices are simultaneously grounded in local spaces and embedded in global digital networks (Li, 2025).

Importantly, these communities also function as organized forms of social collectivity. Groups such as IndoRunners illustrate how sport becomes a foundation for social cohesion, solidarity, and collective identity that is continuously maintained through digital communication. Social media plays a crucial role in sustaining these bonds by facilitating mutual support, shared narratives, and symbolic recognition among members. Previous studies suggest that urban sports communities strengthen social cohesion through shared experiences and collective engagement, processes that are significantly intensified through digital interaction (Beel et al., 2017; Kusuma et al., 2020). Beyond individual and community identity, running communities also contribute to the symbolic construction of urban identity. Participation in such communities is often associated with representations of a healthy, modern, and progressive city, narratives that are actively disseminated through social media. As Simpson & Cook (2016) argues, community-based sports provide arenas for constructing inclusive urban lifestyles that emphasize participation, visibility, and social engagement. In Makassar, this is reflected in the proliferation of digitally mediated running events, the use of community symbols, and the strategic presentation of urban spaces as backdrops for sporting activity.

These dynamics resonate with Guy Debord's concept of the spectacle, in which social relations are increasingly mediated through images and representations. Digital public spaces transform running activities into visual and symbolic performances that are consumed by both participants and broader audiences. Running, therefore, becomes not only an embodied practice but also a form of spectacle in which identity, lifestyle, and social value are displayed and evaluated within a digitally saturated urban culture. Against this backdrop, this study aims to examine how running practices in Makassar are shaped by the interplay between physical public spaces and digital platforms. Specifically, it investigates how digital public spaces function in reproducing social identities and urban lifestyles through running communities, and how social media and activity-tracking technologies enable running to operate as a form of self-presentation and collective identity construction. By focusing on IndoRunners Makassar, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of digitalization in transforming urban sport into a socially and symbolically mediated practice.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sport as a Social Practice in Digital Public Spaces

From a sociological perspective, sport is no longer understood solely as a physical activity but as a socially constructed practice embedded within both physical and digital public spaces. In contemporary urban contexts, sporting activities—particularly community-based sports such as running—operate as platforms for social interaction, identity negotiation, and collective meaning-making mediated by social media and

digital technologies (Yang et al., 2022). Digital platforms and activity-tracking applications have transformed sport into a hybrid practice that simultaneously unfolds offline and online. In major Indonesian cities, including Makassar, sports communities increasingly extend their presence beyond physical spaces such as urban parks and running tracks into digital public spheres. Empirical studies indicate that urban sports communities in Indonesia have evolved into digitally mediated lifestyle formations, where participation is sustained through online interaction, performance sharing, and algorithmic visibility (Zhao, 2025). Applications such as Strava and social media platforms like Instagram function not only as tools for monitoring physical activity but also as infrastructures for building digital social networks, fostering peer recognition, and sustaining collective engagement.

Wu & Liu (2025) and Chen et al. (2025) emphasizes that digitally networked sport communities serve as mechanisms of social integration, enabling individuals from diverse social backgrounds to interact, negotiate identities, and form collective bonds beyond face-to-face encounters. Within running communities, digital platforms facilitate translocal and even global connections, allowing local practices to be embedded within wider digital sport cultures. In Makassar, communities such as IndoRunners exemplify how running activities are transformed into digitally visible social performances through the circulation of images, performance metrics, and communal narratives that reinforce solidarity across physical and virtual spaces. Furthermore, digital sport communities provide alternative public spaces in increasingly virtualized societies. Ilieva & Mcphearson (2018) argues that digitally mediated sports communities create horizontal and relatively egalitarian forms of social interaction, where participation, mutual support, and shared challenges foster a sense of belonging. Through practices such as sharing achievements, engaging in virtual challenges, and offering encouragement online, running communities function not merely as fitness-oriented groups but as digital communication spaces that sustain collective identity and social cohesion.

2.2 Sport and the Construction of Social Identity

Sport has long been recognized as a cultural arena through which social identities, lifestyles, and symbolic distinctions are produced and communicated, particularly in urban settings. (Dwianto & Rahardini, 2021) conceptualizes sport as a cultural field that reflects and reproduces social, political, and cultural identities. In the digital era, however, sport increasingly operates as a mediated practice through which values, norms, and social status are communicated via online platforms. In Makassar, running communities that once symbolized healthy and modern urban lifestyles in physical public spaces have expanded their identity formation processes into digital environments. Participation in running communities on platforms such as Instagram, Strava, and messaging applications not only signals commitment to health and fitness but also projects a digitally mediated identity associated with modernity, discipline, and social connectivity. Thorpe (2017) and Yu et al., (2022) argue that lifestyle sports function as expressions of urban identity that are increasingly constructed and performed through social media, where visibility and aesthetic presentation play central roles.

At the same time, digital sport practices involve the negotiation between local and global cultural influences. Chan (2017) and Léger et al. (2020) highlights that sports communities in non-Western urban contexts often integrate global digital sport cultures while retaining local cultural elements. In Makassar, running communities incorporate local symbols, narratives, and aesthetics into their digital self-presentations, allowing members to assert cultural distinctiveness within globally standardized platforms. This

hybridization reflects how sport-mediated identities are continuously negotiated in digitally connected urban societies. Stevens et al. (2017) and Gil & Gil (2022) further note that sport provides a space for individuals to negotiate cultural identities through embodied and mediated practices. Within running communities, identity construction occurs through digital self-presentation practices such as posting images, videos, and performance data that combine physical achievement with cultural signifiers. These practices illustrate how digital public spaces enable sport to function as a transformative process through which urban identities are constructed, displayed, and normalized.

2.3 Sport and Social Stratification in Digital Contexts

While sport communities are often associated with social inclusion and cohesion, digitally mediated sports practices also reveal and reproduce forms of social stratification. Access to digital platforms, premium applications, wearable technologies, and paid virtual events introduces new forms of inequality within ostensibly inclusive communities (Khazraee & Novak, 2018). In the context of running communities in Makassar, differential access to digital resources shapes patterns of participation and recognition. Members who engage in paid virtual races, utilize premium tracking applications, or possess advanced wearable technologies often gain higher visibility and symbolic status within digital community spaces. Pedersen et al. (2018) observes that digital badges, performance metrics, and premium platform features function as symbolic markers of distinction, reflecting broader socio-economic disparities. Digital stratification becomes particularly visible in social media interactions, where posts featuring branded equipment, participation in exclusive events, or high-performance data receive greater attention and validation. These practices contribute to the formation of digital hierarchies in which visibility, technological access, and symbolic capital differentiate community members (Papangelis & States, 2026; Shao et al., 2021). Thus, while running communities promote inclusivity at the level of participation, digital mediation simultaneously introduces new axes of social differentiation.

2.4 Goffman's Dramaturgical Perspective: Public Space as Social Stage

Goffman's dramaturgical theory conceptualizes social interaction as a performance in which individuals manage impressions before an audience within specific social settings. Traditionally applied to face-to-face interactions, this perspective has gained renewed relevance in the analysis of digitally mediated social practices (Domunco, 2021). Digital platforms now function as extended public stages where performances are curated, recorded, and continuously accessible (Kiarie et al., 2025; Özturan et al., 2024). Within running communities in Makassar, social media platforms operate as digital stages on which members perform identities associated with health, discipline, and collective belonging. The sharing of group photos, performance statistics, and symbolic markers—such as community apparel or event medals—constitutes forms of digital impression management aimed at reinforcing positive collective images. These practices align with Goffman's notion of front-stage behavior, where individuals consciously construct presentations of self for public consumption. Digital self-presentation within sports communities allows members to assert social positions, gain recognition, and strengthen their affiliation with collective identities (Gordon, 2022; Rafa'al & Sangadji, 2023). The persistence and shareability of digital content amplify these performances beyond immediate social interactions, making identity work in sport increasingly continuous and publicly visible.

2.5 The Society of the Spectacle: Sport, Identity, and Social Media

Debord's concept of the society of the spectacle provides a critical framework for understanding how social life is increasingly mediated through images and representations. In digital environments, sport becomes a key site for the production and consumption of visual narratives that communicate identity, lifestyle, and social value (Tang et al., 2022). In Makassar, running communities actively utilize social media platforms to construct visually compelling representations of collective activity and urban lifestyle. Hashtags, curated imagery, video documentation, and virtual challenges transform running into a form of digital spectacle that extends beyond physical participation. These representations enable communities to reach broader audiences and embed local practices within global visual cultures of sport. Recent scholarship highlights the emergence of digital capital, where social recognition and status are accumulated through online visibility and engagement (Carlén & Maivorsdotter, 2017; Eldik et al., 2019). Within this framework, running activities function as both embodied practices and symbolic performances that generate value in digital public spaces. Sport, therefore, operates as a central mechanism through which identities are not only enacted but also consumed and evaluated within contemporary urban digital cultures.

3. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method, which, according to Hasan & Sangadji (2024), is a research method aimed at understanding phenomena regarding what is experienced by research subjects holistically through descriptions in the form of words and language. In line with this definition, this study applies a qualitative interpretive approach with a focused ethnographic case study design to examine the social practices of urban running communities across physical and digital public spaces in Makassar. This approach is appropriate for capturing the meanings, interactions, and identity performances embedded in everyday sporting practices that are increasingly mediated by digital technologies. Focused ethnography enables intensive engagement within a specific social setting over a limited period, allowing the researcher to explore how running practices are enacted, represented, and negotiated both offline and online. The study integrates participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and digital content analysis to obtain a comprehensive understanding of community dynamics and identity construction.

Fieldwork was conducted over a period of approximately three to four months to capture routine activities and event-based interactions within the running community. Observations took place in key urban public spaces frequently used for running activities, including coastal promenades, urban parks, and car-free day areas, where interactions between runners and the broader public could be observed. In parallel, digital field sites included community-managed social media accounts and messaging platforms such as Instagram, Strava, WhatsApp, and Telegram, which functioned as spaces for coordination, interaction, and symbolic representation. Examining both physical and digital sites allowed the study to trace how social meanings and identities circulate across interconnected urban and digital environments.

Data collection involved sustained participant observation during group runs, routine training sessions, public running events, and virtual activities, complemented by in-depth semi-structured interviews with community organizers, core members, novice runners, and event coordinators. These methods were designed to capture diverse perspectives on participation, motivation, and the role of social media in shaping community life. Visual and textual materials, including photographs, videos, performance metrics, and archived social media content, were also collected to support the analysis of symbolic practices and digitally mediated self-presentation. Field notes

were maintained throughout the research process to document contextual observations and reflexive insights.

Data analysis followed an inductive thematic approach, involving the systematic transcription, coding, and interpretation of interview data, observational notes, and digital artifacts. Themes were developed iteratively to identify recurring patterns related to identity performance, social interaction, and the use of public space, guided by Goffman's dramaturgical framework and Debord's concept of the spectacle. Visual ethnographic techniques were applied to analyze images and videos shared on social media, focusing on the interplay between front-stage and back-stage performances in digital and physical contexts. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation across methods and sources was employed, alongside member checking with selected participants. An audit trail was maintained to ensure transparency and methodological rigor throughout the research process.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Urban Running Practices and Social Interaction Across Physical and Digital Public Spaces

The findings indicate that running practices in Makassar function as a socially integrative activity facilitated by the convergence of physical public spaces and digital platforms. Public spaces such as Pantai Losari, Karebosi Field, and the CPI area serve not only as sites for physical exercise but also as open social arenas that enable spontaneous interaction among individuals from diverse social backgrounds. This openness is further amplified by social media, which extends the accessibility of these spaces into the digital realm and lowers the threshold for participation. Several participants reported that their initial involvement in the running community occurred through informal encounters in public spaces, which were subsequently reinforced through digital interaction. One participant explained that observing group runs in a public setting and later encountering related content on Instagram or Strava encouraged spontaneous participation without formal registration or prior social ties. This illustrates how physical visibility and digital circulation work together to create inclusive entry points into the community.

Digital platforms play a crucial role in sustaining these interactions beyond face-to-face encounters. Social media and messaging applications such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Telegram function as continuous social spaces where coordination, informal communication, and mutual recognition take place. Participants emphasized that interactions in these digital spaces mirror the relaxed and non-hierarchical atmosphere experienced during group runs, fostering familiarity and accelerating social bonding. As one participant noted, the absence of formal barriers—both offline and online—creates a sense of comfort that facilitates natural social integration. Overall, the results demonstrate that the integration of physical and digital public spaces produces a hybrid social arena in which running becomes a medium for spontaneous social interaction. The digital extension of public space enables individuals to encounter the community virtually before participating physically, reinforcing the role of social media as a gateway to collective urban sport practices.

4.2 Digital Mediation, Solidarity, and Community Sustainability

The study further reveals that digital platforms significantly strengthen social interaction and solidarity within the running community. Participants consistently described the community environment as egalitarian and inclusive, emphasizing that neither professional background nor age influenced social relations. This sense of

equality is maintained not only during physical gatherings but also through everyday interactions in digital communication channels. Regular engagement in both physical runs and online group interactions fosters emotional closeness and collective attachment. Participants reported that sharing experiences, encouragement, and achievements through social media reinforces feelings of belonging and mutual support. One informant highlighted that receiving responses to shared running activities on social media enhances motivation and strengthens emotional ties among members. This finding suggests that digital interaction operates as a form of social reinforcement that complements embodied participation.

Digital visibility also contributes to the sustainability of the community by enhancing its public presence. Content shared on social media—such as photos, event announcements, and performance updates—functions as an invitation to potential new members. Several participants noted that they initially became aware of the community through Instagram posts or online stories before deciding to join in person. This indicates that digital platforms play a strategic role in community regeneration by facilitating continuous exposure and recruitment. In this context, digital public spaces act as infrastructural supports that enable the community to remain open, visible, and socially resilient. The combination of routine physical activities and ongoing digital interaction ensures continuity, allowing new members to integrate quickly while reinforcing collective norms and values among existing members.

4.3 Running as Digital Performance and Urban Identity Construction

The findings also show that running in public spaces—amplified through social media—functions as a form of self-presentation and collective identity performance. Participants reported heightened motivation, confidence, and emotional engagement when running in visible public settings or when sharing running-related content online. Awareness of being observed, both physically and digitally, transforms running into a socially meaningful activity rather than a purely personal exercise. This awareness generates a sense of responsibility to maintain appropriate behavior, appearance, and discipline, as participants perceive themselves as representatives of the community. Many participants deliberately wear community attributes and present themselves in ways that reflect a healthy, organized, and positive image. These practices are reinforced through digital feedback mechanisms such as likes, comments, and reposts, which validate individual and collective performances.

Social media thus operates as a digital stage where identity is continuously enacted and evaluated. Participants described how posting running activities on Instagram or viewing community content strengthens their sense of pride and belonging. For younger participants, digital visibility contributes to collective confidence and reinforces identification with an active, modern urban lifestyle. For older or professional participants, it carries an additional dimension of social responsibility and role modeling. The repeated circulation of visual and narrative content enables the reproduction of community identity over time. Routine runs, recurring digital posts, and shared symbols create a recognizable and enduring representation of the community in the urban public sphere. Through this process, running becomes a performative practice that simultaneously constructs individual self-images and collective urban lifestyle identities within a digitally mediated society.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Urban Running as a Hybrid Social Practice: Interaction, Performance, and Digital Mediation

The findings demonstrate that urban running practices in Makassar operate as hybrid social practices situated at the intersection of physical public space and digital platforms. Public spaces such as Pantai Losari and major urban boulevards function as social arenas where runners engage in embodied interaction, while social media platforms—particularly Instagram and Strava—extend these interactions into continuous digital visibility. From a dramaturgical perspective, these spaces operate as a front stage where individuals and communities actively manage impressions through appearance, bodily discipline, and coordinated movement, reinforcing shared meanings of health, activity, and urban modernity, consistent with Erving Goffman’s conceptualization of social life as performance. Importantly, digital platforms intensify and stabilize these performances. Visual documentation, hashtags, and performance metrics circulate running activities beyond their immediate spatial context, transforming momentary interactions into persistent representations. This digital extension strengthens early-stage social interaction by lowering entry barriers for newcomers, who often encounter the community virtually before participating physically. As such, social media does not merely reflect offline interaction but actively structures how interaction emerges, is recognized, and is sustained.

Beyond visual representation, the affective and atmospheric dimensions of running—sounds, rhythms, collective pacing, and emotional energy—are also translated into digital narratives through captions, videos, and stories. These representations reinforce a shared urban imaginary in which running signifies not only physical fitness but also civic engagement and belonging. The awareness of being observed—both physically and digitally—creates a reflexive social environment in which members regulate behavior and presentation, reinforcing collective norms and social responsibility. This supports contemporary interpretations of dramaturgy that emphasize symbolic interaction across offline–online continuums. Solidarity within the running community emerges through repeated ritualized practices—warm-ups, group runs, closing interactions—which function as “team performances” that require coordination and mutual attentiveness. These rituals are amplified digitally through repeated posting and interaction, allowing solidarity to persist beyond co-presence. In line with recent sport sociology literature, digital communication platforms enable the maintenance of cohesion, even in the absence of physical interaction, by providing continuous channels for encouragement, recognition, and identity affirmation.

Table 1. Urban Running Practices, Social Interaction, and Digital Performance

Analytical Aspect	Empirical Pattern	Dramaturgical Interpretation (Goffman)	Spectacle Interpretation (Debord)
Public space as meeting arena	Coastal areas and boulevards serve as gathering points before and after runs	Front stage where active, healthy identities are performed	Running becomes a visible urban lifestyle spectacle
Social interaction and solidarity	Informal conversations, encouragement, shared routines	Team performance reinforces group cohesion	Solidarity itself becomes a consumable social image

Analytical Aspect	Empirical Pattern	Dramaturgical Interpretation (Goffman)	Spectacle Interpretation (Debord)
Digital mediation	Instagram, Strava, WhatsApp extend interaction	Digital platforms prolong front-stage performance	Performances circulate as digital spectacles
Community sustainability	Routine runs and digital documentation attract new members	Stable performance scripts ensure continuity	Repeated spectacle sustains public interest

Table 1 illustrates how urban running practices in Makassar operate through the integration of physical public spaces and digital platforms, producing socially meaningful performances that sustain community life. Coastal areas and urban boulevards function as front-stage settings where runners collectively display identities associated with health, discipline, and urban modernity. Social interactions that emerge through informal conversations, mutual encouragement, and shared routines constitute a form of team performance that strengthens internal cohesion while simultaneously projecting solidarity as a visible and recognizable social image. Digital platforms such as Instagram, Strava, and WhatsApp extend these interactions beyond co-present encounters by prolonging front-stage performances and enabling continuous impression management in online spaces. Through the circulation of visual content and performance data, running practices are transformed into digital spectacles that reach wider audiences and generate symbolic recognition. Moreover, the combination of routine physical activities and consistent digital documentation contributes to community sustainability by stabilizing performance scripts and maintaining public interest over time. Overall, the table demonstrates that social media and digitalization play a central role in transforming urban running from a localized physical activity into a continuously visible, socially cohesive, and symbolically sustained urban lifestyle practice.

5.2 Reproducing Urban Lifestyle Identity Through Public and Digital Spaces

The discussion further reveals that the IndoRunners community functions as a mechanism for reproducing urban lifestyle identities through repeated performances in public and digital spaces. Running activities are not framed merely as health-oriented practices but as symbolic enactments of being urban, modern, and disciplined. Within Goffman's framework, these activities represent sustained impression management, where consistency across appearances, behavior, and digital representation is crucial for maintaining credibility and legitimacy. From the perspective of Guy Debord, these practices align with the logic of the spectacle, wherein social relations are increasingly mediated by images. Running activities documented and shared online transform physical exertion into symbolic capital—visual proof of discipline, commitment, and lifestyle alignment. Social media thus functions as an infrastructure for the commodification of identity, where representations of health and activity are continuously reproduced and consumed.

Attributes such as community uniforms, coordinated movement, and event participation operate as symbolic props that differentiate the running community from other users of public space. When circulated digitally, these symbols reinforce collective distinction and expand the audience beyond immediate observers. The reproduction of identity becomes cyclical: repeated physical practices generate digital content, which in turn reinforces motivation, legitimacy, and recognition, sustaining further participation.

Moreover, identity reproduction is open and iterative. Digital platforms allow non-members to observe, evaluate, and potentially adopt the identity scripts performed by the community. This openness contributes to inclusivity while simultaneously standardizing expectations about appearance, behavior, and commitment, reflecting the dual nature of digital mediation as both enabling and regulating.

Table 2. Public Space, Digital Representation, and Urban Lifestyle Identity

Dimension	Empirical Evidence	Dramaturgical Reading	Spectacle Reading
Running as lifestyle symbol	Routine runs and events	Front-stage performance of urban identity	Lifestyle consumed as visual spectacle
Digital documentation	Photos, videos, hashtags	Extended impression management	Identity commodified through images
Community image	Discipline, inclusivity, solidarity	Consistent role performance	Collective image circulated publicly
Identity reproduction	Repetition across events and platforms	Stabilized social scripts	Continuous spectacle regeneration

Table 2 illustrates how urban running practices in Makassar operate as a hybrid process of identity construction mediated by public space and digital representation. Routine runs and organized events function as front-stage performances in which runners enact and display an urban lifestyle identity characterized by activity, health, and modernity. Through digital documentation in the form of photos, videos, and hashtags, these performances are extended beyond physical encounters, enabling continuous impression management across online platforms. From a spectacle perspective, such digital representations transform embodied practices into visual commodities that can be consumed, evaluated, and replicated by wider audiences. The consistent portrayal of discipline, inclusivity, and solidarity reinforces a coherent community image, positioning the running community as a recognizable and legitimate social actor within the urban landscape. Repetition of these practices across events and platforms stabilizes shared social scripts, allowing members and observers to internalize expected roles and behaviors. At the same time, the ongoing circulation of images and narratives sustains a continuous cycle of spectacle regeneration, ensuring that urban lifestyle identity remains visible, relevant, and socially validated in both physical and digital public spheres.

5.3 Running, Self-Presentation, and Collective Visibility in the Digital City

Finally, the findings position urban running as a form of self-presentation that simultaneously produces individual and collective identity. Awareness of being observed—by passersby or digital audiences—generates emotional responses such as pride, motivation, and responsibility. These emotions reinforce commitment to both personal discipline and collective norms, aligning with dramaturgical notions of audience-oriented behavior. Digital visibility magnifies this process. Likes, comments, and reposts serve as feedback mechanisms that validate performances and strengthen identification with the community. The public display of solidarity—through

coordinated attire, synchronized movement, and supportive interaction—becomes a visual narrative of cohesion that enhances legitimacy and attracts new participants. In Debord’s terms, visibility itself becomes a source of social power, as recognition and legitimacy are derived from being seen and acknowledged. Importantly, visibility operates as both outcome and driver of community sustainability. Regular exposure in public and digital spaces reinforces the perception of stability, vitality, and openness. This dual visibility enables IndoRunners Makassar to embed itself within the urban social landscape, not only as a sports community but as a recognizable symbol of contemporary urban lifestyle.

Table 3. Visibility, Performance, and Identity Reproduction

Aspect	Empirical Observation	Dramaturgical Function	Spectacle Function
Awareness of being observed	Heightened motivation and discipline	Impression management	Visual consumption by public
Collective appearance	Uniforms, coordinated movement	Team performance	Cohesion as spectacle
Digital circulation	Social media documentation	Extended front stage	Amplified audience reach
Identity continuity	Repeated routines and events	Stable role internalization	Ongoing spectacle reproduction

Table 3 demonstrates that visibility plays a central role in linking performance, digital mediation, and the reproduction of collective identity within urban running communities. Awareness of being observed—both in physical public spaces and on social media—encourages heightened motivation and self-discipline, reflecting deliberate impression management as conceptualized in dramaturgical theory, while simultaneously transforming individual actions into objects of public visual consumption. Collective appearance, expressed through uniforms and coordinated movement, functions as a form of team performance that reinforces internal cohesion and projects a unified image outward, allowing solidarity itself to become a visible spectacle. The digital circulation of running activities through social media platforms extends the front stage beyond immediate spatial settings, enabling performances to reach wider and more diverse audiences. This amplification strengthens recognition, validation, and symbolic value attached to the community. Finally, identity continuity is maintained through repeated routines and recurring events, which facilitate the internalization of stable social roles among members while ensuring the ongoing reproduction of the community as a recognizable spectacle. Together, these processes illustrate how visibility, mediated through digital platforms, sustains collective identity by integrating performance, audience recognition, and repetitive social practice.

6. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that urban running communities in Makassar represent a hybrid form of social practice in which physical public spaces and digital platforms operate as interconnected arenas for interaction, performance, and identity construction. Running activities conducted in public spaces are not merely health-oriented practices but function as socially meaningful performances that are

continuously extended, stabilized, and amplified through social media. Digital platforms such as Instagram, Strava, and messaging applications transform momentary embodied encounters into persistent representations, enabling urban lifestyle identities to be displayed, evaluated, and reproduced beyond spatial and temporal boundaries. The findings contribute to sociological understandings of sport and urban life by showing how social media reshapes the dramaturgical dynamics of public interaction. Physical spaces operate as front stages where identities are enacted, while digital platforms extend these stages, allowing performances to circulate as visual spectacles that reinforce solidarity, legitimacy, and community sustainability. Through repeated routines, coordinated appearances, and digital documentation, the running community reproduces a collective identity associated with health, discipline, inclusivity, and modern urban living. Theoretically, this study integrates dramaturgical perspectives with the concept of the spectacle to explain how visibility—both physical and digital—functions as a key mechanism in sustaining collective identity. Empirically, it highlights the central role of digitalization in transforming urban sport into a socially mediated lifestyle practice, contributing to broader debates on digital public space, identity performance, and contemporary urban culture.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research adopts a qualitative case study approach focused on a single running community in Makassar. While this allows for in-depth contextual analysis, the findings may not be directly generalizable to other urban contexts, sports communities, or cultural settings. Comparative studies across cities or different types of lifestyle sports could provide broader insights into how digital mediation varies across social and spatial contexts. Second, the study primarily relies on participants' narratives and observed digital content, which may be influenced by self-presentation and selective disclosure, particularly in social media environments where image management is prominent. Future research could complement qualitative insights with digital trace data, network analysis, or mixed-method approaches to examine interaction patterns and visibility dynamics more systematically. Third, this study focuses on the constructive and integrative dimensions of digital visibility and community identity. Less attention is given to potential tensions, exclusions, or power asymmetries generated through digital stratification, algorithmic visibility, or unequal access to technology. Further research could critically examine how digital platforms may simultaneously enable participation while reproducing new forms of inequality within urban sport communities. Addressing these limitations would enrich understanding of the complex relationship between sport, digital media, and urban social life in increasingly mediated cities.

7. REFERENCE

1. Beel, D. E., Wallace, C. D., Webster, G., Nguyen, H., Tait, E., Macleod, M., & Mellish, C. (2017). Cultural resilience : The production of rural community heritage , digital archives and the role of volunteers. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 54, 459–468. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2015.05.002>
2. Black, I., & Veloutsou, C. (2017). Working consumers : Co-creation of brand identity , consumer identity and brand community identity. *Journal of Business Research*, 70, 416–429. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.07.012>
3. Bredvold, R. (2016). Lifestyle entrepreneurs and their identity construction : A study of the tourism industry n. 56, 96–105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.03.023>
4. Carlén, U., & Maivorsdotter, N. (2017). Exploring the role of digital tools in running : the meaning-making of user-generated data in a social networking site.

- Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 6778, 1–15.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2016.1180636>
5. Chan, M. (2017). Media Use and the Social Identity Model of Collective Action : Examining the Roles of Online Alternative News and Social Media News. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699016638837>
6. Chen, X., Sun, Y., Illia, F., Ibrahim, B., Aishah, M., & Kamarazaly, B. (2025). Social media interaction and built environment effects on urban walking experience : A machine learning analysis of Shanghai Citywalk. 1–20.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0320951>
7. Domunco, C. F. (2021). Goffman's Self and The Dramaturgical Model of Everyday Life. *Anadiss*, 17(32), 269-275.
8. Dwianto, R. D., & Rahardini, A. (2021). Indonesian middle class as cultural intermediaries , ' running ' for trendy urban lifestyle. 42, 837–844.
9. Eldik, A. K. Van, Kneer, J., & Jansz, J. (2019). Urban & Online : Social Media Use among Adolescents and Sense of Belonging to a Super-Diverse City. Cc.
<https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v7i2.1879>
10. Eldik, A. K. Van, Kneer, J., Lutkenhaus, R. O., & Jansz, J. (2019). Urban Influencers : An Analysis of Urban Identity in YouTube Content of Local Social Media Influencers in a Super-Diverse City. 10(December), 1–17.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02876>
11. Ellis, B. H., & Abdi, S. (2017). Building Community Resilience to Violent Extremism Through Genuine Partnerships. American Psychologist Association.
12. Gil, G. J., & Gil, G. J. (2022). Identities and moralities in social networks . A digital ethnography of running in contemporary society. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 14(4), 530–544.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2021.1942179>
13. Gordon, K. O. (2022). Toward a Full Embrace of Goffman ' s Dramaturgy within Self-Presentation Analyses. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003455103-13>
14. Hasan, D. S., & Sangadji, S. S. (2024). Fundamentals in Crafting Research and Community Service Articles. *SCIENTIA: Journal of Multi Disciplinary Science*, 3(1), 31–39. <https://doi.org/10.62394/scientia.v3i1.102>
15. Ilieva, R. T., & Mcphearson, T. (2018). Social-media data for urban sustainability. *Nature Sustainability*, 1(October). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-018-0153-6>
16. Irsyad, Z., Fuzail, M., Iswanto, D., & Gamri, M. (2025). Digital Innovation in Enhancing Competitiveness of Destination Marketing Strategy. *Aurora: Journal of Emerging Business Paradigms*, 2(2), 71–80.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.62394/aurora.v2i2.147>
17. Kati, V., & Jari, N. (2016). Bottom-up thinking — Identifying socio-cultural values of ecosystem services in local blue – green infrastructure planning in Helsinki , Finland. 50, 537–547.
18. Khazraee, E., & Novak, A. N. (2018). Digitally Mediated Protest : Social Media Affordances for Collective Identity Construction.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118765740>
19. Kiarie, J., Owusu, E., & Hagabirema, G. (2025). The Role of Digital Marketing in Expanding Rural Markets in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Aurora: Journal of Emerging Business Paradigms*, 2(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.62394/aurora.v2i1.185>
20. Kusuma, Y. P., Study, C. S., Muhammadiyah, U., Tangerang, K., Basit, A., Study, C. S., Muhammadiyah, U., Tangerang, K., Amaludin, M., Study, C. S., Muhammadiyah, U., & Tangerang, K. (2020). Knowledge of Sports Motivation : The Consumptive Lifestyle of a Running Community. 27(ICoSHEET 2019), 269–272.

21. Léger, M. T., Martin, S., & Moncton, U. De. (2020). A Collective Case Study into the Use of Social Media as a Tool for Developing Sustainable Living Habits in Urban Families. 23(3), 132–149.
22. Li, F. (2025). Investigating the role of Chinese sports media in shaping young adults ' exercise habits through the lens of the health belief model. September, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2025.1600486>
23. Liu, Y., & He, J. (2021). “ Why Are You Running Away From Social Media ?” Analysis of the Factors Influencing Social Media Fatigue : An Empirical Data Study Based on Chinese Youth. 12(September), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.674641>
24. Özturan, N., Ören, A. Ş., & Çakar, S. Ş. (2024). Digital Innovations and Market Dynamics of Tourism Businesses in Turkey. *Aurora: Journal of Emerging Business Paradigms*, 1(1), 12–17. <https://doi.org/10.62394/aurora.v1i1.107>
25. Papangelis, K., & States, U. (2026). Performing the Digital Self : Understanding Location- Based Social Networking , Territory , Space , and Identity in the City Performing the Digital Self : Understanding Location-Based Social Networking , Territory , Space , and Identity in the City. 27(1). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3364997>
26. Pedersen, H., Pedersen, L. K., & Thing, L. F. (2018). ‘ Liquid running communities ’ – an analysis of serious runners ’ communities. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 15(3), 234–249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16138171.2018.1491152>
27. Rafa'al, M., & Sangadji, S. S. (2023). Digital Transformation of the Hotel Industry “Theories, Practices, and Global Challenges.” *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 56, 469–470. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2023.08.002>
28. Sarikaya, T. (2023). The effects of interactions in virtual communities on social media in the shaping and reproducing of cultural Los efectos de las interacciones en comunidades virtuales en las redes sociales en la conformación y reproducción de la memoria cultural , la ide. 12, 62–89.
29. Schmiz, A. (2017). Staging a ‘ Chinatown ’ in Berlin : The role of city branding in the urban governance of ethnic diversity. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776416637208>
30. Shao, Z., Sumari, N. S., Portnov, A., Ujoh, F., & Mandela, P. J. (2021). Geo-spatial Information Science Urban sprawl and its impact on sustainable urban development : a combination of remote sensing and social media data. *Geo-Spatial Information Science*, 24(2), 241–255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10095020.2020.1787800>
31. Simpson, P., & Cook, S. (2016). Running Order : Urban Public Space , Everyday Citizenship and Sporting Subjectivities.
32. Stevens, R., Gilliard-matthews, S., Dunaev, J., & Brawner, B. M. (2017). The digital hood : Social media use among youth in disadvantaged neighborhoods. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815625941>
33. Tang, Y., Zhang, J., Liu, R., & Li, Y. (2022). Exploring the Impact of Built Environment Attributes on Social Followings Using Social Media Data and Deep Learning.
34. Thorpe, H. (2017). Action Sports , Social Media , and New Technologies : Towards a Research Agenda. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479516638125>
35. Wu, X., & Liu, C. (2025). Geoforum Digitalising rural lifestyles : Online platforms and everyday life in Chinese villages. *Geoforum*, 159(January), 104206. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2025.104206>
36. Yang, J., Ju, F., & Tian, Z. (2022). Sports and Social Interaction : Sports Experiences and Attitudes of the Urban Running Community.

37. Yu, M., Wong, C., Ou, K., & Zhang, C. (2022). Neighborhood Built and Social Environment Influences on Lifestyle Behaviors among College Students in a High-Density City : A Photovoice Study.
38. Zhao, Y. (2025). Place-makers in the digital age : Lifestyle migrants and the emergence of lifestyle-oriented urbanization in China. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 47(7), 2339–2354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2023.2291071>