Available on: https://jsshrs.ep-journals.org/ E-ISSN: 3051-3561, P-ISSN: 3051-3553

Journal of Social Science and Human Research Studies

Volume: 02 Issue: 04 April-2026

Negotiating Relational Identity: How Couples Construct Visual Representation in Prewedding Photography

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Published Date: April 29, 2026 **Article DOI: 10.65150/EP-jsshrs/V2E4/2026-16**

ABSTRACT: This study examines how couples negotiate their identity in prewedding photography as a form of visual communication. Previous studies have mainly treated prewedding photos as symbolic representations or idealised images, with limited attention to the interaction processes that shape these visual outcomes. This research adopts a qualitative interpretative approach, using in-depth interviews and participant observation involving three engaged couples and supporting photographers. The findings indicate that a couple's identity is not fixed prior to the photo session. Instead, it is constructed through ongoing interaction, negotiation, and adjustment between partners with different backgrounds and preferences. The study identifies three configurations of identity negotiation: dominance, collaboration, and mediation. Each configuration produces distinct forms of visual representation. In addition, identity negotiation operates at multiple levels. At the interpersonal level, couples negotiate their preferences and meanings. At the production level, photographers act as mediators who translate ideas into visual form. At the social level, decisions are influenced by cultural norms, family values, and public expectations. The findings also reveal that prewedding photography serves both as a medium of representation and as a means of identity validation. Overall, this study suggests that prewedding photography is a constructive communication practice in which identity is actively produced and reinforced through relational negotiation.

KEYWORDS: identity negotiation, visual communication, prewedding photography, representation, couple relationship

INTRODUCTION

Prewedding photography is a practice carried out by engaged couples prior to their wedding. In the development of modern visual culture, prewedding photos have shifted in function. They are no longer merely a way to archive moments, but have become a medium of symbolic communication that presents identity, values, and the couple's ideal image. Prewedding photos function not only as personal documentation, but also as a form of visual representation in public spaces (Mahameruaji, 2014). Couples no longer simply capture memories. Instead, they consciously construct and display their self-image through the visual choices they make.

The selection of visual elements such as clothing, location, poses, and expressions becomes a way for couples to express their identity. It also reflects how they want to be perceived by others (Akdemir, 2018). Prewedding photography cannot be separated from the desire for social recognition, especially within a digital culture that emphasises visual appearance. A couple's identity is no longer formed only through interpersonal interaction. It is also shaped through visual representations consumed by the public, particularly on social media (Alfariz et al., n.d.).

The production process of prewedding photos cannot be understood merely as a technical photographic activity. It involves interaction between the couple and the photographer in developing the visual concept to be presented (Mahameruaji, 2014). In this interaction, the couple brings their preferences, values, and ideal self-image. Meanwhile, the photographer acts as a visual facilitator who translates these ideas into visual form.

Previous studies have examined prewedding photos as a medium for representing a couple's identity in social, cultural, and aesthetic contexts. Research shows that prewedding photos are used to display identity through symbols and specific visual elements (Mahameruaji, 2014). In international studies, visual elements such as clothing, location, and visual style are also seen as key factors in shaping identity and image (Alfazeena & S, 2025). However, these studies tend to treat the photo as a final product. They focus on aesthetic aspects and visual meaning, without exploring the interaction process behind its creation. This approach pays limited attention to the communication process that shapes representation. As a result, identity is often viewed as something already formed before being represented, rather than as a product of ongoing communication.

Research on prewedding photography in Indonesia generally positions it as a medium of identity representation through visual elements. Studies show that prewedding photos are used to build a couple's image through visual symbols such as clothing, poses, and consciously chosen concepts (Mahameruaji, 2014). Similarly, other research states that prewedding photography has developed into a form of visual expression influenced by

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aesthetic trends and public visual preferences (R. D. S. Dinata et al., 2021). Visual elements such as composition, style, and setting are selected to create appealing images that align with evolving visual tastes.

Studies in photography and visual arts also indicate that prewedding photos are no longer seen as simple documentation. They are now understood as visual works that emphasize aesthetics and creativity. Other research shows that prewedding photography involves complex visual construction through techniques, concepts, and photographic styles (P. R. N. Dinata et al., 2025). In addition, research on hyperreality in prewedding photography in Bali shows that the resulting visuals often do not directly represent reality. Instead, they construct an ideal image desired by the couple (Siswadi, 2022). From this perspective, prewedding photos become part of a visual simulation practice influenced by social media and popular culture. Therefore, the identity displayed is constructed and symbolic.

Several other studies highlight the social and cultural dimensions of prewedding photography. Research in various national journals shows that the choice of prewedding concepts is often influenced by religious values, social norms, and local culture (Amri, 2020; Ihsan, 2025; Ma'ruf & Anwar, 2025). Other studies emphasise that prewedding photos are closely related to self-representation in public spaces, especially on social media (Oknita & Safitri, 2023). The visuals produced are not only consumed privately but are also intended for a wider audience. Therefore, couples consider how their image will be perceived.

Although research on prewedding photography in Indonesia has developed from various perspectives, several gaps remain. First, most studies still focus on prewedding photos as a product of visual representation. They emphasize aesthetic, symbolic, or cultural aspects. These studies mainly examine "what is shown" in the photos, as seen in Mahameruaji (2014) and Siswadi (2022), without exploring the communication process behind their formation (Mahameruaji, 2014; Siswadi, 2022). Second, existing research generally positions individuals as the main subjects. Few studies examine couples as relational subjects. In fact, within relationships, identity is not formed individually. It is constructed through interaction and negotiation between two individuals with different backgrounds. Third, studies that integrate interpersonal communication perspectives, especially identity negotiation, with visual communication are still limited. Most research separates visual and social aspects, without examining how interaction produces visual representation.

Based on these gaps, this study seeks to provide a new perspective. It positions prewedding photography as the result of identity negotiation within a couple's relationship. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how identity is constructed, negotiated, and realized through visual communication practices.

However, most previous studies still focus on visual outcomes as representation products. Research that specifically examines couples as relational subjects who actively construct and negotiate identity through interaction remains limited. In interpersonal relationships, identity is formed through ongoing negotiation in communication (Dewatara & Agustin, 2021). Within couples, identity is not singular. It is shaped through adjustment and negotiation between two individuals with different backgrounds, preferences, and perspectives.

Based on this condition, there is an important research gap. There is still a limited understanding of how a couple's identity is constructed through communication and negotiation in prewedding photography practices. This study is based on the assumption that a couple's identity is not directly represented. Instead, it is formed through interaction that involves the exchange of meaning and adjustment of preferences.

This study focuses on how engaged couples negotiate their identity through communication when determining visual elements in prewedding photos. It does not focus on the technical aspects of photography. In this study, identity is understood as the result of an identity negotiation process. This is a process in which individuals actively try to understand, adjust, and reach agreement on the self-image they want to present in interpersonal relationships (Paramita et al., 2022).

Identity Negotiation Theory proposed by Ting-Toomey, explains that identity is not static. It is formed and negotiated through interaction with others (Ting-Toomey, 2015). Decisions regarding visual representation in prewedding photos are not merely aesthetic choices. They are the result of communication processes involving the exchange of views, compromise, and adjustment of preferences between individuals.

This study aims to understand how identity negotiation occurs within a couple's relationship. It also examines how this process influences the formation of visual representation in prewedding photos. The study is expected to contribute to visual communication studies by positioning prewedding photography not only as a representation of identity, but also as a space where identity is produced through communication processes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In photographic studies, visuals are not only understood as an aesthetic medium. They are also seen as a means of producing social meaning and representing identity (Riadi et al., 2025). This perspective positions photography as a form of communication practice. It enables individuals to present and shape their identity through consciously selected visual elements. In line with this view, communication studies emphasize that identity is not static. Instead, it is formed through a process of negotiation within social relationships that involves the exchange of meaning between individuals (Ting-Toomey, 2015).

Initially, photography functioned as simple documentation. Over time, the practice of capturing moments has developed into various forms, including prewedding photography. In this context, visual representation does not occur spontaneously. It emerges through a series of negotiations involving the selection of concepts, styles, and visual elements designed to express the couple's identity (Dewi et al., 2025). This negotiation becomes an important mechanism. It shapes the dynamics of the relationship and determines how the couple's identity is represented (Swann Jr. et al., 2009).

Prewedding Photography and Identity Negotiation in Visual Representation

Studies in photography indicate a shift in function, from a mere tool of documentation to a medium of communication that plays a role in shaping identity and social meaning. In the digital era, the practice of capturing and distributing images is no longer limited to preserving memories. It has also become a means of constructing identity and maintaining social relationships (van Dijck, 2008). This shift positions visual imagery as an active part of communication practices. Individuals do not simply record reality. They also construct and present themselves through images. In

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family and community photography, images are understood as symbolic practices linked to identity and a sense of belonging. Photography functions as a "social ritual" that allows individuals to negotiate their position within specific cultural and community contexts (Sinder, 2019).

A number of studies show that visual images have the capacity to shape broader social narratives, including those related to relationships, gender, and culture. Photographs do not merely depict reality. They can also reinforce certain social structures through visual compositions that reflect societal values and norms (Suleiman, 2020). This suggests that photography carries an ideological dimension. Visual meaning is not neutral, but is shaped by social context and power relations.

In prewedding photography, visuals become the primary medium for presenting a couple's identity. Prewedding photos contain visual signs that do not only follow conventional codes, but are also modified to create new concepts that reflect the couple's identity in a more personal way (Lukito et al., 2016). This process indicates that visual representation in prewedding photography is a constructed outcome. It involves the deliberate selection of symbols, styles, and concepts.

In addition, the development of contemporary wedding photography shows a shift toward more "natural," "candid," and artistic aesthetics, influenced by visual culture and digital media. This practice is not only related to documentation. It is also connected to how couples present themselves in broader social spaces, particularly through social media (Kohli, 2023).

The aesthetics of wedding photography are not determined solely by technical aspects. They are also shaped by the interaction between photographers and clients, as well as by visual preferences influenced by social trends and digital media (Alfariz et al., n.d.). This reinforces the idea that visual representation in prewedding photography results from a communication process involving multiple actors and social contexts. On the other hand, studies on identity negotiation emphasize that identity is formed through interaction between individuals who bring their own perceptions and interests. This process involves efforts to reach alignment between how individuals see themselves and how they wish to be seen by others (Swann, 1987). Identity negotiation is not passive. It is an active process that involves strategies, adjustments, and compromises within social relationships.

More contemporary approaches show that identity negotiation is multidimensional and occurs across multiple social spaces simultaneously. Identity is not shaped by a single factor. Instead, it emerges from the interaction of various dimensions such as culture, language, and social experience (Compton-Lilly et al., 2017). This highlights that identity is complex and continuously evolving through ongoing interaction.

In couple relationships, identity negotiation functions to achieve mutual understanding and social acceptance. As a result, the identity presented is a dialogical product of interaction (Dewatara & Agustin, 2021). The construction of identity in this process can be understood as a series of meaning-making stages. These include individuals' initial values, adjustments to relational contexts, and the performance of identity in interaction (Suryandari et al., 2025). Therefore, visual representation in prewedding photography does not merely reflect an existing identity. It is also the result of a negotiation process that actively shapes that identity.

Negotiation Theory in the Construction of Relational Identity

Studies on negotiation theory in communication view social interaction as a dynamic process. It involves the adjustment of meaning and identity between individuals. Identity is not understood as something fixed. Instead, it is seen as a construction that is continuously shaped through social interaction. From a psychological perspective, identity negotiation occurs when individuals attempt to maintain consistency in their self-concept. At the same time, they adjust to the expectations of others within social interaction (Swann, 1987; Swann Jr. et al., 2009).

Communication approaches further develop this understanding through Identity Negotiation Theory. This theory emphasizes that identity is dynamic and is negotiated through interpersonal and intercultural communication (Ting-Toomey, 2015). In this process, individuals do not only attempt to express their identity. They also seek recognition and validation from others. Successful identity negotiation is marked by the achievement of mutual understanding and acceptance within relationships. Research also shows that identity negotiation is multidimensional. It occurs simultaneously across various social spaces. Individuals actively adjust their identity based on the social, cultural, and relational contexts they encounter (Compton-Lilly et al., 2017).

Identity negotiation in prewedding photography becomes more significant because the resulting visuals represent a shared identity between two individuals in a relationship. The process of selecting concepts, poses, and visual elements reflects the outcome of negotiation between the couple. This process is influenced not only by personal preferences, but also by the social and cultural values surrounding them. Studies show that visual representation in prewedding photography is a constructed process. It involves the selection of specific symbols and styles to present the couple's identity (Lukito et al., 2016). In addition, contemporary wedding photography practices are shaped by the development of digital media. Visuals are no longer produced solely for documentation. They are also created for public consumption through social media.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To understand the process of identity negotiation among couples in determining the visual representation of prewedding photos, this study employs a qualitative approach with an interpretative design. A qualitative approach is chosen because the study focuses on uncovering meaning, experiences, and interaction dynamics that cannot be reduced to quantitative variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Meanwhile, the interpretative approach allows the researcher to understand how participants make sense of their experiences within their natural social context (Quinlan, 2017).

Data analysis in this study was conducted using a thematic analysis approach. This approach was chosen to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns of meaning related to the process of identity negotiation among couples in prewedding photography. The analysis followed several stages. First, all interview data were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. Second, the researcher conducted initial coding by identifying key statements related to preferences, negotiation processes, and decision-making. Third, these codes were grouped into broader categories that represent patterns of identity negotiation. Finally, the categories were interpreted to develop themes that explain how identity is constructed and negotiated in the context of visual representation.

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To enhance the credibility of the findings, this study applied data triangulation by combining interview data with participant observation during the photo sessions. The researcher compared what participants said in interviews with their actual interactions in the field. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming selected interpretations with participants to ensure that the findings accurately reflect their experiences.
The study also considered dependability and confirmability. The research process was documented systematically, including field notes, interview transcripts, and coding procedures, to ensure transparency. Reflexivity was maintained by acknowledging the researcher's position and minimizing subjective bias during data interpretation. Through these procedures, the study aims to ensure that the findings are credible, consistent, and grounded in participants' lived experiences.
The research subjects consist of three engaged couples who participated in prewedding photo sessions: Icha and Bagus, Farandy and Sarah, as well as Haikal and Frida. In addition to the couples, photographers are included as supporting informants. The couples are positioned as the main subjects because they are directly involved in the process of negotiating identity in relation to the image they wish to present. Meanwhile, the photographers act as visual facilitators who help translate the outcomes of this negotiation into visual form. The object of this study is the process of identity negotiation among couples as manifested in the visual representation of prewedding photos. This process includes three main aspects: differences in individual preferences, the negotiation process to reach an agreement, and the final outcome in the form of a mutually agreed visual representation.
Data are collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews. Observation is conducted by the researcher through direct involvement in the photo sessions to understand the interaction dynamics between the couples and the photographers. In-depth interviews are conducted using a semi-structured format to explore the couples' experiences, considerations, and decision-making processes in determining the visual concept.

RESULTS

Identity Construction and Transformation in Prewedding Photography

In this study, there are three couples who conducted prewedding photo sessions. Based on the interview results, each couple has a different photographic concept.

Nama pasangan	Konsep foto	Hasil foto prewedding
Icha and Bagus	Javanese theme	
Farandy and Sarah	Javanese theme	
Haikal and Frida	Modern, flexible, and less formal	

Figure 1. Research Subjects and Prewedding Photo Concepts

In this study, the research subjects consist of three engaged couples who participated in prewedding photo sessions: Icha and Bagus, Farandy and Sarah, and Haikal and Frida. Each couple is positioned as the main subject because they are directly involved in determining and negotiating the visual concept of their prewedding photos.
Based on the findings, each couple adopts a different photo concept. The first couple is Icha and Bagus. In their relationship, Icha describes herself as an individual with a simple lifestyle who prioritises comfort in both clothing and decision-making. However, as she moved closer to marriage, she experienced significant changes in herself, particularly in terms of discipline, appearance, and sensitivity to social perceptions. Feedback from

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her partner regarding her appearance is not seen as a form of restriction. Instead, it is understood as a way of reminding each other so that the image they present in public aligns with the social norms they consider important.

The second couple is Farandy and Sarah, who come from different value systems and habits. Farandy sees himself as a person who is natural, expressive, and not strongly influenced by social judgment. In contrast, Sarah was raised in a family environment that emphasises religious values, discipline, and order in daily life. Since being in the relationship, Farandy acknowledges changes in his behaviour. These changes are especially evident in his concern for his partner, his surroundings, and his way of dressing, which now takes social norms and context into greater consideration. The third couple in this study is Haikal and Frida. In the interviews, both Haikal and Frida demonstrate a relaxed, open, and communicative character. They are able to clearly express their preferences and perspectives regarding their prewedding photo concept.

Based on interviews with the three couples, it was found that they do not view prewedding photography merely as documentation. Instead, they understand it as a visual medium that represents both personal identity and their relationship. For Haikal and Frida, prewedding photos are seen as a symbol of readiness for marriage. This is reflected in visual choices that appear neat and convey maturity. Meanwhile, Icha and Bagus interpret the photo session as an experience that strengthens emotional closeness and communication within their relationship. A similar perspective is shared by Farandy and Sarah. They see prewedding photography as a reflective medium that provides validation of the harmony in their relationship.

The findings also show that a couple's identity in prewedding photos does not exist as a fully formed entity from the beginning. Rather, it emerges through an ongoing process of interaction. Each couple enters the planning stage with different backgrounds, preferences, and self-meanings. These differences do not necessarily lead to conflict. Instead, they become the starting point for a dynamic and dialogical process of identity negotiation. Identity negotiation not only functions to reconcile differences. It also becomes a space for individuals to reflect on and adjust their personal identity within the relationship. One informant described this process as a gradual change that takes place in everyday life.

> *"Since being with my partner, I have become more attentive to what they say, starting from how I dress to how I live and behave." (Sarah, January 2026)*

This statement indicates that personal identity is not fixed. Instead, it undergoes transformation as individuals become involved in a relationship. This transformation then serves as the basis for the formation of a shared identity as a couple. That identity is later translated into visual form through prewedding photography.

Dynamics of Identity Negotiation and Social Influence

The negotiation process does not occur in a uniform way. The findings show that the dynamics within each relationship produce different patterns of negotiation. In some couples, the process takes place in a collaborative manner. Both individuals have relatively equal space to express their preferences and to reach an agreement.

> *"The concept was developed from both of our ideas. Neither of us dominated the process. We focused on finding what felt most comfortable and best represented who we are." (Frida & Haikal, January 2026)*

However, in other situations, negotiation does not take place in a fully equal manner. Differences in values or preferences may lead to a tendency toward dominance, even though it is not always recognized as an imbalance. For example, this can occur in the context of choosing clothing. In such cases, the outcome of the negotiation is still perceived as a mutual agreement, even though one party may have a stronger influence. This suggests that identity negotiation within a couple's relationship does not always result in perfect balance. Nevertheless, it still contributes to the formation of a shared identity that is accepted by both individuals.

In addition to internal dynamics within the couple, the study also finds that the process of identity negotiation is influenced by the presence of other parties, such as family. Family plays a role in shaping the negotiation process, particularly in the selection of traditional concepts. Sarah explains that the decision to choose a Javanese traditional theme for their prewedding photos was the result of an agreement between herself, her partner, and their family.

In addition to family, the photographer also plays an important role. The photographer is not merely a technical executor, but also acts as a mediator who helps the couple formulate and translate their identity into visual form. This mediating role becomes especially important when the couple faces difficulties in reconciling differences in preferences or when they need guidance to express their identity visually. Thus, the process of identity negotiation does not occur solely at the interpersonal level. It also involves a broader dimension of visual production.

The findings also show that decision-making in prewedding photography serves as the main arena where identity negotiation takes place in a concrete way. Decisions regarding the concept, clothing, poses, and overall theme are not made individually. Instead, they are reached through a process of discussion that involves shared consideration. In this process, couples do not only take their personal preferences into account. They also adjust these preferences to align with relational values and the broader social context.

The influence of social and cultural factors is also evident in the decision-making process. Some couples choose a traditional concept as a form of compromise. This choice allows them to accommodate differences in family background and cultural values.

> *"This Javanese traditional concept became a meeting point between my background and my partner's differences. It reflects our identity as a couple preparing for marriage." (Farandy & Sarah, wawancara, 2026).*

These findings indicate that identity negotiation does not only occur at the personal and interpersonal levels. It also involves broader social dimensions, including family and cultural norms. The outcomes of this negotiation process are then manifested in the visual form of prewedding photos. Visual elements such as clothing, poses, and expressions do not merely serve aesthetic purposes. They also function as symbols that represent the couple's identity. These visual choices reflect how couples interpret their relationship and how they wish to be recognized by others.

Interestingly, prewedding photos do not only function as representations of identity. They also serve as a means of validating that identity. Some couples revealed that after seeing the final photos, they gained new meanings and insights about their relationship.

> *"After seeing the photos, we realized that we actually look harmonious and well-matched. It made us feel more confident about our relationship." (Farandy & Sarah, wawancara, 2026).*

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This statement indicates that visuals do not merely represent identity. They also reinforce and affirm it. Prewedding photos become a medium that allows couples to see themselves as a unified entity. At the same time, they provide emotional and social validation for the relationship.

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrates that prewedding photography should be understood not merely as a visual product, but as a communicative process through which relational identity is actively constructed. Previous studies have largely treated prewedding photos as symbolic representations or aesthetic outcomes (Mahameruaji, 2014; Siswadi, 2022). While these approaches are useful, they tend to assume that identity already exists prior to representation. As a result, they fail to explain how identity is formed through interaction. This study addresses that limitation by shifting the focus from visual outcomes to the negotiation processes that produce them.

The findings confirm that identity negotiation in prewedding photography is dynamic and relational. The experiences of the couples show that identity is continuously shaped through adjustment, compromise, and alignment of meanings. This supports Identity Negotiation Theory, which views identity as fluid and constructed through communication processes (Ting-Toomey, 2015). However, this study extends the theory by demonstrating that identity negotiation is not only expressed through verbal interaction but also materialised in visual form. In this context, visual representation becomes an integral part of identity construction rather than a separate outcome.

A key contribution of this study lies in the identification of three configurations of identity negotiation: dominance, collaboration, and mediation. This typology provides a more specific explanation of how negotiation operates in relational contexts. While existing studies emphasise negotiation as a process aimed at achieving mutual agreement (Swann, 1987; Swann Jr. et al., 2009), the findings show that agreement does not necessarily indicate equality. In dominance, one partner exerts greater influence, yet the outcome is still perceived as shared. In collaboration, both partners contribute relatively equally, producing a more integrated identity. In mediation, external actors, particularly photographers, play a crucial role in facilitating negotiation. This categorisation highlights that identity negotiation is not uniform, but context-dependent and shaped by relational dynamics.

Furthermore, the study reveals that identity negotiation operates across multiple levels. At the interpersonal level, couples negotiate their preferences and meanings. At the production level, photographers function as mediators who translate abstract ideas into visual form, supporting previous findings on the role of photographers in shaping visual aesthetics (Alfariz et al., n.d.). At the social level, decisions are influenced by cultural norms, family expectations, and public perceptions. This multi-level analysis strengthens the argument that identity is constructed not only through interpersonal interaction but also within broader social structures (Compton-Lilly et al., 2017).

The influence of cultural context is particularly evident in the use of traditional concepts. The selection of Javanese themes reflects not only aesthetic choices but also a process of cultural negotiation that accommodates family values and social legitimacy. This finding supports earlier studies that position prewedding photography as a site where personal identity intersects with social expectations (Mahameruaji, 2014; Siswadi, 2022). However, this study goes further by showing how such negotiation occurs in practice, rather than merely identifying its symbolic outcomes.

From a visual communication perspective, these findings reinforce the view that images are produced through social practices rather than functioning as neutral representations. As noted by van Dijck (2008), digital photography enables individuals to construct identity through visual means. This study extends that argument by introducing the idea of *visualised identity negotiation*, in which visual outputs are understood as the result of negotiated meanings within interpersonal relationships. This concept offers a more integrated framework that connects interpersonal communication with visual production.

In addition, the study identifies the reflective and performative functions of prewedding photography. Reflectively, photos allow couples to reinterpret their relationship, generating new meanings and emotional understanding. Performatively, they function as a means of presenting identity to a broader audience and gaining social recognition. This aligns with Goffman's (1959) concept of self-presentation, where individuals strategically manage their image to influence others' perceptions. In the context of social media, this performative dimension becomes more significant, as visual representations are circulated and consumed in public spaces (Oknita & Safitri, 2023).

Importantly, this study also shows that visual representation plays a role in identity validation. Identity is not only negotiated during interaction, but also reinforced after the visual outcome is produced. This finding expands existing perspectives by demonstrating that validation occurs not only through interpersonal communication but also through mediated visual forms. Therefore, visual representation functions both as an outcome and as a mechanism that strengthens identity.

Overall, this study contributes to communication scholarship by integrating interpersonal and visual communication perspectives. It shifts the analytical focus from representation as a product to representation as a process. By doing so, it provides a more comprehensive understanding of how identity is constructed, negotiated, and validated within contemporary visual culture.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that prewedding photography cannot be understood merely as a visual product that represents a couple's identity. Instead, it should be seen as the outcome of a communication process that involves identity negotiation within interpersonal relationships. In this context, a couple's identity is not fixed. It is formed through interaction that involves adjustment, compromise, and the exchange of meaning between individuals with different backgrounds and preferences.

The findings identify that the process of identity negotiation occurs in several configurations, namely dominance, collaboration, and mediation. Each configuration produces a different form of visual representation. In addition, identity negotiation does not only take place at the interpersonal level. It also involves the dimension of visual production through the role of the photographer, as well as broader social and cultural contexts.

This study also confirms that prewedding photography has a dual function. It serves both as a medium of representation and as a means of identity validation. The resulting visuals do not only display the couple's identity. They also reinforce and affirm that identity both emotionally and socially.

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Therefore, prewedding photography can be understood as a constructive communication practice, in which identity is not simply represented but is produced through negotiation processes within relationships.

Theoretically, this study contributes by expanding the understanding of the relationship between interpersonal communication and visual communication, particularly in the context of representation production. It shifts the focus from analyzing visuals as products toward understanding visuals as outcomes of identity negotiation processes.

However, this study has limitations in terms of the number of informants and the specificity of the research context. Future research may expand the scope by involving more couples from diverse backgrounds and by exploring the role of digital media in mediating the representation of couple identity.

Ethical and Compliance Statements

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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