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# How online self-presentation affects well-being and body image: A systematic review☆

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ABSTRACT

Sophistication of media technologies offers increasing possibilities for selective self-presentation online. However, how self-presentation affects well-being and body image is unclear. This systematic review aimed to map to what extent and under which circumstances types of self-presentation, versus lurking, support or hamper individuals' well-being and body image. Seven scientific databases were searched, comprising 55 relevant studies in 52 publications out of 975 publications. Results were mixed: Both self-presentation and lurking can enhance or diminish well-being and body image. Self-presentation, lurking, and well-being were categorized to systematically clarify results, and vital mechanisms were determined to explain differences within and between self-presentation and lurking. For example, lurking at others generally decreased well-being, whereas authentic self-presentation increased well-being. Moreover, the studies' examined outcomes differed among studies' culture-of-origin. Finally, results showed the importance of peers in examining effects of self-presentation. Future research should delineate self-presentation types, report on cultural variability, and include peer influence.

## 1. Introduction

The technological possibilities to selectively present oneself online increase rapidly. Recent phenomena like 'selfies' particularly benefit from such advanced technology, for example by instant beautify apps, particularly suited for creating optimized self-presentations. Technological sophistication does not only impact those who actively self-present, but also the more passive users, who primarily expose themselves to others' self-presentations, so-called 'lurking'. Both the human drive to express oneself and the drive to compare oneself can explain the enormous popularity of Social Networking Sites (SNSs). Consequently, the abundant use of SNSs in combination with increasing possibilities to present idealized selves, while also being exposed to idealized presentations, raises questions on how active self-presentation and lurking may influence well-being and body image. This article presents
a systematic review to indicate to what extent and under which circumstances self-presentation and lurking on SNSs can enhance or undermine an individual's well-being and body image, and to indicate directions for future research.

More specifically, the aim of this systematic literature review is threefold: (1) to identify the beneficial or detrimental impact of various types of self-presentation, in comparison to types of lurking, on well-being and body image; (2) to specify the role of national culture as a possible mechanism in the influence of self-presentation on well-being and body image; (3) to identify possible mediators

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and moderators that are vital for determining the outcomes. Both positive and negative impact of self-presentation on SNSs can be theoretically explained. Positive effects are mainly guided by the assumptions of the hyperpersonal model (Walther, 1996), which argues that positive self-presentations can be easily accomplished and can be reinforced by others, fostering body image and well-being (Walther et al., 2011). Contrary, negative influences can be explained by the Objective Self-Awareness theory, claiming that focusing exclusively on the self, and subsequent awareness of discrepancies between oneself and societal standards, negatively impacts body image and well-being (Duval and Wicklund, 1972; Fejfar and Hoyle, 2000).

Results from previous reviews in the domain of self-presentation and SNS use were mixed and indicated that not only various underlying mechanisms are vital in determining positive or negative outcomes on well-being, but also the type of behavior, passive or active use of SNS (Allen et al., 2014; Baker and Algorta, 2016; Best et al., 2014; Desjarlais et al., 2015; Twomey and O'Reilly, 2017; Verduyn et al., 2017). Different patterns of SNS use, being more active or more passive, and the type of self-presentation are assumed to be crucial for explaining the heterogenous outcomes (Twomey and O'Reilly, 2017; Verduyn et al., 2017). For example, authentic self-presentation was consistently related to higher self-esteem, whereas inauthentic presentations were related to lower self-esteem (Twomey and O'Reilly, 2017). Although self-presentation and lurking are very distinct behaviors (e.g., Chae, 2019; Tosun, 2012), these behaviors are not mutually exclusive (Tromholt, 2016). However, both types of behavior are omnipresent on SNSs and may have a different impact on well-being and body image. Therefore, the current review specifically identifies **specific types** of both self-presentation and lurking.

National culture may interfere with the ways of how individuals present themselves, or perceive others, online. Representing the core of national cultures, cultural values impacts individuals' communication behaviors (Gudykunst, 1997). As such, the impact of active self-presentation, as well as the impact of being exposed to self-presentations of others may depend on the national culture one finds oneself in. Therefore, national culture might be an important underlying mechanism to explain differences in the impact of self-presentation and lurking on well-being and body image. The concept of culture is ambiguous and has many definitions (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952; Tams, 2013). For the scope of this review, we adhere to Hofstede's definition of culture: "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" (2001, p. 21), and the accompanying dimensions of 'individualism-collectivism' and 'uncertainty avoidance'. 'Individualism-collectivism' and 'uncertainty avoidance' have both been applied to explain national cultural differences in SNS behaviors (e.g., Lee et al., 2013; Liu and Wang, 2018; Liu et al., 2019; Rui and Stefanone, 2013; Rosen et al., 2010; Wang and Liu, 2019). Individualistic- and collectivistic-oriented national cultures vary with respect to importance assigned to relationships with others (Gudykunst, 1997; Hofstede, 1980, 2001; Triandis, 1995). Generally, individualistic-oriented cultures mainly focus on the self, independently from the social context. Contrary, in collectivistic-oriented cultures people rely more on the relationships with others and are connected to their social context. The dimension 'uncertainty avoidance' refers to the extent to which individuals have (in)tolerance for uncertain and ambiguous situations, with national cultures high in uncertainty avoidance having more intolerance than national cultures low in uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980, 2001).

Although the notion of having a national culture is criticized (Baskerville, 2003; McSweeney, 2002), the objection that cultural diversity may vary within countries attained little empirical support. On the contrary, within-country regions aligned with the values of the national culture and allow for a comparison among national cultures (Minkov and Hofstede, 2011). Especially with newer forms of online communication, such as SNSs, the intertwinement of cultural dimensions and communication behaviors seems relevant. For example, national cultures are found to be of influence on decisions for self-presentation (Huang and Park, 2013; Kim and Papacharissi, 2003; Liu et al., 2019; Wang and Liu, 2019). However, the influence of cultural variability in this domain has not yet been systematically studied. Therefore, this systematic review aims to identify the underlying role of national culture in determining positive and negative relationships between self-presentations versus lurking and well-being and body image.

While most reviews mainly investigated the direct relationships between self-presentation or SNS use and well-being (Allen et al., 2014; Best et al., 2014; Desjarlais et al., 2015; Twomey and O'Reilly, 2017; Verduyn et al., 2017), it has been stressed that examining complex relationships may overcome inconsistent outcomes (Baker and Algorta, 2016). Within the social media environment, that is inseparable from peers and allows for continuous interaction, the social aspects seem to be a factor that could serve as a potential mechanism in determining the outcomes. Therefore, the current systematic review aims to further unravel possible moderators and mediators that may underlie the heterogeneous relationships.

In sum, our **Research Questions** are:

RQ1: To what extent are various types of self-presentation versus lurking related to (a) well-being and (b) body image?
RQ2: What is the role of cultural variability (i.e., individualism-collectivism and uncertainty avoidance) in the relationships between self-presentation versus lurking, and (a) well-being and (b) body image?
RQ3: What are important moderators and mediators in the relationships between self-presentation versus lurking, and (a) well-being and (b) body image?

## 2. Method

This section elaborates on the procedures for the selection of studies to be included in this systematic review, that is, the identification, screening, and eligibility procedures. This inclusion process is visualized in the flow chart in Fig. 1. In reporting this review, we largely followed the 27-item checklist of the PRISMA-statement (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses; Moher et al., 2009).

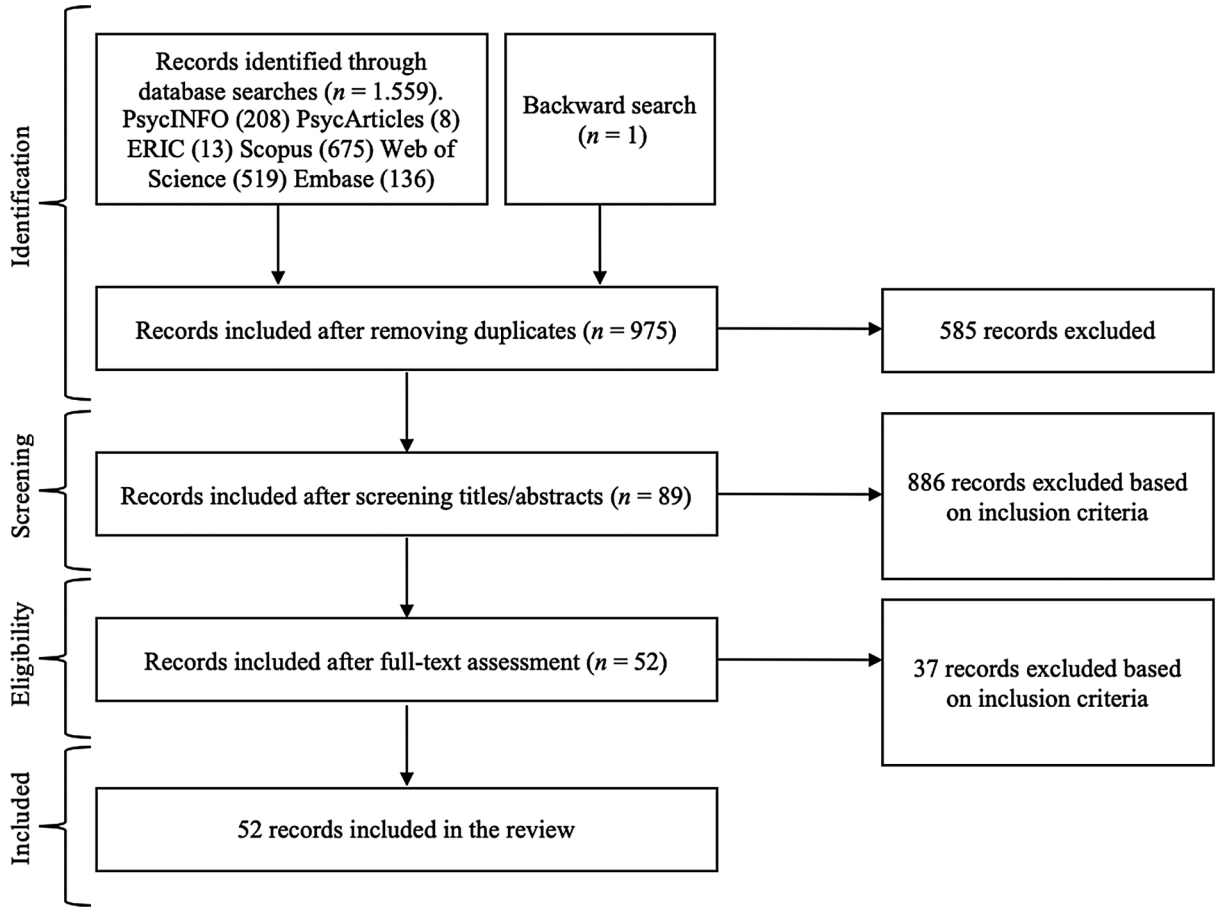


**Fig. 1.** Flow chart inclusion procedure of the systematic literature review.

### *2.1. Identification procedure*

The identification procedure started with identifying the number of articles that were potentially relevant for this review. The following databases were systematically searched: PsycINFO, PsychArticles, ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, Pubmed, and Embase. The search included Boolean operators with three components: 1. self-presentation or lurking, 2. well-being and body image, and 3. SNSs. Appendix A entails full details of the search string. The last search was completed on 9th of January 2018. After identifying the number of records retrieved via these database searches ($n$ = 1.559), all duplicates from the records retrieved were removed, resulting in a total of 974 unique records. Through a backward search (i.e., carefully checking references cited in eligible records) one study was included, resulting in 975 unique records.

### *2.2. Screening procedure*

The resulting 975 abstracts were screened to check whether the article matched the inclusion criteria. Appendix B contains the detailed coding scheme of the screening procedure. When in doubt, the full-text publications were analyzed. Main inclusion criteria were: 1) being a quantitative study, and 2) reporting on the relation between self-presentation(s) or lurking (as independent variables) on the one hand, and concepts related to body image and well-being (as dependent variables) on the other hand. In total, this assessment resulted in 89 unique publications being eligible for further analysis.[1] For those articles, full-text analyses were conducted.

[1] To check whether the coding scheme in this screening procedure was sufficient to indicate which abstracts should be included in the eligibility procedure, a second independent coder rated a random sample of 92 abstracts. This number was based on a formula for generating sample sizes that hold valid reliability estimates (Lacy & Riffe, 1996). The intercoder reliability yielded an agreement score of 93.5% and a sufficient Kalpha of 0.71 (i.e., > 0.67; cf. Krippendorff, 2004).

### 2.3. Eligibility procedure

A more detailed coding scheme was used to further assess whether the eligible publications ($n = 89$) should be included in the review. The detailed coding scheme is included in Appendix C. In this step, publications were only included if, according to the original authors, self-presentation or lurking was hypothesized to be an indicator of well-being or body image.

To give an overview, the coding scheme first reported on general publication characteristics, such as author names and year of publication. Then, specifics of the full article were coded, such as target group and study's country-of-origin. Based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions prevailing in specific countries, the countries in which studies were performed were identified as either individualistic- or collectivistic-oriented, and low or high in uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980, 2001; Hofstede Insights, 2018). Subsequently, self-presentation or lurking were coded if they were the study's independent variable(s) (IVs). Similarly, measures of well-being or body image were coded if they were the study's dependent variable(s) (DVs). Moreover, the designated article should report on at least one relationship between IVs and DVs of interest, and the reported self-presentation or lurking must take place on SNSs. Not meeting these criteria meant that the article had to be omitted.

After meeting the above criteria, the study was further coded in terms of the number of IVs, the number of DVs, and the original variable names. All IVs were further coded as comprising self-presentations or lurking. Similarly, the DVs of the study were coded as comprising either well-being or body image. Then, the outcomes of the study were reported for each relationship between an IV and a DV, including indications of the significance and direction (i.e., positive or negative) of the relation. If available, the effect size of the relationship and the control variables were also described. Then, it was described whether moderating or mediating factors were present. If this was the case, the outcomes, available effect sizes and/or control variables were also reported.

## 3. Results

In the following, the descriptive characteristics of the included publications ($n = 52$) are reported. Thereafter, categorization of self-presentation, lurking, and well-being is reported. Finally, results are systematically described per research question. Findings for the three research questions are synthesized separately for well-being and body image. Appendix D contains a numbered reference list of all publications included in this systematic review. Appendix E and F include complete overviews of the reported relationships from all included studies.

### 3.1. Study characteristics

In total, 52 peer-reviewed publications were identified for inclusion in this systematic review, comprising 55 relevant studies, sample sizes ranging from 42 to 2000 participants. Participants' age ranged from 12 to 75 years old. Twelve different countries were identified as country-of-origin, including Canada, China, and the USA. Countries were classified into Hofstede's dimensions of individualism-collectivism as well as uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede Insights, 2018), with 18 studies identified as being conducted in collectivistic environments, while 35 studies operated in individualistic environments. Additionally, 31 studies were identified as low in uncertainty avoidance and 22 high in uncertainty avoidance. Two studies were excluded for examination of RQ2, because the study's country-of-origin was not reported. Regarding the study design, 33 studies were cross-sectional, 11 studies had experimental designs, 9 studies included longitudinal components, and 2 studies conducted quantitative content analyses (see Appendix E and F for design per study).

### 3.2. Categorization of self-presentation and lurking variables

Self-presentation and lurking have been studied in numerous ways, have been operationalized in different ways, and were named differently. To align these variations, we categorized self-presentation forms based on previous research, which suggests that self-disclosure varies on at least five dimensions: breadth, intimacy, positive-negative, consciously intended disclosure, and honest disclosures (Wheeless, 1976; Wheeless and Grotz, 1976). Based on these dimensions, while also taking into account original conceptualizations and operationalizations of the publications included in this review, this review found five rudimentary categories to classify self-presentation: (1) breadth of self-presentation, (2) depth of self-presentation, (3) authentic self-presentation, (4) idealized self-presentation, and (5) negative self-presentation. Likewise, for lurking: (1) breadth of lurking at oneself, (2) breadth of lurking at others, (3) depth of lurking, (4) upward lurking at others, and (5) downward lurking at others. These categories are further defined below.

From the studies included in this review, those focusing on amount of self-presentation rather than specific content, were classified into the category *breadth of self-presentation* (e.g., number of selfies posted per week). When operationalizations put more emphasis on the content being shared, such as sharing emotions, these were categorized as *depth of self-presentation*. *Authentic self-presentations* represent presentations that align with offline features of an individual, also referred to as presenting their true-selves or honest selves. Then, *idealized self-presentations* refer to presentations that are digitally enhanced or idealized, whereas negative self-presentations refer to sharing negative events or presentations that downsize the individual.

Breadth of lurking at oneself and breadth of lurking at others refer to the amount of time that individuals spent on looking at either presentations of oneself or presentations of others. Depth of lurking refers to the content of the exposure, such as being exposed to emotional expressions online. Finally, upward and downward lurking at others represent whether the exposures are to people that are better off, or worse off than the individual, respectively.

### 3.3. Categorization of well-being variables

Well-being is generally described as a rather abstract term, that is difficult to operationalize due to the ongoing conceptualizations of its meaning (Best et al., 2014). Consequently, an abundance of well-being-related variables were used to operationalize different forms of well-being in the studies examined. Based on previous literature and this systematic review, well-being variables can be categorized into four (global) categories: (1) social well-being, (2) personal well-being, (3) subjective well-being, and (4) psychological well-being. Each will be described below.

Ad. 1. Social well-being is operationalized by concepts that refer to relationships with others, for example, the quality of (newly) established relationships and social support. Although social well-being overlaps with a dimension that is defined within psychological well-being (i.e., positive relations; Ryff, 1989), the current review categorized this dimension as a distinct category of well-being given the specific social nature of SNSs, where peers and relationships with others take center stage (cf. Desjarlais et al., 2015).

Ad. 2. Personal well-being relates to the overall evaluation that individuals have of oneself (e.g., self-esteem; cf. Rosenberg, 1965). Thus, how one sees oneself as a person.

Ad. 3. In addition to the overall evaluation of oneself, subjective well-being refers to specific cognitive and affective evaluations of individuals' lives (Diener, 2000). This category refers to the 'hedonic' view, reflecting affective 'pleasure and pain' states (Diener, 1984; Schreier, 2013).

Ad. 4. A distinct category is created for psychological well-being, which refers to positive psychological functioning (Ryff, 1989). While this category somewhat relates to subjective well-being, it is created to tap into the deeper meanings of life, such as meaningful existence and control. Psychological well-being relates to the 'eudaimonic' view, focusing on having a meaningful life (Diener, 1984; Schreier, 2013).

### 3.4. Relations between self-presentation, lurking, and well-being

RQ1a pertained to the relationships between various types of self-presentation, lurking, and well-being. Although numbers indicate that the majority of individuals use SNSs to lurk (Brandtzæg and Heim, 2011), lurking has been relatively understudied compared to the amount of studies examining (active) online self-presentation. Studies that do examine lurking, thus far, seem to primarily focus on the breadth of lurking and not so much on the specific content-types that one is exposed to. Detailed results of the relationships between self-presentation, lurking categories and well-being are reported below per well-being category. For studies that included types of self-presentation unable to fit into the specific categories aforementioned, results are described separately.

#### 3.4.1. Social well-being

Overall, the studies in this review found that the various types of self-presentation were related to elevations in social well-being. More specifically, the breadth of self-presentation, depth of self-presentation, authentic self-presentation, and, to some extent, idealized self-presentation were found to enhance social well-being[3,7,12,15,20,26,27,28,33,41,44,45,46,50,52]. In contrast, negative self-presentation did not (negatively) affect social well-being[37]. Furthermore, this review revealed that all types of lurking generally increased social well-being[1,12,27]. Hence, it seems that (actively) presenting oneself or (passively) lurking online increases social well-being. Also studies including mixtures of the various types of self-presentation indicated positive relationships with self-presentation and social well-being[16,24].

#### 3.4.2. Personal well-being

Generally, breadth of self-presentation is not related to personal well-being[36,41,47,51]. Depth of self-presentation decreased personal well-being[51]. For authentic self-presentation, both positive and insignificant results were reported[30,51]. Idealized self-presentations increased personal well-being[6,13,14,51]. No studies investigated negative self-presentations and personal well-being.

Individuals lurking at self-presentations of oneself systematically showed increased personal well-being[14,42], whereas lurking at others showed decreases in personal well-being[14,42,47]. One exception to the latter is that looking at group photos of others (versus single-person pictures) related positively to personal well-being[47].

#### 3.4.3. Subjective well-being

The majority of studies included in this systematic review, generally found mixed results – being either positive, negative or insignificant – for the breadth, depth, or idealized self-presentation on subjective well-being[2,5,8,12,18,20,22,25,26,32,33,40,43,47,48,49,52]. For authentic self-presentation increases in subjective well-being were found as well as insignificant results[15,18,38,45]. No decreases in subjective well-being were found for authentic self-presentation, whereas for negative self-presentation only decreases in subjective well-being were found[2,8]. Additionally, for self-presentation types that were not classified into one of the categories, we found that portraying either masculine and a combination of masculine and feminine characteristics increased subjective well-being[34,35].

As for lurking, the amount of lurking at others generally seemed to diminish subjective well-being[6,12,43], or left it unaffected[33,43,46]. No other lurking types were studied in relation to subjective well-being. Thus, results reveal that both negative self-presentation and lurking at others can decrease subjective well-being.

#### 3.4.4. Psychological well-being

The breadth and depth of self-presentation were the only types of self-presentation that have been examined in relation to psychological well-being in this review's studies. Both positive and insignificant results were found for the breadth of self-presentation[41]. Depth of self-presentation was found to increase psychological well-being[7]. None of the lurking-types were included as predictors of psychological well-being.

### 3.5. Cultural variability in relation to self-presentation, lurking, and well-being

The second aim of this review was to point out the role of cultural variability, in terms of individualism-collectivism and uncertainty avoidance, in determining the relationships between active self-presentation and lurking on SNSs, and well-being (RQ2a). Notably, studies performed in collectivistic-oriented countries mainly concentrated on *social* well-being, whereas individualistic-oriented countries also represented more individual levels of well-being (e.g., *psychological* well-being). Furthermore, the variation in self-presentation and lurking categories, that were included as study variables, is higher for individualistic- than collectivistic-oriented countries. This variation is also higher in countries low in uncertainty avoidance than countries high in uncertainty avoidance. Therefore, it was not always possible to make valid comparisons within and between the dimensions. In those cases, the next sections report that no conclusions could be drawn on the role of culture in the relation between types of self-presentation or lurking, and types of well-being.

#### 3.5.1. Social well-being

Studies in both individualistic- and collectivistic-oriented countries, as well as in countries high and low in uncertainty avoidance, generally showed similar (generally positive) relationships between breadth, depth, authentic, and idealized self-presentation and social well-being. For negative self-presentation, the included studies were only performed in individualistic countries that were low in uncertainty avoidance. Therefore, no comparisons could be made here between the cultural dimensions. Regarding lurking, only the breadth of lurking at others was included in studies performed in both individualistic- and collectivistic-oriented countries, yielding positive relationships with *social* well-being. No comparison could be made for the dimension of uncertainty avoidance regarding lurking.

#### 3.5.2. Personal well-being

Studies in individualistic-oriented countries as well as countries low in uncertainty avoidance indicated that personal well-being was unaffected by breadth of self-presentation[41,47,51]. Results for studies from countries that qualify as either collectivistic-oriented countries or high in uncertainty avoidance were mixed, showing both increased and insignificant results of breadth of self-presentation on personal well-being[36,40]. For two studies qualifying as individualistic (leaving no comparison on the individualism-collectivism dimension), one study from a country high in uncertainty avoidance showed a positive relationship between authentic self-presentation and personal well-being[30], whereas an insignificant relationship was found for the other country being low in uncertainty avoidance[51]. Similarly, one study high in uncertainty avoidance showed decreases in personal well-being[31], whereas increases in personal well-being were found for studies low in uncertainty avoidance[13,14,51]. Additionally, no comparisons between high and low uncertainty avoidance and individualism-collectivism could be made regarding depth, idealized, and negative self-presentation. Furthermore, most studies examining lurking were performed in an individualistic country that is also low in uncertainty avoidance. Only for breadth of lurking of others a comparison could be made, here results of a study performed in an individualistic country and in a collectivistic-oriented country both yielded increases in personal well-being.

#### 3.5.3. Subjective well-being

Distinctions could be made on the cultural dimensions for the breadth of self-presentation on subjective well-being. Although relationships between breadth of self-presentation were insignificant in individualistic-oriented countries[43,47], breadth of self-presentation primarily yielded increases in subjective well-being in collectivistic-oriented countries[19,25,49]. Similarly, for countries low in uncertainty avoidance, primarily insignificant results were found for breath of self-presentation and subjective well-being[43,47,52], whereas studies performed in countries high in uncertainty avoidance increased subjective well-being[12,20,25,40]. Thus, classification into individualism-collectivism and uncertainty avoidance can induce similar results.

Idealized self-presentations only resulted in insignificant relationships with subjective well-being in collectivistic-oriented countries[22,52], whereas studies in individualistic-oriented countries mainly increased subjective well-being[8,18,20,35]. For the dimension of uncertainty avoidance no such distinctions were detected. Results for depth and authentic self-presentation were mixed for both cultural dimensions (i.e., individualism-collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance), reporting increases or decreases in subjective well-being, or insignificant results, throughout the dimensions.

For breadth lurking at others studies performed in high uncertainty avoidance retrieve similar results as studies performed in a collectivistic-oriented country, both found decreases in subjective well-being[7,12]. No comparisons were possible for the other types of lurking and the dimensions of culture.

#### 3.5.4. Psychological well-being

Studies conducted in an individualistic setting, were also low in uncertainty avoidance, leaving a cultural comparison impossible at this stage.

### 3.6. Moderators and mediators for self-presentation, lurking, and well-being

RQ3a pertained to identifying possible moderators and mediators in the relationships between self-presentation or lurking and well-being, and findings hereto will be discussed next.

#### 3.6.1. Moderators

Nine studies included potential moderators of the effects of self-presentation, or lurking, on well-being. First, one study showed *gender* differences in that only for adolescent girls, breadth of self-presentation decreased subjective well-being[12]. However, gender did not influence the relation between breadth of self-presentation and social well-being[28]. In addition, scholars assessed the moderating role of gender and various individual differences, but found no support for their moderating role in the effect of lurking at others on subjective well-being[43].

Furthermore, *effortful control* was found to moderate the influence of breadth of lurking at others on personal well-being, such that those with low levels of effortful control experienced less personal well-being[6]. Additionally, individuals high in self-esteem had a weaker relationship for idealized self-presentation and subjective well-being, while this relationship was stronger for individuals with high levels of social trust[22]. Moreover, the association between various types of self-presentation and personal well-being was moderated by *mindfulness*; increased subjective well-being resulting from both depth and authentic self-presentation was higher for mindful individuals compared to less mindful individuals[51]. Then, those with higher scores on *stressful life events* had lower rates of subjective well-being when presenting themselves more online, as well as for presenting authentic or idealized selves[52]. Finally, personal well-being and subjective well-being increased for individuals high in *need for popularity* by viewing selfies frequently[47].

#### 3.6.2. Mediators

Fifteen studies reported on possible mediators, comprising 18 indirect relationships. Several of these studies reported *perceived social support* to mediate the relationship between active self-presentation and well-being outcomes[12,16,20,26,46]. These significant relationships were found for various well-being outcomes (such as subjective well-being well-being), and for various types of self-presentation (such as breadth of self-presentation, idealized self-presentation). Similar mediation effects were found for variables like perceived social closeness, social connectedness, positive feedback, bridging and bonding social capital, and depth of face-to-face disclosures, which underscores the important role of reinforcement by others[7,10,15,28,31,33]. Here, the general line suggests that peers have an important role in determining outcomes.

In addition, some other important mediators were found: *Stress* mediated the effect of authentic self-presentation on social well-being[15]. Furthermore, *rumination* was shown to fully mediate the connection between authentic online self-presentation and subjective well-being[46]. Regarding lurking, *envy* was found to mediate the relationship between lurking at Facebook and subjective well-being[43]. Finally, the relation between lurking at others or lurking at individual or group selfies was mediated by *self-esteem*[6,47]. In sum, the identified mediators primarily apply to social aspects that mediate the relationships between self-presentation and well-being dimensions.

### 3.7. Relations between self-presentation, lurking, and body image

Following the findings for well-being in RQ1a, for RQ1b, this systematic review distinguished relationships between active self-presentations lurking, and *body image*. Not many studies have investigated how self-presentation or lurking are related to perceptions of body image. After screening and coding the publications for our review, only seven studies on body image were identified. There were no studies conducted at the time of data-collection for this review that examined the relationship of authentic self-presentation and negative self-presentation on body image, and for lurking, no studies to date have examined the breadth of lurking at oneself or others, or depth of lurking. Hence, not all categories of self-presentation or lurking were covered in studying their relation with body image. Detailed results of the studies including body image are reported below.

Some studies found that higher amounts of online self-presentation increased body image concerns, in terms of more *body dissatisfaction*[9,29]. Furthermore, breadth of self-presentation online is found to increase emphasis on one's appearance[39]. More self-presentation is not related to disordered eating symptomatology[9]. Likewise, depth of self-presentation was not directly related to eating symptomatology. However, increased weight and shape concerns were found through higher in-depth self-presentation[17].

Regarding online lurking at others, results seem to be mixed. Although studies have primarily found that upward lurking decreased appearance and body satisfaction[21,23], an insignificant relationship with body image was also found[11]. In contrast, downward lurking at others increased appearance satisfaction[21].

Related to RQ1b, our review showed a recent trend towards investigating visual content: Six of eight studies examined visual forms of self-presentation or lurking, like selfie-sharing[9,11,21,23,29,39]. Moreover, the first study in this review focusing on body image originates from 2015, which might indicate that SNS only recently became more oriented on physical appearances. Additionally, no longitudinal studies were found in our selection for this review that examined the influence of self-presentation, or lurking, on body image over time.

### 3.8. Cultural variability in relations between self-presentation, lurking, and body image

For body image (RQ2b), this systematic review collected differences between individualistic- vs. collectivistic-oriented countries

and uncertainty avoidance in their relationships between self-presentation, vs. lurking, and *body image*. Only one study was performed in a collectivistic-oriented country,[39] whereas the remaining six studies were conducted in individualistic-oriented countries. With different outcome measures for these studies, no valid comparison in terms of individualism-collectivism was possible. However, the study performed in a collectivistic-oriented country indicated that more engagement in online self-presentation is related to more positive feelings towards one's appearance[39], whereas for engagement in online self-presentation performed in individualistic-oriented countries, negative feelings towards one's body were found[9,29].

Regarding the dimension of uncertainty avoidance, a distinction was found for upward lurking at self-presentations of others: A study performed in a country low in uncertainty avoidance showed no relationship between lurking and body image[11], whereas a study performed in a country high in uncertainty avoidance indicated that lurking decreased body image[23]. No other valid comparisons could be made for countries low or high in uncertainty avoidance.

### 3.9. Moderators and mediators for self-presentation, lurking, and body image

RQ3b refers to identifying important mediators or moderators in the associations between active self-presentation or lurking, and *body image* outcomes. No indirect relations were systematically pointed out in the studies for this review. Yet, six significant moderation variables were reported. First, individuals with high levels (vs. low) of pre-dispositional body satisfaction increased body image when exposed to upward lurking at others[11]. Second, the positive association between depth of self-presentation and concerns regarding shape, weight and eating held more strongly for individuals receiving extreme (vs. less) negatively tinged comments[17]. Third, the generally negative effect of upward lurking to others on body image accounted more for those engaging in social comparison[23]. Moreover, variations in appearance comparison orientation, experiencing appearance schemas, and self-esteem were each found to moderate the relation between both upward and downward lurking at others and body image, such that those more sensitive in terms of comparing oneself more, experiencing less appearance schemas and lower self-esteem, reported higher appearance satisfaction for upward lurking at others[21]. Again, the important role of others (peers) is highlighted in these studies, in particular in determining the impact of self-presentation or lurking on body image, comparing oneself with others seems to influence the result.

## 4. Discussion

This section summarizes the main findings of this systematic review and discusses them in perspective of the extant theorizing. Thereafter, the strengths and limitations of the review are pointed out. Finally, future research and implications are discussed.

### 4.1. Summary of main findings

This paper systematically reviewed 55 studies (from 52 journal publications) to present an overview of the extent to which active self-presentation, versus passive lurking, enhances or diminishes individuals' well-being and body image. First, the key concepts used in the studies appeared to be conceptualized and operationalized in numerous ways. Hence, we categorized types of self-presentation, lurking and well-being in order to be able to provide a systematic overview. Five types of active self-presentation were derived: 1) breadth of self-presentation, 2) depth of self-presentation, 3) authentic self-presentation, 4) idealized self-presentation, and 5) negative self-presentation). Also, five types of lurking: 1) breadth of lurking at oneself, 2) breadth of lurking at others, 3) depth of lurking, 4) upward lurking, and 5) downward lurking. Additionally, four types of well-being were categorized: 1) social well-being, 2) personal well-being, 3) subjective well-being and 4) psychological well-being. Overall, this review found that for well-being, a vast body of research has examined the various categories of self-presentations, whereas lurking was relatively understudied.

Second, findings of this systematic review indicated that the relationships between categories of self-presentation, versus lurking, and well-being categories were mixed. Both online self-presentation and lurking can either be beneficial or harmful for well-being. Even tough results are mixed, in general, active self-presentation online seems to benefit (rather than diminish) all types of well-being, or leaves it unaffected. In contrast, lurking generally seems to decrease personal well-being. Hence, our findings for active self-presentation align more with the positive expectations from the hyperpersonal model of online communication (Walther, 1996), whereas the negative outcomes for lurking at others are more in line with the Objective Self-Awareness theory (Duval and Wicklund, 1972; Fejfar and Hoyle, 2000; Gonzales and Hancock, 2011). However, some crucial differences were also detected within and between self-presentation and lurking categories, which appear highly useful in identifying enhancing or diminishing relations with well-being, given the mixed results.

Within the various categories of self-presentation and lurking, it has been found that negative self-presentation decreased subjective well-being, whereas authentic self-presentation rather seemed to increase subjective well-being. Results also revealed that a specific self-presentation type can positively influence a specific well-being category, but can also induce negative influences on another well-being category. Regarding lurking, lurking at self-presentation of oneself increased well-being, whereas lurking at others decreased well-being. These findings align with conclusions of Twomey and O'Reilly (2017) in that determining specific types of self-presentation is crucial for explaining its potential impact. However, we did not find such clear pathways as described by Twomey and O'Reilly (2017) because we believe that such pathways become more ambiguous when including a broader range of well-being outcomes and self-presentation measures, like we did in this review.

Between self-presentation and lurking, clear differences in their relation to well-being were found. For example, while passively lurking at others generally decreased subjective well-being, active self-presentation mainly increased this type of well-being or left it

unaffected. Hence, this systematic review indicated differences between active and passive behaviors online, aligning with results from Verduyn et al. (2017). However, similarities between self-presentation and lurking in their relation to well-being also occurred, depending on the specific types. For example, disclosing negative information as well as breadth of lurking at others on SNSs decreased subjective well-being. Thus, categorization of specific self-presentation and lurking behaviors, as well as specifying outcome-categories, appears vital in determining the valence of possible outcomes.

For body image, findings largely indicated negative outcomes. Such findings of negative body image resulting from online self-presentation and lurking could be expected from the Objective Self-Awareness theory (Duval and Wicklund, 1972). This theory emphasizes that focusing exclusively on the self automatically triggers comparisons with (ideal-body) standards prevailing in (a mediated) society (cf. Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997). Possibly, such automatic comparisons with society's body ideals are activated upon posting or seeing body-related self-presentations that focus on outward appearances. Consequently, if one feels not meeting the standards of beauty ideals, this likely results in experiencing negative body perceptions. Following Walther's (1996) hyperpersonal model, indicating that the affordances of SNSs allow for selective self-presentation, active self-presentation allows highlighting one's positive aspects (Gonzales and Hancock, 2008). However, no positive findings for body image resulting from self-presentation or lurking were found in the studies for this review. Furthermore, results suggest that especially visual forms of self-presentations should be considered when examining the relationship between active self-presentation and passive lurking to self-presentations and body image.

#### 4.1.1. Cultural variability

Inspecting the role of cultural variability in the studies for the current review, some differences and similarities were found for the cultural dimensions of individualism-collectivism and uncertainty avoidance. First, to a certain extent the direction of outcomes overlaps for dimensions of individualism-collectivism and uncertainty avoidance. Classification into collectivism can lead to similar results as classification into high uncertainty avoidance. However, such overlap was not always clear stressing the importance to include various dimensions of culture. Second, research into self-presentation or lurking and well-being seems to occur more often in individualistic-oriented countries and included a wider variety of variables than in collectivistic-oriented countries. Third, from our findings, the type of well-being variables studied seems institutionalized within the cultural dimension from the study's country-of-origin: Studies performed in collectivistic-oriented countries typically focused on well-being outcomes related to how individuals interact with their peers (i.e., social well-being). In contrast, studies originating from individualistic-oriented countries examined a broader range of possible well-being outcome variables, including a stronger focus on individual levels of well-being (e.g., personal well-being). This aligns with the basic ideas of cultural variability in indicating that in collectivistic-oriented countries individuals perceive themselves as being interdependent of others, while in individualistic-oriented countries individuals perceive themselves as independent and distinct from others (Gudykunst, 1997; Hofstede, 1980, 2001; Triandis, 1995).

Some indications exist that the specific type of self-presentation may affect well-being differently (in opposite directions) depending on the cultural dimension of the study's country-of-origin (i.e., for both individualism-collectivism and uncertainty avoidance). However, more research is needed to make adequate comparisons: Because many categories for self-presentation, lurking and well-being were missing for individualistic- and collectivistic-oriented countries and countries low and high in uncertainty avoidance in the studies in this review.

Regarding body image, whereas no conclusions can be drawn for the role of individualism-collectivism regarding the influence of self-presentation or lurking on *body image*, uncertainty avoidance appeared a mechanism in explaining different results for the relationship between lurking at others and body image. Again, as for well-being, the body image-related outcomes that were subject to studies in individualistic- or collectivistic-oriented countries, are seemingly different. Individualistic countries seemed to primarily focus on negative body image outcomes, whereas collectivistic countries predominantly included positively-framed outcomes. These findings from our systematic review underpin the need for more research to understand how cultural variability relates to self-presentation and to individuals' cognitive and affective perceptions about oneself and one's life. Previous research identified the importance of cultural variability in the way individuals present themselves (e.g., Huang and Park, 2013; Wang and Liu, 2019). However, how differences in self-presentation impact individuals' well-being and body image, and more specifically, how cultural variability impacts the scope of the research could not yet be fully systematically studied.

#### 4.1.2. Mediators and moderators

Several relevant mediators and moderators were found to influence the how and when individuals' self-presentation or lurking may impact well-being or body image. A variety of significant mediating effects emphasize the social context, such as social support and social connectedness. This finding corresponds with the hyperpersonal model, highlighting that the influence of self-presentations can be established through reinforcement of peers (Walther et al., 2011). Our systematic review supports such importance of peers in various studies that indicated their influence on well-being and body image. In sum, the identified moderators and mediators primarily apply to social aspects. Yet, some individual differences in, for example, self-esteem and pre-dispositional body satisfaction were also found to influence the relationship between various forms of self-presentation and well-being and body image.

### 4.2. Strengths and limitations

Our study positions itself in the relatively new field of research on online self-presentations and visual depictions of the self. The oldest article generated for this systematic review was published in 2011, illustrating the novelty of this topic. The possible impact of self-presentation and lurking on both well-being and body image measures was not systematically mapped thus far. This review has

important theoretical implications. Our overview highlights that self-presentation consists of many facets, and that examining self-presentation or lurking in general does not justify the complexity, nor can it further explain, the impact on well-being and body image. From the divergent patterns found in this review, our findings imply that integrating several theories (see 4.3), is needed to fully understand the complexity of the relationships between self-presentation, lurking, well-being and body image. Furthermore, this review highlighted the importance of specifying mechanisms underlying the aforementioned relationships. Doing so may also add to adequately address moral panics in society.

Another important asset of this review in presenting a full overview of the current state of the art, is specifying the various types of self-presentation and online lurking that have been studied thus far. However, the wide variety of self-presentation types (ranging from authentic to idealized self-presentations) in combination with the wide array of outcome variables, made it difficult to compare the studies' findings. Though, from this review it becomes apparent that clear conceptualization and operationalization of self-presentation and lurking is necessary, to understand the direction of possible outcomes.

Generalizability of findings is limited, despite large pooled sample sizes in several studies in the current review; the majority of participants were female college students. Thus, the current findings especially pertain to young adults in emerging adulthood (cf. Arnett, 2000; Nelson et al., 2008), in particular females. Interestingly, this developmental stage is characterized by identity exploration (Arnett, 2000), and online self-presentation lends itself well for doing so. Furthermore, most studies were limited to Facebook use (compared to other SNS). Another limitation concerns the operationalization of variables. Cultural variability was operationalized as national culture according to Hofstede's framework (1980; 2001). National culture was assessed based on the country-of-origin where the study took place. However, whether participants within the study actually live by the values attributed to the national culture remains unknown.

Finally, this study addressed self-presentation and lurking in their role as predictor variables, with well-being and body image as outcome variables, whereas results are reported as relationships (i.e., inherently bidirectional, not causal). Therefore, reported relationships can in principle be reversible. More specifically, feelings about one's own body or well-being in general could also motivate individuals to engage in self-presentation or lurking (cf. Veldhuis et al., 2018). In that case, feelings about oneself may as well serve as input variables and guide online behaviors.

### *4.3. Future research and implications*

The results of our systematic literature review clearly show that the complexity of relationships in determining the impact on well-being and body image cannot be covered when self-presentation and lurking is studied in terms of general behavior, as was also suggested by Twomey and O'Reilly (2017). Therefore, specific types of active and passive self-presentational behavior should be clearly distinguished. Moreover, since the types of self-presentation and lurking on SNSs were found to differentially influence cognitive and affective states, each type of self-presentation should be examined separately, instead of combining several types resulting in second-order effects.

Theoretically, this review has shown great variation in types of self-presentation vs. lurking and outcome variables. From the divergent patterns found in this review, our findings imply that integrating various theories is needed to fully understand the complexity of the relationships between self-presentation, lurking, well-being and body image. In addition to integrating the hyperpersonal model (Walther, 1996) and Objective Self-Awareness theory (Duval and Wicklund, 1972), also integrating others such as the Technoself (Luppicini, 2013), Social Comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), Social Exchange theory (Emerson, 1976), the Proteus Effect (Yee and Bailenson, 2007), and Communication Privacy Management theory (CPM; Petronio, 2002), would allow a more coherent picture of both positive and negative outcomes and its possible important mechanisms.

Further research is also needed into the moderating and mediating mechanisms that underlie the relationship between self-presentation versus lurking and well-being and body image, as shown in this review: the role of culture, individual differences, and peer influence. Moreover, additional variables such as perceived realism (e.g., Vogels, 2019) and wishful identification (e.g., cf. Konijn et al., 2007; Von Feilitzen and Linné, 1975) might also be fruitful for examining the relationship between self-presentation, lurking, well-being and body image. Thus far, it is unclear whether the aforementioned mechanisms act simultaneously, or operate separately in influencing the proposed relationships between (various types of) online self-presentation and lurking on well-being and body image. Future research could, for example, explore the amount of variance explained by cultural variability and peer feedback to unravel their impact. Importantly, as touched upon in the above, studying more SNS-platforms than just Facebook as well as widening the target groups (i.e., not just college students) in future studies is warranted. Moreover, the study of visual online self-presentations clearly increased from 2015 onwards and sophistication of graphical options for self-presentation steadily increased ever since. This calls for an updated review specifically targeting visual online self-presentation.

The studies in our systematic literature review mainly applied cross-sectional designs, which provide valuable information about the associations between self-presentation versus lurking and well-being and body image. However, this domain obviously also calls for applying longitudinal and experimental designs. More specifically, longitudinal studies are required to identify possible reciprocal relationships, long-term dynamic change in these relationships, and lasting consequences. Experimental research is needed to further identify causal relationships.

Our findings further provide useful insights for clinicians and pediatricians. In particular, those who primarily lurk at others online may experience undesirable consequences such as decreased well-being, likely further at risk when self-esteem is low, as indicated by our results. In contrast, other types of lurking and in particular authentic self-presentations can increase well-being. Perhaps, interventions could be designed to target individuals experiencing undesirable outcomes in changing their online behaviors and seeking the positive strengths of active presentation of one's positive sides. However, both active contributors and passive

observers should be considered when it comes to (un)desired effects. Especially with the rise of appearance-focused SNS like Instagram and technological affordances so easily at hand, any user is subject to (idealized) presentations. Raising awareness of both sides of the same coin and specifying where possible risks and benefits reside, is an important task for future research.

To conclude, this review tapped into the complexity of how self-presentation, in comparison to lurking, may affect well-being and body image. Specific types of self-presentation (e.g., idealized self-presentation) vs. specific types of lurking (e.g., breadth of lurking at others) appeared important differentiating factors in determining the outcomes. Moreover, additional mechanisms may interfere in the relationship between types of self-presentation versus lurking and possible outcomes. For example, our review highlighted the role of culture and social context as important moderators. Thus, the apparent ease of presenting oneself online and watching others, comes with evident complexity to grasp its impact.

## Disclosure statement

There is no potential conflict of interest to be reported.

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## Appendix A

The search string was constructed as follows: 1. ("self-present*" OR "identity" OR "self present*" OR "self-promot*" OR "self-disclos*" OR "real self" OR "ideal self" OR "false self" OR "true self" OR "authentic self" OR "impression" OR "selfie*" OR "lurk*" OR "passiv* us*") AND 2. ("well-being" OR "wellbeing" OR "well being" OR "mental health" OR "life satisfaction" OR "quality of life" OR "happiness" OR "social capital" OR "social support" OR "social isolation" OR "self-esteem" OR "self esteem" OR "depress*" OR "stress" OR "anxiety" OR "body image" OR "body dissatisfaction" OR "body satisfaction" OR "body appreciation" OR "self-objectification" OR "appearance evaluation" OR "appearance satisfaction" OR "disordered eating" OR "eating disorder*" OR "appearance comparison" OR "plastic surgery" OR "cosmetic surgery" OR "social comparison" OR "positive affect" OR "negative affect" OR "envy" OR "optimism" OR "satisfaction" OR "self-acceptance" OR "positive relations" OR "autonomy" OR "environmental mastery" OR "purpose in life" OR "personal growth") AND 3. ("Facebook*" OR "SNS" OR "Instagram" OR "online social network*" OR "social network* site*" OR "social media" OR "snapchat" OR "twitter" OR "Pinterest" OR "YouTube" OR "Tumblr").

## Appendix B

*Coding scheme of the screening procedure*

*Description of concepts*

**Well-being and body-image**. Well-being, mental health, life satisfaction, quality of life, happiness, social capital, social support, social isolation, self-esteem, depression, stress, anxiety (NOT death anxiety), body image, body dissatisfaction, body satisfaction, body appreciation, self-objectification, appearance evaluation, appearance satisfaction, disordered eating, eating disorder, appearance comparison, plastic surgery, cosmetic surgery, social comparison, positive affect, negative affect, envy, optimism, satisfaction, self-acceptance, positive relations, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, personal growth.*

*Also related concepts of well-being or body image are considered such as social closeness and appearance evaluation.

**Self-presentation vs. lurking.** Self-presentation, identity, self-promotion, self-disclosure, real self, ideal self, false self, true self, authentic self, impression (management), selfie, lurking, passive use.

*Procedure*

Per abstract fill in the excel sheet for column "round 1" with the codes below (0, 1, 2; see codes below). Also indicate in the column 'reason' the code that explains the reason for exclusion. For the articles that are coded as 'in doubt' the full text should be analyzed to determine whether the article should be included or excluded.

*Codes*

0 = Based on abstract excluded (does not meet the inclusion criteria for the screening procedure; please see exclusion criteria below)

1 = Based on abstract included (abstract meets the inclusion criteria of the screening procedure; please find inclusion criteria below).

2 = In doubt (full text analysis). When the coder is in doubt whether the abstract meets the inclusion criteria of the coding procedure full text is analyzed based on the same criteria listed below underneath point three of the reasons to exclude abstracts (see

paragraph reasons for in doubt for a few examples).

**Exclusion Criteria (code 0)**

1. Duplicate.
2. Does not meet inclusion criteria of the manuscript (i.e., 1. Study is qualitative (in-depth interviews, ethnography, thematic analysis, field analysis, etc.); 2. Not peer-reviewed (only established in the eligibility procedure); 3. Meta-analysis; 4. Literature review; 5; Book; 6. Chapter in a book; 7. Dissertation; 8. Proceedings (bundle of all contributions to the proceedings); 9. Issue; 10. Editorial; 11. Conference paper).
3. Study does not meet inclusion criteria of participants. As there were no restrictions regarding participants, no studies can be excluded based on this criterion.
4. Does not meet the inclusion criteria of self-presentation (vs. 'lurking'). 4.1 = No form of self-presentation or passive exposure to their own self-presentations or self-presentation of others is identified. 4.2 = Self-presentation or lurking is the outcome variable in this study.
5. Does not meet inclusion criteria regarding correlations, influences and effects of self-presentation (vs. 'lurking'). 5.1 = No well-being or body image measures are identified in the study. 5.2 = Well-being or body image is seen as the predictor variable in this study. 5.3 = There is no relationship between self-presentation and/or lurking and well-being and/or body image no well-being/ self-image.

For example, a study that does not meet the inclusion criteria because it is a *meta*-analysis receives the code 2.3.

**Inclusion Criteria (code 1)**

1. Manuscript. Quantitative studies, in peer-reviewed journals in English (peer-reviewed will be analyzed for eligibility procedure). Studies should not be doubled in the analyses therefore meta-analyses and previous literature reviews are not considered. No restrictions for year of publication (because of the search for SNS, all articles should include SNS).
2. Participants: No restrictions. Target group of the study will be reported in the full article coding procedure.
3. Self-presentation (vs. 'lurking'). The studies that are included in the review should include a form of self-presentation or self-promotion (or related concepts as identity, impression management, selfie) of an **individual** on SNSs or passive exposure to self-presentations (own/others) as independent variable.
4. Correlations, influences and effects of self-presentation (vs. 'lurking'). Studies should include concepts that are related to self-image and well-being (self-image and well-being is applied with a rather broad definition as it can be measured by a variety of variables; e.g., stress, happiness, body image). Only titles and abstracts that hypothesize well-being/self-image as outcome variables and self-presentation (or lurking) as predictor are included for further examination.

**Reasons for in doubt (code = 2)**

1. When the abstract is unclear about what the independent variable and what de dependent variables were. For example, when both the component self-presentation and well-being are mentioned as variables, but it is unclear if self-presentation is seen as the independent variable, or whether well-being is seen as the independent variable.
2. It is unclear from the abstract whether a relationship between self-presentation (vs. lurking) is tested in the study. In this case both components self-presentation (vs. lurking) and a form of well-being or body image are present, however, in the abstract it is not reported whether a relationship between those two components is tested.
3. From the abstract it is unclear whether the independent variable consists of either active self-presentation of passive exposure to self-presentations. For example, many studies may investigate SNS use of Facebook use. Based on this information it cannot be established whether they measure Facebook use for example by items indicated passive use, or active self-presentations. For these studies the method section is analyzed to indicate if such a distinction could be made. If the study for example only measures time spend on SNSs (which does not allow for a distinction between active and passive use), the study is excluded.
4. No abstract available

## Appendix C

*Coding scheme of the eligibility procedure*

If a study consists of multiple studies code the study as follows: AUTHOR_YEAR(*study*). Also report as separate study if two or more countries are compared. Report all questions per study.

**1. Full text code** (*Name of the file of the article as given by first coder*)
< fill in >
**2. Authors** (*Names of all the authors of the article, separated by commas*)
< fill in >
**3. Year** (*Year of publication*)
< fill in >

**4. Title (***Full title of the article*)
< fill in >
**5. Is the full article available in English?**
No = 0 → End of coding procedure
Yes = 1 → Continue coding procedure
**6. Is the full article published in a peer-reviewed journal?**
No = 0 → End of coding procedure
Yes = 1 → Continue coding procedure
**7. Journal** (Complete title of the journal in which the article is published)
< fill in >
**8. How many studies does the article include*?**
< fill in >
*If reported on different countries report as different studies.
**9. Report on which study you are now reporting**.
< fill in >
**10. What is the design of the study?**
Cross-sectional = 1
Longitudinal = 2
Experimental = 3
Content analysis (quantitative) = 4
No quantitative approach = 0 → End of coding procedure
**11. What is the sample size of the study?**
< fill in>
**12. What is the target group of the study?**
< fill in >
**13. What is the mean age of the participants?**
< fill in >
**14. What is the percentage of females in the study?**
< fill in >
**15. What is the ethnicity of the sample?**
< fill in >
**16. In which country did the study take place*?**
< fill in >
*if the study took place in more than one country you report all countries.
**17. Does the study report on or test for either a form of self-presentation or passive exposure to presentations (own/others) on social media** (i.e., independent variable; IV)*?
No = 0 → End of coding procedure
Yes = 1 → Continue coding procedure
* If the measures in the study cannot be distinct into an active form of self-presentation or passive exposure to presentations **(own/others)** on social media, then do not report on that variable.
**18. Does the study report on or test for at least one of the dependent variables of interest?** (i.e., correlations, influences and effects of self-presentations: studies should include concepts that are related to body image and well-being). A mediator is also included as dependent variable as there should be a direct effect of the IV to the DV.
No = 0 → End of coding procedure
Yes = 1 → Continue coding procedure
**19. Does the study report on or test for the direct relation between on at least one of the independent and dependent variables of interest in the study?**
No = 0 → End of coding procedure
Yes = 1 → Continue coding procedure
No, but = 2 → Continue coding procedure. Here only articles that provide information for RQ3 are included. Thus, articles that do not include a direct relation between independent variable and dependent variable, but do account for a mediation effect of the independent variable and dependent variable are included.
**20. Report number of independent variables (IV's) that include either a form of self-presentation or passive exposure to presentations (own/others) on social media**.
< fill in >

- For example, if 2 IV's are present you report as: 2.
- If the study only measures time spent on SNSs, a distinction between active participation and passive use cannot be made and are therefore excluded for study purposes.
- To establish the number of IV's you critically read the theory, hypothesis, and conceptual model to establish what are IV's, then go through the measures, go through all independent variables of the study and determine what variables can be accounted for as

active self-presentation of passive exposure to presentations. If a variable for example as with Gonzales and Hancock (2011), includes multiple conditions, go through the different conditions and report as whether they are active or passive.

**21. Name the independent variable(s) as given by the authors**.
< fill in >
**22. On what social networking site does the self-presentation or lurking take place*?**
< fill in >
If not on SNS = 0 → End of coding procedure
*For multiple SNSs report as SNS.
**23. Report how many independent variables are a form of active self-presentation**.
< fill in >
**24. Report how many independent variables are passive exposure to presentations (own/others) on social media.** For experiments report on different aspects (conditions) within the variable. Read entire article carefully: The method might suggest that there are for example two variables, however, they might be combined in the analyses. Report on the variables that are used to test hypotheses or analyze RQ's.
< fill in >
**25. What type of self-presentation or passive exposure to presentations (own/others) is it?**
Visual (e.g., photo's / video's / Gif's) = 1
Non visual (e.g., text) = 2
Both/Unclear = 3
**26. Report number of dependent variables that include either a form of *body image or well-being*.** Variables that are included as mediation should also be coded as dependent variable (as there should always be a direct effect from the IV to the mediator). If a variable is measured with various subscales code that variable as 1 and report the effects of different subscales in question 31.
< fill in >
**27. Name the dependent variable as given by the authors**.
< fill in >
**28. Report how many dependent variables are a form of body image***.
< fill in >
*Body image: body image, body dissatisfaction, body satisfaction, body appreciation, self-objectification, appearance evaluation, appearance satisfaction, eating disorder, appearance comparison, plastic surgery, cosmetic surgery, social comparison
**29. Report how many dependent variables are a form of well-being image**.
< fill in >
*Well-being: well-being, mental health, life satisfaction, quality of life, happiness, social capital, social support, social isolation, self-esteem, depression, stress, anxiety, positive affect, negative affect, envy, optimism, satisfaction, self-acceptance, positive relations, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, personal growth.
**30. Report the outcomes of all relationships that are addressed in the article between IV's and DV's. Report whether significant and report whether the influence/relationship/effect is positive or negative.**
< fill in >
**31. If available report on the effect sizes for each significant relationship**.
< fill in >
**32. Report control variables per relationship**.
< fill in >
**33. Is the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable moderated or mediated by another variable*?**
No = 0 (end of coding procedure)
Yes = 1 (continue coding procedure)
*When both mediation and moderation are present continue coding scheme. If mediation continue to Q35, in case of moderation skip to Q39.
**34. Report the number of mediation hypotheses**.
< fill in >
**35. Report the effects of mediation**.
< fill in >
**36. If available report on the effect sizes for each significant relationship ($p < .05$)**.
< fill in >
**37. Report control variables per relationship**.
< fill in >
**38. Report the number of moderation hypotheses**.
< fill in >
**39. Report the effects of moderation**.
< fill in >

**40. If available report on the effect sizes for each significant relationship ($p < .05$).**

< fill in >

**41. Report control variables per relationship**.

< fill in >

## Appendix D

Table 1. Numbered Reference List of Publications Included in the Systematic Literature Review


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## Appendix E

Table 2
Type of self-presentations, well-being measures and the reported relationships.

| Authors | Design[a] | Cultural dimensions[b] | Self-presentation type | Well-being measures[c] | Reported relations<br>→ Increase<br>← Decrease<br>∅ Insignificant | Mediators<br>⊕ Significant<br>∅ Insignificant | Moderators<br>⊕ Significant<br>∅ Insignificant |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bae et al. (2013) | E | I, L | Depth of Lurking | Social well-being | → | | |
| Bevan et al. (2014) | Cr | I, L | Idealized self-presentation<br>Negative self-presentation | Subjective well-being<br>Subjective well-being | ∅ (stress)<br>∅ (life satisfaction)<br>→ (stress)<br>← (life satisfaction) | | |
| Bohn et al. (2014) | Co | - | Breadth of self-presentation | Social well-being | → | | |
| Brandtzæg (2012) | L | I, L | Breadth of lurking at others | Subjective well-being | → | | |
| Ceglarek & Ward (2016) | Cr | I, L | Depth of self-presentation | Subjective well-being | ∅ (anxiety, paranoia, sensitivity, depression);<br>→ (hostility);<br>← (loneliness) | | |
| Chen et al. (2016) | Cr | C, L | Breadth of lurking at others | Personal well-being<br>Subjective well-being | ←<br>← | ⊕ Self-esteem | ∅ Effortful control |
| Chen & Li (2017) | L | C, L | Depth of self-presentation | Social well-being<br>Psychological well-being | →<br>→ | ⊕ Bridging social<br>⊕ bonding social capital | |
| Choi & Toma (2014) | L | I, L | Idealized self-presentation<br>Negative self-presentation | Subjective well-being<br>Subjective well-being | →<br>← | | |
| Desjarlais & Joseph (2017) | Cr | I, L | Depth of self-presentation | Social well-being | ∅ | ⊕ Depth of FtF-disclosure | |
| Frison & Eggermont (2016) | L | I, H | Breadth of lurking at others<br>Breadth of self-presentation | Subjective well-being<br>Social well-being<br>Subjective well-being<br>Social well-being | ←<br>→<br>←<br>→ | ⊕ Social support | ⊕ Gender |
| Gentile, et al. (2012) | E | I, L | Idealized self-presentation | Personal well-being | → | | |
| Gonzales, & Hancock (2011) | E | I, L | Breadth of lurking at oneself<br>Breadth of lurking at others<br>Idealized self-presentation | Personal well-being | →<br>←<br>→ | | |
| Grieve & Watkinson (2016) | Cr | I, H | Authentic self-presentation | Social well-being<br>Subjective well-being | →<br>← (stress);<br>∅ (life satisfaction, depression, anxiety) | ∅ Social connectedness<br>⊕ Stress | |
| Huang (2016) | Cr | C, H | Various types of self-presentation | Social well-being | → | ⊕ Social Support | |
| Jackson (2017) | Cr | I, L | Authentic self-presentation<br>Idealized self-presentation | Subjective well-being<br>Subjective well-being | ∅ (positive affect)<br>← (negative affect)<br>→ (positive affect)<br>→ (negative affect) | | |
| Kim. J. et al. (2014) | Cr | C, H | Breadth of self-presentation | Subjective well-being | → | | |
| Kim, J. & Lee (2011) | Cr | I, L | Idealized self-presentation<br>Authentic self-presentation | Social well-being<br>Subjective well-being<br>Social well-being<br>Subjective well-being | ∅<br>→<br>→<br>∅ | ∅ Perceived social support | |
| Kim Y. & Min (2014) | Cr | C, H | Idealized self-presentation | Subjective well-being | ∅ | | ⊕ Self-esteem<br>⊕ Social trust |
| Lai & Yang (2015) | Cr | C, H | Various types of self-presentation<br>Depth of self-presentation | Social well-being | →<br>→ | | |
| Lee G. et al. (2011) | Cr | C, H | Breadth of self-presentation | Subjective well-being | → (affective balance, Subjective well-being);<br>∅ (life satisfaction) | | |
| Lee K-T. et al. (2013) | Cr | C, H | Depth of self-presentation | Social well-being<br>Subjective well-being | →<br>∅ | ⊕ Social support | |
| Lee J. Y. et al. (2016; *1)* | Cr | C, H | Breadth of self-presentation<br>Breadth of lurking at others | Social well-being | →<br>→ | | |
| Lee J. Y. et al. (2016*; 2)* | Cr | I, H | Breadth of self-presentation<br>Breadth of lurking at others | Social well-being | →<br>→ | | |
| Liu & Brown (2014) | Cr | C, L | Breadth of self-presentation | Social well-being | → (bridging social capital);<br>∅ (bonding social capital) | ⊕ Positive feedback | ∅ Gender |

(*continued on next page*)

Table 2 (*continued*)

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Metzler & Scheithauer (2015) | Cr | I, H | Authentic self-presentation | Personal well-being | → | | |
| Metzler & Scheithauer (2017) | Cr | I, H | Idealized self-presentation | Social support | → | ⊕ Positive feedback | |
| Morin-Major et al. (2016) | L | I, L | Idealized self-presentation | Subjective well-being | ∅ | | |
| Neubaum & Krämer (2015) | E | - | Breadth of lurking at others | Social well-being<br>Subjective well-being<br>Social well-being | ←<br>∅<br>→ | | |
| | | | Breadth of self-presentation | Subjective well-being | → (positive affect);<br>∅ (negative affect) | ⊕ Perceived social closeness | |
| Oberst et al. (2016a) | Cr | I, H | Androgyny<br>Idealized self-presentation | Personal well-being | →<br>→ | | |
| Oberst et al. (2016b) | Cr | I, H | Masculine self-presentation<br>Feminine self-presentation | Personal well-being | →<br>∅ | | |
| Pantic et al. (2017) | Cr | C, H | Breadth of self-presentation | Personal well-being | ∅ | | |
| Park et al. (2016*; 1)* | Co | I, L | Idealized self-presentation<br>Negative self-presentation | Social well-being | ∅<br>∅ | | |
| Park et al. (2016*; 2)* | L | I, L | Idealized self-presentation<br>Negative self-presentation | Social well-being | ∅<br>∅ | | |
| Reinecke & Trepte (2014) | L | I, H | Authentic self-presentation | Subjective well-being | → | | |
| Shin et al. (2017) | E | C, H | Breadth of self-presentation | Subjective well-being<br>Personal well-being | ←<br>→ | | |
| Tobin et al. (2015) | E | I, L | Breadth of self-presentation | Social well-being<br>Personal well-being<br>Psychological well-being | →<br>∅<br>→ (meaningful existence)<br>∅ (control) | | |
| Toma (2013) | E | I, L | Breadth of lurking at oneself<br>Breadth of lurking at others | Personal well-being | →<br>← | | |
| Verduyn et al. (2015; *1)* | E | I, L | Breadth of self-presentation | Subjective well-being | ∅ | | |
| | | | Breadth of lurking at others | Subjective well-being | ∅ (life satisfaction, loneliness);<br>← (affective well-being) | | ∅ Gender |
| Verduyn et al. (2015; *2)* | L | I, L | Breadth of self-presentation | Subjective well-being | ∅ | | |
| | | | Breadth of lurking at others | Subjective well-being | ← | ⊕ Envy | ∅ Individual differences |
| Vitak (2012) | Cr | I, L | Breadth of self-presentation<br>Idealized self-presentation | Social well-being | →<br>→ | | |
| Wang J-L. et al. (2014) | Cr | C, L | Breadth of self-presentation | Social well-being | → | | |
| Wang P. et al. (2017) | Cr | C, L | Authentic self-presentation | Subjective well-being<br>Social well-being | →<br>→ | ⊕ Perceived social support<br>⊕ Rumination | |
| Wang R. et al. (2017) | Cr | I, L | Selfie-posting<br>Selfie viewing<br>Groupie posting<br>Groupie viewing<br>Selfie posting<br>Selfie viewing<br>Groupie posting<br>Groupie viewing | Personal well-being<br>Subjective well-being | ∅<br>←<br>∅<br>→<br>∅<br>∅<br>∅<br>∅ | ⊕ Self-esteem | ⊕ Need for popularity |
| Wang S. S. (2013) | Cr | C, H | Depth of self-presentation | Subjective well-being | → | | |
| Wei & Gao (2017) | Cr | C, L | Breadth of self-presentation | Subjective well-being | → | | |
| Yang & Brown (2016) | L | I, L | Depth of self-presentation<br>Idealized self-presentation<br>Breadth of self-presentation<br>Authentic self-presentation | Social well-being | →<br>→<br>→<br>→ | ∅ Supportive feedback | |
| Yang et al. (2017) | Cr | I, L | Depth of self-presentation<br>Idealized self-presentation<br>Breadth of self-presentation<br>Authentic self-presentation | Personal well-being | ←<br>→<br>∅<br>∅ | | ⊕ Mindfulness |
| Zhang (2017) | Cr | C, L | Authentic self-presentation<br>Idealized self-presentation<br>Breadth of self-presentation | Subjective well-being<br>Social well-being<br>Subjective well-being<br>Social well-being<br>Subjective well-being<br>Social well-being | ∅<br>→(enacted social support)<br>∅ (general social support)<br>∅<br>→(enacted social support)<br>∅ (general social support)<br>∅<br>→ | | ⊕ Stressful life events |

*Note*. Relationships or effects were only reported as significant if they exceed the statistical threshold of $p < .05$.
[a]C = Correlational, E = Experimental, L = Longitudinal.
[b]C = Collectivistic, I = Individualistic, L = Low in uncertainty avoidance, H = High in uncertainty avoidance.
[c]If various variables in a study are characterized within the same category of well-being and they induce similar relationships only one relationship is reported, in the complete results each variable within each category is counted separately.

## Appendix F

Table 3
Type of Self-Presentations, Body Image Measures and the Reported Relationships.

50

| Authors | Design[a] | Cultural dimensions[b] | Type of self-presentation | Self-image measures | Reported relations<br>→ Increase,<br>← Decrease,<br>∅ Insignificant | Mediators<br>⊕ Significant<br>∅ Insignificant | Moderators<br>⊕ Significant<br>∅ Insignificant |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Body satisfaction | → | | |
| Cohen et al. (2018) | C | I, H | Breadth of self-presentation | Drive for thinness | ∅ | | |
| | | | | Bulimia | ∅ | | |
| Flynn (2016) | E | I, L | Upward lurking at others | Body image | ∅ | | ⊕ Pre-dispositional body satisfaction. |
| | | | | Dietary restraint | ∅ | | |
| | | | | Shape concern | → | | |
| Hummel & Smith (2015) | C | I, L | Depth of self-presentation | Eating concern | ∅ | | ⊕ Negatively tinged comments. |
| | | | | Weight concern | → | | |
| Kim, M. & Park (2016) | E | I, L | Upward lurking at others<br>Downward lurking at others | Appearance satisfaction | ←<br>→ | | ⊕ Appearance orientation.<br>⊕ Low self-esteem, ∅ high self-esteem.<br>⊕ High appearance schemas, ∅ low appearance schemas. |
| Kleemans et al. (2018) | E | I, H | Upward lurking towards others | Body image | ← | | ⊕ Social comparison. |
| | | | | Shape and weight | → | | |
| McLean et al. (2015) | C | I, H | Breadth of self-presentation | Body dissatisfaction | → | | |
| | | | | Dietary restraint | → | | |
| Seyfi & Arpaci (2016) | C | C, H | Breadth of self-presentation | Appearance evaluation | → | | |
| | | | | Appearance orientation | → | | |

*Note*. Relationships or effects were only reported as significant if they exceed the statistical threshold of $p < .05$.
[a]C = Correlational, E = Experimental, L = Longitudinal.
[b]C = Collectivistic, I = Individualistic, L = Low in uncertainty avoidance, H = High in uncertainty avoidance.

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