

Identity expressiveness in marketing: review and future research agenda

Review and
future research
agenda

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Received 3 August 2021
Revised 31 March 2022
18 November 2022
7 March 2023
13 July 2023
Accepted 26 September 2023

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to follow a rigorous approach to identify, critically analyze and synthesize 75 papers published from 2000 to 2022.

Design/methodology/approach – The study presents a systematic literature review on identity expressiveness (IE), clarifying and expanding what is currently known about the concept.

Findings – To synthesize current knowledge on IE, the study uses the overarching framework of antecedents-phenomenon-consequences, using this same framework to identify gaps and future research directions. The findings show individual and brand-related factors such as the need for uniqueness and anthropomorphism as antecedents of IE, and eWOM/WOM, impulse purchases and upgrading to more exclusive lines as consequences of IE.

Research limitations/implications – The study contributes to theory by synthesizing and mapping current understanding of the state of knowledge on the concept of IE while highlighting gaps in the extant literature and paving future research directions for scholars in the field.

Practical implications – The study offers useful insights for practitioners, broadening marketers' actionable options in identity-based marketing. Marketers can use insights from this study to inform marketing strategy and communication campaigns for different types of brands.

Originality/value – To the best of the authors' knowledge, this study is the first of its kind and offers an integrative review of the current literature on IE, thus enhancing understanding of the concept, its antecedents and consequences. The study also contributes to knowledge by highlighting future research priorities for researchers in this field of enquiry.

Keywords Identity expressiveness, Systematic literature review, Identity signaling, Self-expression, Self-expression needs, Self-authenticity, Self-concept, Brand identity expressiveness

Paper type Literature review

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1. Introduction

Identity expressiveness (IE) is grounded in the idea that individuals can express identity via the purchase and use of products and/or brands (Bosnjak *et al.*, 2016; Cho and Hwang, 2020; He *et al.*, 2018; Robson, 2002; Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007). The concept is of interest to both scholars and practitioners (Chernev *et al.*, 2011; Cho and Hwang, 2020; Sirgy *et al.*, 2016), as it reflects the relationship between consumers and brands (Cho and Hwang, 2020; Sirgy *et al.*, 2016) and influences consumers' behavior (Giakoumaki and Krepapa, 2020; Goor *et al.*, 2020). Compared with *identity*, researchers argue that IE may be more valuable in driving behaviors (Mannetti *et al.*, 2002; Pagani *et al.*, 2011; Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007). At the same time, IE has immense potential to inform communication strategies and shape marketing outcomes (e.g. brand preference, purchase, WOM, social media engagement and so on), with marketers using identity expressive messages in their campaigns (Bhattacharjee *et al.*, 2014) (e.g. "Breitling. Instruments for professionals," Dior's website references to *powerful femininity* in their alliances with their featured female celebrities).

However, despite its relevance and value in marketing, extant literature lacks a systematic literature review (SLR) on IE, which hinders the "current state of knowledge" (Palmatier *et al.*, 2018, p. 2) of this key concept. An SLR on IE is important, as it will validate what we currently know about the concept (MacInnis, 2011) and its implications for marketing practice; help researchers to identify the theoretical and methodological approaches to studying IE; highlight inconsistencies and reconcile viewpoints; and pave new directions for future study (Elsbach and van Knippenberg, 2020; Post *et al.*, 2020). In view of this gap, we present an initial synthesis on IE in line with Elsbach and van Knippenberg (2020), guided by two research objectives: (RO1) To review and integrate/connect research findings from literature sources on IE using as a guide the overarching framework of *antecedents-phenomenon-consequences* (Schmeisser, 2013), and (RO2) To identify key research priorities and future research directions that will help advance this field of literature. In doing so, we follow established procedures from other reviews published in top journals in the business field (Christofi *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Leonidou *et al.*, 2020; Vrontis *et al.*, 2020) and methodological studies on developing and writing review articles (Gaur and Kumar, 2018; Snyder, 2019; Tranfield *et al.*, 2003).

This study constitutes the only attempt in the literature to date to offer a SLR on IE. Specifically, we contribute to theory by synthesizing and mapping current understanding of the state of knowledge on the concept while identifying gaps in the extant literature that present future research directions for scholars in the field (Hulland and Houston, 2020). To enable the academic development of the subject in question, our review reconciles definitional approaches to IE, clarifying how IE has been considered in the literature while identifying and mapping its antecedents and consequences. In addition to the theoretical contributions, our review provides valuable insights for managers, thereby promoting knowledge exchange between academia and industry.

In the next section, we present our review method, explaining the database used, the keywords chosen and the criteria for including or excluding studies, as well as the analysis strategy. The results section provides a review and a theme-based analysis and discussion according to the *antecedents-phenomenon-consequences* framework. We then present research priorities and future research directions in the study of IE. Finally, we identify the study's implications for both academics and practitioners.

2. Review approach

To ensure a rigorous review and critical analysis of published work on IE, we applied the SLR methodology. In particular, SLRs identify, select, critically analyze and synthesize

extant literature in a meticulous manner, allowing for transparency and replicability of results (Christofi *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Vrontis and Christofi, 2021). The SLR method leads to robust conclusions about what is known and not known on a specific domain, phenomenon or relationship (Christofi *et al.*, 2017; Denyer and Tranfield, 2009). It also allows researchers to shed light on the concept under scrutiny while deriving future research directions (Menghwar and Daood, 2021). Overall, the SLR method reflects the most suitable approach in the context of our study.

2.1 Sample

As regard the scope of our review, we followed other state-of-the-art reviews (Christofi *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). Specifically, because such publications contribute substantially to the academic development of the domain (Luo and Zhang, 2016), we included studies that have been published in the premier journals in the business field. Thus, following Leonidou *et al.* (2020) and Vrontis and Christofi (2021), we limited our review to articles published in peer-reviewed journals ranked 3, 4 or 4* in the ABS 2021 journals list. By focusing on highly esteemed academic journals, we captured scholarly debates and research trends in a given research area (Atewologun *et al.*, 2017), and this journal restriction is a common practice applied in various SLRs for ensuring the quality of the results (Debellis *et al.*, 2021; Vrontis and Christofi, 2021). Moreover, following similar practices from state-of-the-art reviews (Christofi *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Pisani *et al.*, 2017), we selectively included the following ABS2 journals: *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *International Journal of Consumer Studies* and *Advances in Consumer Research*. These outlets are considered specialized consumer behavior journals and are, therefore, more likely to carry the topic of IE. Next, to search and identify relevant studies from these journals, we used EBSCOhost's Business Source Ultimate, a scientific database that is often used by scholars for its comprehensive coverage of business journals (Lamberton and Stephen, 2016; Pisani *et al.*, 2017; Rajwani and Liedong, 2015).

Subsequent to the selection of the scholarly outlets, we identified our final sample of articles. We used the following criteria in alignment with our objectives, and in accordance with the standard practice of state-of-the-art reviews (Christofi *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Gaur and Kumar, 2018; Pisani *et al.*, 2017). First, we included both conceptual and empirical studies that treat IE as their main or secondary focus. Second, we included peer-reviewed academic articles, excluding books, letters, viewpoints, dialogue papers, book reviews, editorials, conference proceedings and commentaries. Third, we also excluded articles published in languages other than English (Becker and Jaakkola, 2020). Fourth, in terms of the time frame, we focused on relevant studies published from 2000 and up to March 2022.

Continuing as per the common practice in SLRs (Christofi *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Pisani *et al.*, 2017), we conducted a keyword search algorithm on the titles, abstracts and keywords provided by the authors of the studies. To develop the keyword search formula, we followed Vrontis *et al.* (2021) and Lamberton and Stephen (2016). Specifically, we first ran a pilot search in the title, abstract and keywords of potentially relevant studies using the keywords "identity expressiveness" and "identity expression." As a result of this pilot search, ten papers in the domains of consumer behavior, brand and/or marketing were identified. By examining the reference lists of these ten papers, a further 13 papers were identified. From the directly relevant studies, we then scanned the titles, abstracts and keywords of these studies to identify authors' choices of words or phrases in these sections that reflect the topic of their articles. After excluding duplicates and irrelevant words or phrases, we identified a set of relevant keywords that were often used by the scholarly community to characterize the IE phenomenon (see Table 1). Applying the Boolean OR

Table 1.
Relevant keywords
used by papers
identified in pilot
search^a

Authors	Title	Publication	Definition of IE used by authors	Key phrases used by authors in abstracts	Keywords used by authors
Ahuvia (2005)	Beyond the extended self: loved objects and consumers' identity narratives	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	N/A	Loved objects, Self-narrative	Affect/Emotions/Mood, Involvement, Postmodernism/Poststructuralism, <i>Self-concept</i> , Depth/Long Interviews
Berger and Heath (2007)	Where consumers diverge from others: <i>identity signaling</i> and product domains	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	N/A	Diverge to avoid signaling undesired identities, <i>Identity signaling</i>	Group/Interpersonal Influences, Diffusion, Innovation, Technology, <i>Symbolic Consumption</i> /Semiotics, Judgment and Decision Making, Clothing/Fashion
Berger and Heath (2008)	Who drives divergence? <i>identity signaling</i> , outgroup dissimilarity and the abandonment of cultural tastes	<i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>	N/A	Identity domains, Desired/undesired identity	Culture, Diffusion, Identity, Social Influence and Intergroup Processes
Beverland and Farrelly (2010)	The quest for authenticity in consumption: consumers' purposive choice of authentic cues to shape experienced outcomes	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	N/A	Consumption of authentic objects, Identity benefits from authentic objects	Beliefs, Brand Loyalty, Cultural Theories and Analysis, Depth/Long Interviews, Motivation/Desires/Goals
Bhattacharjee et al. (2014)	When identity marketing backfires: <i>consumer agency in identity expression</i>	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	N/A	Explicit identity-marketing messages, Salience of external determinants of behavior, <i>Consumers' perceptions of agency in identity expression</i>	N/A

(continued)

Authors	Title	Publication	Definition of IE used by authors	Key phrases used by authors in abstracts	Keywords used by authors
Bosnjak <i>et al.</i> (2016)	<i>Self-expressiveness in sport tourism: determinants and consequences</i>	<i>Journal of Travel Research</i>	N/A	<i>Self-expressiveness</i> , Personal happiness	Eudaimonia, Happiness, Hedonic enjoyment; <i>Self-expressiveness</i> , Sport tourism, Subjective well-being
Cardoso <i>et al.</i> (2010)	Fashion consumer profiles in the Portuguese market: involvement, innovativeness, <i>self-expression</i> and impulsiveness as segmentation criteria	<i>International Journal of Consumer Studies</i>	N/A	Fashion involvement, Fashion innovativeness, <i>Self-expression</i> , Impulsiveness	Fashion, Consumer profiles, innovativeness, Involvement, <i>Self-expression</i> , Impulsiveness
Chan <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Identifiable but not identical: combining social identity and uniqueness motives in choice	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	N/A	Identity-relevant consumer categories, Multiple identity motives	N/A
Chernev <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Competing for consumer identity: limits to <i>self-expression</i> and the Perils of lifestyle branding	<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	N/A	<i>Self-expression</i> , need for self-expression	Brand, Competition, Identity, Lifestyle, Preferences, <i>Self-expression</i>
Cho and Hwang (2020)	Drivers of consumer-based brand equity: a two-country analysis of perceived brand origin and <i>identity expressiveness</i>	<i>International Marketing Review</i>	N/A	Effect of cognitive, sensory and affective brand associations, Brand love, <i>Identity expressiveness</i>	Brand associations, Brand equity, Brand love, <i>Identity expressiveness</i> , Perceived brand origin
Dommer <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Using differentiated brands to deflect exclusion and protect inclusion: the moderating role of self-esteem on attachment to differentiated brands	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	N/A	Social exclusion/inclusion, Self-esteem, Attachment to brands	N/A
Escalas and Bettman (2003)	You are what they eat: the influence of reference groups on consumers' connections to brands	<i>Journal of Consumer Psychology</i>	N/A	Reference groups, Brand associations, <i>Self-concept</i> , Self-brand connections	N/A

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Review and future research agenda

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Authors	Title	Publication	Definition of IE used by authors	Key phrases used by authors in abstracts	Keywords used by authors
Escalas and Bettman (2005)	Self-constraual, reference groups and brand meaning	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	N/A	<i>Self-concept</i> , Self-brand connections, Reference groups, Symbolic brands	Brand Equity/Extensions, Group/Interpersonal Influences, <i>Self-concept</i> , <i>Symbolic Consumption</i> , Semiotics N/A
Oyserman (2009)	Identity-based motivation: implications for action-readiness, procedural readiness and consumer behavior	<i>Journal of Consumer Psychology</i>	N/A	Identity, Situational cues, Identity-based motivation process, Action- and procedural-readiness (of identity)	N/A
Puzakova and Aggarwal (2018)	Brands as rivals: consumer pursuit of distinctiveness and the role of brand anthropomorphism	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	N/A	<i>Consumers' sense of agency in identity expression</i> , (Consumers') distinctiveness goals	Brand anthropomorphism, <i>Distinctiveness motive</i> , <i>Agency in identity expression</i>
Rozenkrants et al. (2017)	Self-expression cues in product rating distributions: when people prefer polarizing products	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	N/A	<i>Individual self-expression</i> , consumer preferences, <i>Self-concept</i>	Consumer behavior, Identity, Online commerce, <i>Self-expression</i> N/A
Schau (2000)	Consumer imagination, identity and <i>self-expression</i>	<i>Advances in Consumer Research</i>	N/A	<i>Consumer self-expression</i> , consumer identities	N/A
Styvén et al. (2020)	Role of place attachment, congruity and <i>self-expressionness</i> on residents' intention to share a place brand message online	<i>Journal of Advertising</i>	"Building on identity theory (Sirgy, 1982), the self-expressionness of a brand message can be described as the extent to which recipients perceive that it supports and enacts their self-concept and will be recognized publicly as such (Taylor, Strutton, and Thompson 2012)."	Residents' intention to share a place brand message online, Place attachment, Place ad-brand congruity, <i>Self-expressionness</i>	N/A

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Authors	Title	Publication	Definition of IE used by authors	Key phrases used by authors in abstracts	Keywords used by authors
Swaminathan et al. (2007)	"My" brand or "our" brand: The effects of brand relationship dimensions and self-construal on brand evaluations	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	N/A	Brands, Role/function of brand, Brand value	Attitudes, Brand Equity/Extensions, Cross-Cultural Research, Persuasion, <i>Self-concept</i> N/A
Thorbjørnsen et al. (2007)	"This Is Who I Am": identity expressiveness and the theory of planned behavior	<i>Psychology and Marketing</i>	"In line with Stryker and Burke (2000), Mittal (1994), and others, 'expressiveness' is viewed as the consumers' perception of a given product's or service's ability to express both social and personal identity dimensions. ... Inspired by identity theory and social identity theory, respectively, the concept of identity expressiveness may be refined into the twin concepts of self-identity expressiveness and social identity expressiveness." N/A	<i>Self-identity expressiveness</i> , <i>Social identity expressiveness</i> , Usage intentions, Subjective norm	
Tian et al. (2001)	Consumers' need for uniqueness: scale development and validation	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>		Need for uniqueness, <i>People's expression of identity</i>	Brand differentiation, Consumer behavior, <i>Self-image</i> , Statistical analysis, Studies

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Review and future research agenda

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Authors	Title	Publication	Definition of IE used by authors	Key phrases used by authors in abstracts	Keywords used by authors
Xie <i>et al.</i> (2015)	An extended model of preference formation between global and local brands: the roles of <i>identity expressiveness</i> , trust and affect	<i>Journal of International Marketing</i>	“We define ‘brand identity expressiveness’ as the capability of a particular brand to construct and signal a person’s self-identity to himself as well as his social identity to important others.”	Perceived brand globalness, Perceived brand localness, <i>Brand’s identity expressiveness</i>	Brand affect, <i>Brand identity expressiveness</i> , Brand trust, Perceived brand globalness, Perceived brand localness

Notes: ^aPhrases in bold and underlined are those that are most relevant to IE and used by authors to characterize notions associated with IE. Some studies included in the table that are relevant to IE in general have fewer relevant phrases in their title, abstract and keywords; hence, no phrase is in bold or underlined

Source: Authors’ own work

operator to identify studies that contain any of the search terms included in the keyword formula (e.g. “brand identity expressiveness” OR “self-expression”), the resulting keyword search formula used was: “identity expressiveness,” “identity expression,” “brand identity expressiveness,” “self-expression,” “self-expressiveness,” “identity signaling,” “symbolic consumption,” “distinctiveness motive,” “agency in identity expression,” “self-image” and “self-concept.”

By applying the final keyword formula, the initial search resulted in 4,879 studies (including duplicates but excluding nonacademic and nonEnglish articles). Following prior review studies (Christofi *et al.*, 2017, 2019; Vrontis and Christofi, 2021), we first read the title and abstract of the articles included in the initial sample to exclude articles that had no relevance to the present topic under review. The second round involved reading the full text of the remaining articles to exclude studies that had only a passing reference or no relevance to IE. For instance, we eliminated Bardey *et al.* (2022) that mentioned the term “self-expression” in the abstract and keywords but failed to focus on the concept as the main or secondary focus of the paper. Adding to this, we also excluded articles that had no relevance to the reviewed topic. For example, IE is found in a variety of research domains and perspectives, such as organizational and management studies as well as human resource management studies (e.g. the IE of workers). These contexts are beyond the focus of this review, and thus, they were excluded from the study. After this round, the relevant studies that were included in the sample totaled 71 (including the 23 papers identified from previous stages). Finally, because the keyword search process in electronic databases could omit significant studies (Christofi *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Nielsen *et al.*, 2017), we also used cross-referencing to identify additional literature (Rajwani and Liedong, 2015). From the cross-reference search, we identified and included another four articles that were related to our research focus. The final sample of our systematic review included 75 articles (see Table 2 for the list of selected articles).

2.2 Coding

Based on the intended contributions of our SLR, as well as the nature of our research objectives, qualitative coding was seen as the most appropriate method for analyzing our final sample. To undertake this task, we referred to recent reviews for examples of best practices (Christofi *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Debellis *et al.*, 2021; Pisani *et al.*, 2017) while taking into consideration the present study’s objectives (Gaur and Kumar, 2018). Adding to this, the selection of qualitative coding was based on our intention to provide an in-depth understanding of the IE domain and not, for instance, statistical generalizations via a meta-analysis approach, which focuses on empirical studies that use only a quantitative methodology (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003; Christofi *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). Also, as per the criteria used for our SLR, we included both conceptual and empirical studies that apply not only quantitative but also qualitative or mixed methods approaches (Leonidou *et al.*, 2020). Compared with any other quantitative approach to our SLR, qualitative coding fits both our research objectives and selection criteria. We initially coded the basic characteristics of each study, including the year of publication, the journal that the article was published in, field of journal, type of paper (theoretical or empirical), methodology applied by the empirical studies (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approach), data collection method, sample characteristics of empirical studies and sample size. We also coded the theories used by the selected articles. This process enabled us to interpret the material, considering the discipline and theoretical context of existing research. Also, following examples from Christofi *et al.* (2021a, 2021b, 2021c) and López-Duarte *et al.* (2016) and to identify major contributions in the existing literature, we documented the number of citations of the selected articles.

Table 2.
List of selected
articles

No.	Author(s)	Year	Title	Journal	Volume	Issue	Page No.
1	Ahuvia, Aaron C.	2005	Beyond the extended self: loved objects and consumers' identity narratives	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	32	1	171–184
2	Bellezza, Silvia; Berger, Jonah	2020	Trickle-round signals: when low status is mixed with high	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	47	1	100–127
3	Berger, Jonah; Heath, Chip	2007	Where consumers diverge from others: identity signaling and product domains	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	34	2	121–134
4	Berger, Jonah; Heath, Chip	2008	Who drives divergence? Identity signaling, outgroup dissimilarity, and the abandonment of cultural tastes	<i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>	95	3	593–607
5	Beverland, Michael B.; Farrelly, Francis J.	2010	The quest for authenticity in consumption: consumers' purposive choice of authentic cues to shape experienced outcomes	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	36	5	838–856
6	Bhattacharjee, Amit; Berger, Jonah; Menon, Geeta	2014	When identity marketing backfires: consumer agency in identity expression	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	41	2	294–309
7	Bosnjak, Michael; Brown, Carroll A.; Lee, Dong Jin; Yu, Grace B.; Sirgy, M. Joseph	2016	Self-expressiveness in sport tourism: determinants and consequences	<i>Journal of Travel Research</i>	55	1	125–134
8	Cardoso, Paulo Ribeiro; Costa, Helda Sofia; Novais, Liliana Andreia	2010	Fashion consumer profiles in the Portuguese market: involvement, innovativeness, self-expression and impulsiveness as segmentation criteria	<i>International Journal of Consumer Studies</i>	34	6	638–647
9	Chan, Cindy; Berger, Jonah; van Boven, Leaf	2012	Identifiable but not identical: combining social identity and uniqueness motives in choice	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	39	3	561–573
10	Chaplin, Lan Nguyen; John, Deborah Roedder	2005	The development of self-brand connections in children and adolescents	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	32	1	119–129
11	Chernev, Alexander; Hamilton, Ryan; Gal, David	2011	Competing for consumer identity: limits to self-expression and the perils of lifestyle branding	<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	75	3	66–82
12	Cho, Eunjoo; Hwang, Jiyoung	2020	Drivers of consumer-based brand equity: a two-country analysis of perceived brand origin and identity expressiveness	<i>International Marketing Review</i>	37	2	241–259

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No.	Author(s)	Year	Title	Journal	Volume	Issue	Page No.
13	Compeau, Larry D; Monroe, Kent B; Grewal, Dhruv; Reynolds, Kristy de Vries, Lisette; Peluso, Alessandro M.; Romani, Simona; Leeftang, Peter SH.; Marcati, Alberto Derbaix, Christian; Decrop, Alain; Cabossart, Olivier	2016	Expressing and defining self and relationships through everyday shopping experiences	<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	69	3	1035–1042
14		2017	Explaining consumer brand-related activities on social media: an investigation of the different roles of self-expression and socializing motivations	<i>Computers in Human Behavior</i>	75		272–282
15		2002	Colors and scarves: the symbolic consumption of material possessions by Soccer fans	<i>Advances in Consumer Research, Association for Consumer Research</i>	29	1	511–518
16	Dittmar, Helga; Bond, Rod	2010	“I want it and i want it now”: using a temporal discounting paradigm to examine predictors of consumer impulsivity	<i>British Journal of Psychology</i>	101	4	751–776
17	Dommer, Sara Loughran; Swaminathan, Vanitha; Ahluwalia, Rohini	2013	Using differentiated brands to deflect exclusion and protect inclusion: the moderating role of self- esteem on attachment to differentiated brands	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	40	4	657–675
18	Escalas, Jenifer; Bettman, James R.	2003	You are what they eat: the influence of reference groups on consumers' connections to brands	<i>Journal of Consumer Psychology</i>	13	3	339–348
19	Escalas, Jenifer; Bettman, James R.	2005	Self-construal, reference groups, and brand meaning	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	32	3	378–389
20	Giakoumaki, Christina; Krepapa, Areti	2020	Brand engagement in self-concept and consumer engagement in social media: The role of the source	<i>Psychology and Marketing</i>	37	3	457–465
21	Goor, Dafna; Keinan, Anat; Ordabayeva, Nailya	2021	Status pivoting	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	47	6	978–1002
22	Goor, Dafna; Ordabayeva, Nailya; Keinan, Anat; Crener, Sandrine	2020	The impostor syndrome from luxury consumption	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	46	6	1031–1051

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Review and
future research
agenda

Table 2.

Table 2.

No.	Author(s)	Year	Title	Journal	Volume	Issue	Page No.
23	Grewal, Lauren; Stephen, Andrew T.; Coleman, Nicole Verrochi	2019	When posting about products on social media backfires: the negative effects of consumer identity signaling on product interest	<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>	56	2	197–210
24	Han, Young Jee; Nunes, Joseph C.; Drèze, Xavier	2010	Signaling status with luxury goods: the role of brand prominence	<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	74	4	15–30
25	Harmon-Kizer, Tracy; Kumar, Anand; Ortinau, David; Stock, James	2013	When multiple identities compete: the role of centrality in self-brand connections	<i>Journal of Consumer Behaviour</i>	12		483–495
26	Hartmann, Patrick; Apaolaza-Ibáñez, Vanessa	2012	Consumer attitude and purchase intention toward green energy brands: the roles of psychological benefits and environmental concern	<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	65	9	1254–1263
27	He, Daniel; Melumad, Shiri; Pham, Michel Tuan	2019	The pleasure of assessing and expressing our likes and dislikes	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	46	3	545–563
28	He, Yuanqiong; Zhang, Junfang; Zhou, Yuanyuan; Yang, Zhilin	2018	“Monkey See, Monkey Do?”: the effect of construal level on consumers’ reactions to others’ unethical behavior	<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	156	2	455–472
29	Hollenbeck, Candice R.; Kaikati, Andrew M.	2012	Consumers’ use of brands to reflect their actual and ideal selves on Facebook	<i>International Journal of Research in Marketing</i>	29	4	395–405
30	Iyer, Gopalkrishnan R; Blut, Markus; Xiao, Sarah Hong; Grewal, Dhruv	2020	Impulse buying: a meta-analytic review	<i>Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science</i>	48		384–404
31	Johnson, Olivia; Chattaraman, Veena	2019	Conceptualization and measurement of millennial’s social signaling and self-signaling for socially responsible consumption	<i>Journal of Consumer Behaviour</i>	18	1	32–42
32	Kaiser, Ulrike; Schreier, Martin; Janiszewski, Chris	2017	The self-expressive customization of a product can improve performance	<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>	54	5	816–831

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No.	Author(s)	Year	Title	Journal	Volume	Issue	Page No.
33	Kauppinen-raisänen, Hannele; Björk, Peter; Lönnström, Alexandra; Jauffret, Marie Nathalie; Jau, Marie-nathalie	2018	How consumers' need for uniqueness, self-monitoring, and social identity affect their choices when luxury brands visually shout versus whisper	<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	84		72–81
34	Keller, Kevin Lane	2021	The future of brands and branding: an essay on multiplicity, heterogeneity, and integration	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	48	4	527–540
35	Kokkoris, Michail; Kuhnén, Ulrich	2013	More than just an opinion: the effect of verbal self-expression on consumer choice	<i>Psychology and Marketing</i>	30	12	1062–1075
36	Liu, Chihling; Hogg, Margaret K.	2018	Using attachment theory to understand consumers' tensions between their sense of self and goal-pursuits in relationships	<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	92	July	197–209
37	Maimaran, Michal; Simonson, Itamar	2011	Multiple routes to self-versus other-expression in consumer choice	<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>	48	4	755–766
38	Malär, Lucia; Krohmer, Harley; Hoyer, Wayne D.; Nyffenegger, Bettina	2011	Emotional brand attachment and brand personality: the relative importance of the actual and the ideal self	<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>	75	July	35–52
39	Matherly, Ted; Pocheptsova Ghosh, Anastasiya	2017	Is what you feel what they see? Prominent and subtle identity signaling in intergroup interactions	<i>Journal of Behavioral Decision Making</i>	30	4	828–842
40	Moreau, C. Page; Prandelli, Emanuela; Schreier, Martin; Hieke, Silke	2020	Customization in luxury brands: Can Valentino get personal?	<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>	57	5	937–947
41	Morewedge, Carey K.; Monga, Ashwani; Palmatier, Robert W.; Shu, Suzanne B.; Small, Deborah A.	2021	Evolution of consumption: a psychological ownership framework	<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	85	1	196–218
42	Oyserman, Daphna	2009	Identity-based motivation: implications for action-readiness, procedural-readiness, and consumer behavior	<i>Journal of Consumer Psychology</i>	19	3	250–260

(continued)

Review and
future research
agenda

Table 2.

Table 2.

No.	Author(s)	Year	Title	Journal	Volume	Issue	Page No.
43	Pagani, Margherita; Hofacker, Charles F.; Goldsmith, Ronald E.	2011	The influence of personality on active and passive use of social networking sites	<i>Psychology and Marketing</i>	28		441–456
44	Perera, L. Chamila Roshani	2014	A processual theory of green identity formation: the case of young environmentalists in Australia	<i>International Journal of Consumer Studies</i>	38	3	289–296
45	Peters, Cara; Bodkin, Charles; Fitzgerald, Scott	2012	Toward an understanding of meaning creation via the collective co-production process	<i>Journal of Consumer Behaviour</i>	11		124–135
46	Puzakova, Marina; Aggarwal, Pankaj	2018	Brands as rivals: consumer pursuit of distinctiveness and the role of brand anthropomorphism	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	45	4	869–888
47	Rajavi, Koushyar; Kushwaha, Tarun; Steenkamp, Jan-Benedict E.M.	2019	In brands we trust? A multicategory, multicountry investigation of sensitivity of consumers' trust in brands to marketing-mix activities	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	46	4	651–670
48	Reed, Americus; Forehand, Mark R.; Puntoni, Stefano; Warlop, Luk	2012	Identity-based consumer behavior	<i>International Journal of Research in Marketing</i>	29	4	310 – 321
49	Rifkin, Jacqueline R.; Du, Katherine M.; Berger, Jonah	2021	Penny for your preferences: leveraging self-expression to encourage small prosocial gifts	<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	85	3	204–219
50	Rifkin, Jacqueline R.; Erkin, Jordan	2019	Variety in self-expression undermines self-continuity	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	46	4	725–749
51	Rozenkrants, Bella; Wheeler, S. Christian; Shiv, Baba	2017	Self-expression cues in product rating distributions: when people prefer polarizing products	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	44	4	759–777
52	Rustagi, Nimish; Shrum, L. J.	2019	Undermining the restorative potential of compensatory consumption: a product's explicit identity connection impedes self-repair	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	46	1	119–139

(continued)

No.	Author(s)	Year	Title	Journal	Volume	Issue	Page No.
53	Saenger, Christina; Thomas, Veronica L.; Bock, Dora F.	2020	Compensatory word of mouth as symbolic self-completion: when talking about a brand can restore consumers' self-perceptions after self-threat	<i>European Journal of Marketing</i>	54	4	671–690
54	Saenger, Christina; Thomas, Veronica L.; Johnson, Jennifer Wiggins	2013	Consumption-focused self-expression word of mouth: a new scale and its role in consumer research	<i>Psychology and Marketing</i>	30	11	959–970
55	Savary, Jennifer; Dhar, Ravi	2020	The uncertain self: how self-concept structure affects subscription choice	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	46	5	887–903
56	Schau, Hope Jensen	2000	Consumer imagination, identity and self-expression	<i>Advances in Consumer Research</i>	27	1	50–56
57	Schembri, Sharon; Merrilees, Bill; Kristiansen, Stine	2010	Brand consumption and narrative of the self	<i>Psychology and Marketing</i>	27	6	623–637
58	Sheehan, Daniel; Dommer, Sara	2020	Saving yourself: how identity relevance influences product usage	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	46	6	1076–1092
59	Loughran Shen, Hao; Sengupta, Jaideep	2018	Word of mouth versus word of mouse: speaking about a brand connects you to it more than writing does	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	45	3	595–614
60	Smith, Rosanna K; Vandellen, Michelle R; Ton, Lan Anh N	2021	Makeup who you are: self-expression enhances the perceived authenticity and public promotion of beauty work	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	48	1	102–122
61	Strizhakova, Yuliya; Coulter, Robin A; Price, Linda L	2011	Branding in a global marketplace: the mediating effects of quality and self-identity brand signals	<i>International Journal of Research in Marketing</i>	28		342–351
62	Stuppy, Amika; Mead, Nicole L.; Van Osselaer, Stijn M.J.	2020	I am, therefore I buy: low self-esteem and the pursuit of self-verifying consumption	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	46	5	956 – 973

(continued)

Review and future research agenda

Table 2.

No.	Author(s)	Year	Title	Journal	Volume	Issue	Page No.
663	Styvén, Maria Ek; Mariani, Marcello M.; Strandberg, Carola	2020	This is my hometown! The role of place attachment, congruity, and self-expressiveness on residents' intention to share a place brand message online	<i>Journal of Advertising</i>	49	5	540-556
664	Suzuki, Satoko; Kanno, Saori; Mizukoshi, Kosuke; Fujikawa, Yoshinori	2016	Consuming "to have no self": Kawaii consumption in Japanese women's identity work	<i>Advances in Consumer Research</i>	44		348-352
665	Swaminathan, Vanitha; Page, Karen L.; Gürhan-Canli, Zeynep	2007	My brand or "our" brand: the effects of brand relationship dimensions and self-construal on brand evaluations	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	34	2	248-259
666	Swaminathan, Vanitha; Sorescu, Alina; Steenkamp, Jan	2020	Branding in a hyperconnected world: refocusing theories and rethinking boundaries	<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	84	2	24-46
667	Benedict E.M.; O'Guinn, Thomas Clayton	2015	Advertising as unfavorable self-presentation: the dirty laundry effect	<i>Journal of Advertising</i>	44	1	58-70
668	Gibson; Schmitt, Bernd Thomas; Tandy Thomas; Trump, Rebecca K.; Price, Linda L.	2007	"This Is Who I Am": identity expressiveness and the theory of planned behavior	<i>Psychology and Marketing</i>	24	9	763-785
669	Nysveen, Herbjørn Tian, Kelly Tepper; William, O Bearden;	2001	Consumers' need for uniqueness: scale development and validation	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	28	1	50-66
670	Hunter, Garry L. Touré-Tillery, Maferima; Kouchaki, Maryam	2021	You will not remember this: how memory efficacy influences virtuous behavior	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	47	5	737-754
671	Wang, Yajin; John, Deborah Roedder	2019	Up, up, and away: upgrading as a response to dissimilar brand users	<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>	56	1	142-157

(continued)

No.	Author(s)	Year	Title	Journal	Volume	Issue	Page No.
72	Ward, Morgan K.; Broniarczyk, Susan M.	2011	It's not me, it's you: how gift giving creates giver identity threat as a function of social closeness	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	38	1	164–181
73	Warren, Caleb; Mohr, Gina S.	2019	Ironic consumption	<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>	46	2	246–266
74	Wilcox, Keith; Kim, Hyeon Min; Sen, Sankar	2009	Why do consumers buy counterfeit luxury brands?	<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>	46	2	247–259
75	Xie, Yi; Batra, Rajeev; Peng, Siqing	2015	An extended model of preference formation between global and local brands: the roles of identity expressiveness, trust, and affect	<i>Journal of International Marketing</i>	23	1	50–71
Source: Authors' own work							

Review and
future research
agenda

Table 2.

Moreover, we used the overarching framework of *antecedents-phenomenon-consequences* to map the findings in line with previous works that:

- apply the SLR method;
- use qualitative coding; and
- include both conceptual and empirical (qualitative and quantitative) studies (Christofi *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Pisani and Ricart, 2016; Pisani *et al.*, 2017).

This framework reflects a systematic and comprehensive approach (Schmeisser, 2013) to synthesize the final sample of studies, enabling us to enhance current understanding of how the IE concept has been treated across contexts and literatures, thus fulfilling RO1. Additionally, the framework has been used extensively in the literature (Christofi *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Pereira *et al.*, 2021; Pisani and Ricart, 2016; Pisani *et al.*, 2017; Schmeisser, 2013; Sousa *et al.*, 2021) and therefore it reflects a valid “tool” where research on IE can be integrated. As an example, Christofi *et al.* (2021a, 2021b, 2021c), in their SLR, assert that this framework “allows us to analyze the reviewed studies systematically and to map them methodically” (p. 964); i.e. the framework supports this process in respect of “the main drivers” (the “antecedents”) of their central concept of interest (the “phenomenon”) and then the influences (the “consequences”) of their central concept on key stakeholders. In the present study, the *antecedents* category includes studies that focus on the underlying mechanisms and main antecedents that spark or influence the emergence of the IE phenomenon. The *phenomenon* category consists of articles that examine the concept of IE and “its most salient aspects” (Pisani *et al.*, 2017, p. 594). Finally, the *consequences* category includes studies that focus on the main outcomes related to the IE concept. By mapping the synthesis of conventions on this emerging topic using the *antecedents-phenomenon-consequences* framework, we reconcile existing approaches in studying this topic while identifying knowledge gaps and suggestions for future research directions and key research priorities that move this field of study forward, thus fulfilling RO2. Finally, our categorization of the themes within each category is based on the theme-based logic (Pisani *et al.*, 2017; Rietveld and Schilling, 2021). This allowed us to proceed systematically in the analysis of the selected studies, identifying broad themes of common interest to IE researchers, which we subsequently used to categorize key findings.

3. Results

3.1 Characteristics of identity expressiveness

The analysis yielded 75 articles published between 2000 and 2022. The majority were published in marketing journals (65 articles), with 28 articles from the *Journal of Consumer Research*. Table 3 shows the number of articles in each field, with 57.3%, 6.7%, 25.3% and 10.7% being from journals ranked as ABS4*, 4, 3 and 2, respectively. Figure 1 shows the number of articles relevant to IE published per year from January 2000 to March 2022. While the number of articles has fluctuated over time, as a field of inquiry, the concept appears to have attracted more attention at specific points in time (in 2011 and 2019), especially in the field of marketing. The first surge echoes what Chernev *et al.* (2011) mentioned in their study about the concept of identity receiving increasing attention as a means of targeting consumers (e.g. identity-based marketing). Indeed, literature emphasizes the importance of a fit between brands and consumers’ identities, suggesting that identity-based marketing is most effective if it closely aligns brands with consumer identities (Bhattacharjee *et al.*, 2014; Chernev *et al.*, 2011; Reed *et al.*, 2012). The second surge seems to relate to the increasing use of social media by individuals to self-express (e.g. by posting about brands/products and

Field of Journal Journal title	No. of papers Rank of Journals (Based on the ABS list)						Review and future research agenda
	2	3	4	4*	Total	%	
General Management, Ethics, Gender and Social Responsibility					5	7	
<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>		1					
<i>Journal of Business Research</i>		4					
Information Management					1	1	
<i>Computers in Human Behavior</i>		1					
Marketing					65	87	
<i>Advances in Consumer Research</i>	3						
<i>European Journal of Marketing</i>		1					
<i>International Journal of Consumer Studies</i>	2						
<i>International Journal of Research in Marketing</i>			3				
<i>International Marketing Review</i>		1					
<i>Journal of Advertising</i>		2					
<i>Journal of Consumer Behaviour</i>	3						
<i>Journal of Consumer Psychology</i>				2			
<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>				28			
<i>Journal of International Marketing</i>		1					
<i>Journal of Marketing</i>				6			
<i>Journal of Marketing Research</i>				6			
<i>Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science</i>				1			
<i>Psychology and Marketing</i>		6					
Psychology (General)					3	4	
<i>British Journal of Psychology</i>		1					
<i>Journal of Behavioral Decision Making</i>		1					
<i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>			1				
Sector Studies					1	1	
<i>Journal of Travel Research</i>			1				
Total	8	19	5	43	75	100	
%	10.7	25.3	6.7	57.3	100		

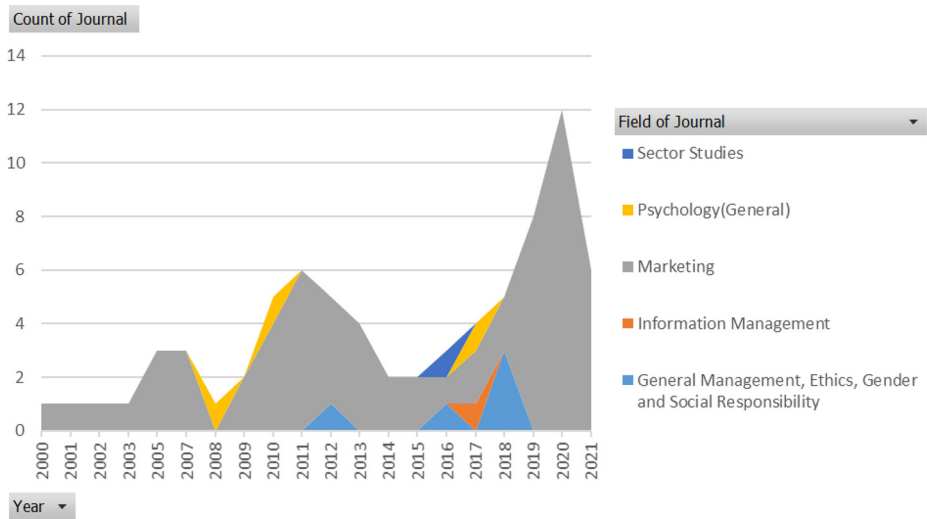
Source: Authors' own work

Table 3.
Journal field and
ranking

engaging in brand-related activities on social media), which has been investigated by many researchers (Giakoumaki and Krepapa, 2020; Grewal *et al.*, 2019; Rifkin and Etkin, 2019; Smith *et al.*, 2021; Touré-Tillery and Kouchaki, 2021).

Among the 75 papers, only seven are conceptual papers. The majority of the 68 remaining empirical papers adopt a quantitative methodology (56 papers), while the remainder include either mixed-methods (two papers) or qualitative approaches (ten papers) (Table 4). Table 4 identifies the types of papers and methods of data collection. Understanding this information from the selected papers was needed to help us gain knowledge about best practices in this research area, to identify methodological patterns and trends and to propose avenues for future research regarding the utilization of diverse methodological approaches. Figure 2 shows the number of papers by type of paper/methodology and field of journal in each year. From this, we find that 13 studies use experimental data (including the mixed-method paper), 11 use survey data and 30 use both survey and experimental data. The qualitative studies include data collection approaches such as interviews, observation, case study and focus groups. Finally, the mixed-method paper combines both in-depth interviews and experiments.

Figure 1.
Number of articles in
a year published in
journals by field of
journal



Source: Authors' own works

Our analysis reveals that the quantitative studies (including the experimental study in the only mixed-method category) have sample sizes ranging between 12 and 15,073 participants. The majority of these studies (41 studies) contain sample sizes of 200 to 1,599 (Figure 3). These samples are relatively broad and diverse in terms of research participant characteristics, e.g. from children (8–18 years) to academic staff, from social media users to local community participants and from fashion fans to confetti users. The most common type of sample is that of university students, as well as participants from online databases. Forty-one studies mention recruiting university students as participants, and 27 studies used online participant pools, including Web-survey databases and social media user pools. Additionally, three studies recruited participants via professional marketing research firms. Meanwhile, two studies randomly targeted consumers on the street or at the train station.

Notably, the majority (54 papers) of the 68 empirical papers adopt the perspective of individual consumers (Ahuvia, 2005; Escalas and Bettman, 2005; Shen and Sengupta, 2018), thus reflecting the nature of IE as a phenomenon that focuses on individual perceptions. By contrast, other studies analyze the expressiveness of brands (Xie *et al.*, 2015) or brands' signaling characteristics (Bhattacharjee *et al.*, 2014). Additionally, some studies explore IE at a cross-national level, thus highlighting the role of culture (Rajavi *et al.*, 2019).

Moreover, among the empirical studies, most are conducted in a single country context (55 articles), six studies collect data from two or three countries, and one study uses survey data from 13 countries. The country contexts include both developed and developing/emerging countries, although 75% of studies are conducted in a single developed country (Table 5). Our results show that the most studied country is the USA (35 studies). Interestingly, six studies used an online participant pool (including social media user pool and Web-survey database), with no specific country context mentioned.

Finally, in terms of citations, 23 articles appear on Google Scholar to be cited more than 200 times, with eight boasting more than 1,000 citations. The citations and key findings of these papers are shown in Table 6.

Type of paper Methodology Data collection method	No. of papers	%	Reference
<i>Empirical</i>	68	91	
<i>Mix</i>	2	3	
In-depth interview, experiment	1	1	Thomas <i>et al.</i> (2015)
Field and lab experiments, incentive-compatible designs, ethnographic analysis, observational study and qualitative interviews	1	1	Goor <i>et al.</i> (2021)
<i>Qualitative</i>	10	13	
Interview	6	8	Beverland and Farrelly (2010), Compeau <i>et al.</i> (2016), Liu and Hogg (2018), Schembri <i>et al.</i> (2010), Perera (2014), Suzuki <i>et al.</i> (2016)
Case study and interview	2	3	Ahuvia (2005), Peters <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Observational research, in-depth interviews	1	1	Derbaix <i>et al.</i> (2002)
Observational research, diaries, focus groups, in-depth interviews and electronic journal entries	1	1	Hollenbeck and Kaikati (2012)
<i>Quantitative</i>	56	75	
Experiment	13	17	Chaplin and John (2005), Chernev <i>et al.</i> (2011), de Vries <i>et al.</i> (2017), Escalas and Bettman (2005), Kaiser <i>et al.</i> (2017), Maimaran and Simonson (2011), Moreau <i>et al.</i> (2020), Ward and Broniarczyk (2011), Wilcox <i>et al.</i> (2009), Rifkin <i>et al.</i> (2021), Kokkoris and Kuhnien (2013), Sheehan and Dommer (2020), Touré-Tillery and Kouchaki (2021)
Survey	11	15	Bosnjak <i>et al.</i> (2016), Cho and Hwang (2020), Kauppinen-räsänen <i>et al.</i> (2018), Malär <i>et al.</i> (2011), Rajavi <i>et al.</i> (2019), Saenger <i>et al.</i> (2013), Strizhakova <i>et al.</i> (2011), Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i> (2007), Xie <i>et al.</i> (2015), Cardoso <i>et al.</i> (2010), Pagani <i>et al.</i> (2011)

(continued)

Review and
future research
agenda

Table 4.
Types of paper and
methods of data
collection

Table 4.

Type of paper Methodology	No. of papers	%	Reference
Data collection method			
Survey and experiment	30	40	Bellezza and Berger (2020), Berger and Heath (2007, 2008), Bhattacharjee <i>et al.</i> (2014), Chan <i>et al.</i> (2012), Dittmar and Bond (2010), Dommer <i>et al.</i> (2013), Escalas and Bettman (2003), Giakoumaki and Krepapa (2020), Goor <i>et al.</i> (2020), Grewal <i>et al.</i> (2019), Han <i>et al.</i> (2010), Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibañez (2012), He <i>et al.</i> (2018), He <i>et al.</i> (2019), Puzakova and Aggarwal (2018), Rifkin and Etkin (2019), Rozenkrants <i>et al.</i> (2017), Rustagi and Shrum (2019), Saenger <i>et al.</i> (2020), Savary and Dhar (2020), Shen and Sengupta (2018), Stuppy <i>et al.</i> (2020), Styvén <i>et al.</i> (2020), Swaminathan <i>et al.</i> (2007), Tian <i>et al.</i> (2001), Wang and John (2019), Harmon-Kizer <i>et al.</i> (2013), Matherly <i>et al.</i> (2017), Warren and Mohr (2019) Smith <i>et al.</i> (2021)
Archival analysis, experiment	1	1	
In-depth interview, scale development	1	1	Johnson and Chattaraman (2019)
Conceptual	7	9	Oyserman (2009), Swaminathan <i>et al.</i> (2020), Iyer <i>et al.</i> (2020), Keller (2021), Morewedge <i>et al.</i> (2021), Reed <i>et al.</i> (2012), Schau (2000)
Grand total	75	100	
Source: Authors' own work			

Review and future research agenda

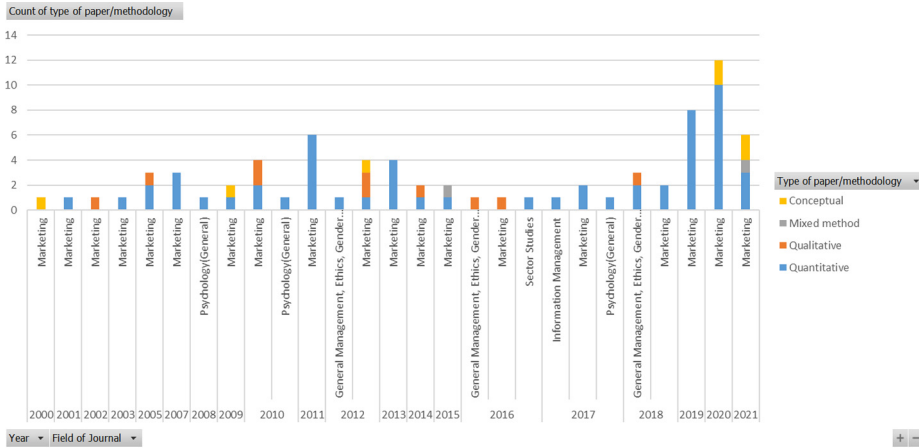


Figure 2. Number of articles by year by type of paper/ methodology and field of journal

Source: Authors' own work

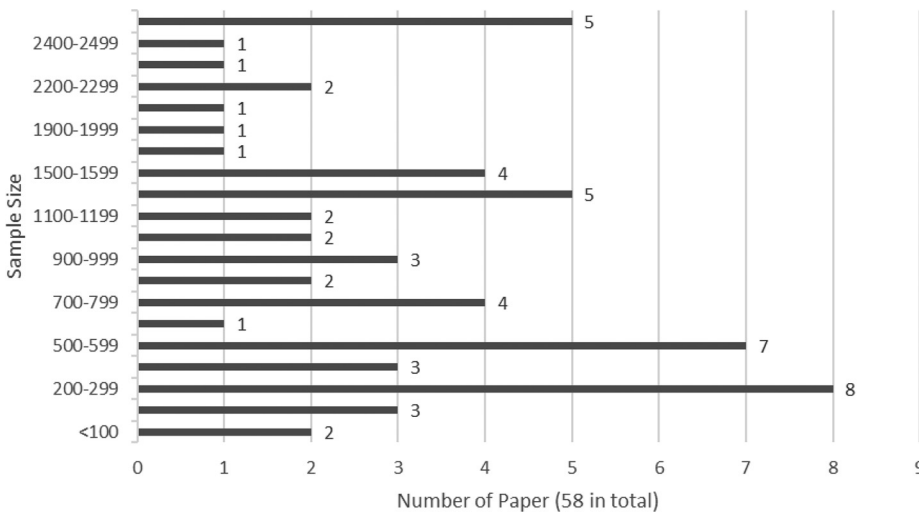


Figure 3. Sample size in quantitative and mix method studies

Note: The sample size in the mix method study refers to the sample size in the experiment
Source: Authors' own work

3.2 Theories and conceptualizations in identity expressiveness research

We examined the identified studies in terms of theoretical underpinnings and definitions of IE used. To explain IE, most studies are grounded in the early theoretical works of Sirgy (1982), Belk (1988) and Tajfel (1981) on self-concept, identity and social identity (Escalas and Bettman, 2005; Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018; Saenger *et al.*, 2013; Schembri *et al.*, 2010). The central tenets of these theories establish that individuals prefer brands that match their

Table 5.
Context of empirical studies

Context of empirical studies	No. of papers	%	Reference	Sample size of the quantitative studies ^a
<i>Single developed country</i> (some of these studies include the use of online participant pools where country is not specified)	51	75.0		
Australia	3	4.4	Beverland and Farrelly (2010), Schembri <i>et al.</i> (2010), Perera (2014)	Qualitative; Qualitative; Qualitative
Belgium	1	1.5	Derbaix <i>et al.</i> (2002)	Qualitative
Germany	1	1.5	Kokkoris and Kuhnen (2013)	Sample size 64
Greece	1	1.5	Giakoumaki and Krepapa (2020)	Qualitative
Hong Kong (China)	1	1.5	Shen and Sengupta (2018)	Sample size 804
Italy	1	1.5	Pagani <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Sample size 1,030
Japan	1	1.5	Suzuki <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Qualitative
Portugal	1	1.5	Cardoso <i>et al.</i> (2010)	Sample size 213
Spain	1	1.5	Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibañez (2012)	Sample size 726
Sweden	1	1.5	Styvén <i>et al.</i> (2020)	Sample size 213
Switzerland	2	2.9	Malär <i>et al.</i> (2011), Goor <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Sample size 2,309; Sample size 2,208
UK	2	2.9	Ditmar and Bond (2010), Liu and Hogg (2018)	Sample size 232; Qualitative
USA	35	51.5	Ahuvia (2005), Bellezza and Berger (2020), Berger and Heath (2007, 2008), Bhattacharjee <i>et al.</i> (2014), Bosnjak <i>et al.</i> (2016), Chan <i>et al.</i> (2012), Chaplin and John (2005), Chernev <i>et al.</i> (2011), Compeau <i>et al.</i> (2016), Dommer <i>et al.</i> (2013), Escalas and Bettman (2003, 2005), Goor <i>et al.</i> (2020),	Qualitative; Sample size: 2452; Sample size: 479, >533; Sample size: 940; Sample size: 1,251; Sample size: 519; Sample size: 122; Sample size: 1,048; Qualitative; Sample size: 1,205; Sample size: 216, 449; Sample size: 1,580;

(continued)

Context of empirical studies	No. of papers	%	Reference	Sample size of the quantitative studies ^a
<i>Single developing/emerging country</i> China (PRC)	2	2.9	Grewal <i>et al.</i> (2019),	Sample size: 1,235;
			He <i>et al.</i> (2019),	Sample size: >5,700;
			Puzakova and Aggarwal (2018),	Sample size: 6,682;
			Rifkin and Rifkin (2019),	Sample size: 1,514;
			Saenger <i>et al.</i> (2013),	Sample size: 790;
			Savary and Dhar (2020),	Sample size: 3,626;
			Stuppy <i>et al.</i> (2020),	Sample size: 1,586;
			Swaminathan <i>et al.</i> (2007),	Sample size: 594;
			Thomas <i>et al.</i> (2015),	Mix method study –
			Tian <i>et al.</i> (2001),	experiment sample size: 278;
			Wang and John (2019),	Sample size: 1,250;
			Ward and Broniarczyk (2011),	Sample size: 781;
			Wilcox <i>et al.</i> (2009),	Sample size: 531;
			Rifkin <i>et al.</i> (2021),	Sample size: 263;
			Harmon-Kizer <i>et al.</i> (2013),	Sample size: 1,727;
			Johnson and Chattaraman (2019),	Sample size: 544;
<i>Single country: country unspecified</i>	2	2.9	Matherly <i>et al.</i> (2017),	Sample size: 12;
			Peters <i>et al.</i> (2012),	Sample size: 1,949;
			Sheehan and Dommer (2020),	Sample size: 25;
			Touré-Tillery and Kouchaki (2021),	Sample size: 1,580;
			Warren and Mohr (2019)	Sample size: 2,039;
				Sample size: 2,210
			He <i>et al.</i> (2018),	Sample size: 653;
			Xie <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Sample size: 287

(continued)

Review and future research agenda

Table 5.

Table 5.

Context of empirical studies	No. of papers	%	Reference	Sample size of the quantitative studies ^a
One European country	2	2.9	de Vries <i>et al.</i> (2017), Kaiser <i>et al.</i> (2017)	Sample size: 964; Sample size: 805
<i>A few countries studies (2–9 countries)</i>	6	8.8		
Developed: 2–3 countries	2	2.9	Kauppinen-räsänen <i>et al.</i> (2018), Moreau <i>et al.</i> (2020)	Sample size: 215; Sample size: 1,157
Developed and developing/ emerging: 2–3 countries	4	5.9	Cho and Hwang (2020), Han <i>et al.</i> (2010), Rustagi and Shrum (2019), Strizhakova <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Sample size: 711; Sample size: 120; Sample size: 1,234; Sample size: 1,168
<i>Multiple country studies (more than ten countries)</i>	1	1.5		
Developed and developing/ emerging: 13 countries	1	1.5	Rajavi <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Sample size: 15,073
<i>Country unspecified</i>	6	8.8		
From online participant pool(s)	6	8.8	Hollenbeck and Kaikati (2012), Maimaran and Simonson (2011), Rozenkrants <i>et al.</i> (2017), Saenger <i>et al.</i> (2020), Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i> (2007), Smith <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Qualitative; Sample size: 504; Sample size: 908; Sample size: 450; Sample size: 533; Sample size: 3,072
<i>Total</i>	68	100.0		

Note: ^aSample sizes are included in quantitative papers only
Source: Authors' own work

Author(s)	Citation	Key findings
Escalas and Bettman (2005)	2580	Brands with images compatible with an ingroup strengthen self-brand links for all consumers, while brands with images consistent with an outgroup have a greater negative impact on independent vs interdependent consumers
Tian <i>et al.</i> (2001)	2141	A scale of 31 items is established to assess consumers' need for uniqueness: 11 items for creative choice counter-conformity, 11 for unpopular choice counter-conformity and nine for avoiding similarity
Escalas and Bettman (2003)	2036	The extent to which individual consumer's self-brand connections are influenced by member group and aspiration group usage is determined by whether the individual belongs to a member group or desires to join an aspiration group
Ahuvia (2005)	1862	Most statements from Belk's "Possessions and the Extended Self" were supported; loved possessions can be linked to the self by both expressing the self and changing oneself into the desired/ideal self
Han <i>et al.</i> (2010)	1731	A taxonomy is proposed that categorizes consumers into four categories based on their wealth and need for status. Wealthy consumers who have less need for status prefer to mingle with their own kind and will pay a premium for "quiet" products that only they can recognize, while wealthy consumers with a strong need for status use "loud" luxury products to convey to the less fortunate that they are not among them. People who have a strong need for status but cannot afford actual luxury use loud counterfeits to imitate others they perceive to be affluent
Berger and Heath (2007)	1629	In product domains that are symbolic of identity, there is a higher possibility for consumers to deviate from majorities or members of other social groups. One reason for consumers to diverge is to avoid associating with unwanted identities
Malär <i>et al.</i> (2011)	1505	Self-congruence has a variety of effects on customers' emotional brand attachment, depending on their product involvement, individual differences and the form of self-congruence used (actual vs ideal self-congruence). Emotional brand attachment is most influenced by actual self-congruence. Product involvement, self-esteem and public self-consciousness enhance the positive influence of actual self-congruence while lowering the influence of ideal self-congruence on emotional brand attachment
Wilcox <i>et al.</i> (2009)	1086	The social motivations, including to express oneself and/or to fit in, which drive consumers' needs for counterfeit luxury brands, are at the root of consumers' luxury brand choices
Beverland and Farrelly (2010)	907	Consumers tend to pay attention to certain cues in products that would help them to convey authenticity and such a decision-making process is motivated by a desire to get various identity benefits such as control, connection, virtue from authentic products

(continued)

Table 6.
Seminal papers
(citation 200)

Author(s)	Citation	Key findings
Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibáñez (2012)	848	Consumer perceptions about green energy brands can be positively affected, and their intention of purchase can be enhanced by three psychological benefit categories – warm glow, self-expressive benefits and nature experiences. Self-expressive benefits are the only one within the three categories that do not affect participants' perception about the experimental brand or their intention of purchase
Chaplin and John (2005)	747	Self-brand connections and the depth of these connections both grow with age for children. Children establish a limited number of self-brand connections during middle childhood. The connections increase when children grow into adolescence once brands are perceived as being linked to their self-concept as the brand shares the same personality, user attributes or reference group connection
Oyserman (2009)	692	People usually behave in ways that are consistent with their identities. As an identity takes on meaning in a given context, it is a dynamic function of how pragmatic options for action are infused with identity-based meaning. Individuals' personal goal accomplishment is not always served by the action-readiness aspect of identity-based motivation
Swaminathan <i>et al.</i> (2007)	667	Self-concept connection and country-of-origin connection have different effects according to how self-construal is construed. Independent self-construal prioritizes self-concept connection. Interdependent self-construal prioritizes brand country-of-origin connection
Berger and Heath (2008)	617	Divergence enables people to avoid signaling unwanted identities, and divergence from dissimilar outgroups can protect them from being misidentified
Reed <i>et al.</i> (2012)	558	This study proposes five basic principles of the identity formation/expression process: identity salience; identity association; identity relevance; identity verification; and identity conflict
Chernev <i>et al.</i> (2011)	480	As consumers' need for self-expression through brands is finite, it can be satiated by exposure to self-expressive brands. It is possible to satiate consumers' need for self-expression from similar brands of the self-expressive brand, brands from other categories, non-brand alternatives of self-expression and other self-expression behaviors
Hollenbeck and Kaikati (2012)	379	Rarely do brands present consumers' actual self in a real, accurate way. On Facebook, people use brands to express their actual selves as well as their ideal selves, but the ideal and actual selves often conflict with one another. Actual and ideal selves are either congruent (congruous) or incongruent (incongruous). Brand linkages allow people to express their identities in accordance with the type of congruence (or lack thereof)
Chan <i>et al.</i> (2012)	365	Assimilation and differentiation goals are simultaneously pursued by consumers on different dimensions within a single decision, e.g. in a single decision, consumers may conform on one dimension by choosing a brand that shows their group affiliation while differentiating on another dimension by choosing a color that shows their individuality

Table 6.

(continued)

Author(s)	Citation	Key findings
Pagani <i>et al.</i> (2011)	295	Innovativeness positively influences both on active and passive use of social networks, whereas identity expressiveness (both self and social identity expressiveness) positively influences only the active use of social networks
Schembri <i>et al.</i> (2010)	293	There are three ways consumers use brands: symbolic, iconic and indexical. To construct the self, consumers use the symbolism of brands, as well as brands that resemble things in an iconic manner or brands that are connected with something in an indexical way
Ward and Broniarczyk (2011)	236	It is possible to create an identity threat to the giver when giving an identity-contrary gift to a close friend (vs a distant friend) who is vital in the giver's self-construction. In response, the giver is more likely to reestablish the threaten identity by taking actions to explicitly express this identity, such as to purchase identity-expressive products
Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i> (2007)	231	Self-identity expressiveness and social identity expressiveness are important factors in affecting intentions to use. Subjective norm by itself cannot adequately explain how identity and social influences drive behavioral intentions
Xie <i>et al.</i> (2015)	210	Both perceived brand globalness and perceived brand localness can facilitate a brand's identity expressiveness

Source: Authors' own work

Table 6.

self/social concept and make brand choices as a way to self-express (Belk, 1988; Cardoso *et al.*, 2010; Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007). Additionally, in line with identity theory, IE is viewed as having two dimensions, namely, *self IE* and *social IE*, positing that these approaches are underpinned by self/social identity theories, respectively. *Self IE* refers to an object's ability or the use of an object (e.g. brand), to reflect one's personal identity whereas *social IE* refers to:

- (1) the brand's ability to reflect group values; or
- (2) a specific behavior that allows expressions of collective self or conformance to group identity (Cho and Hwang, 2020; Pagani *et al.*, 2011; Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007; Xie *et al.*, 2016).

Both facets of IE, namely, self and social, are said to determine consumer behaviors in personal and social settings (Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007; Rozenkrants *et al.*, 2017; Pagani *et al.*, 2011).

Furthermore, we find that a few studies also draw on McCracken's (1988) theory of meaning movement (Escalas and Bettman, 2003), on signaling theory (Johnson and Chattaraman, 2019), as well as on branding theory in general (Escalas and Bettman, 2005; Saenger *et al.*, 2020; Schembri *et al.*, 2010) to further explain expressions of identity via given objects, including brands, products (e.g. fashion) and/or messages (Bosnjak *et al.*, 2016; Cho and Hwang, 2020; Escalas and Bettman, 2005; Styvén *et al.*, 2020; Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007).

Our review of the papers indicates that studies seldom define IE, albeit scholars do attempt to explain IE in lateral terms (Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018; Saenger *et al.*, 2013). Very few scholars provide a formal definition of IE (Cho and Hwang, 2020; Pagani *et al.*, 2011;

Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007), with most studies referring to *self-expression* or *expressiveness* to denote IE. In reconciling the scholarly approaches to understand IE, the concept can be viewed as either a *motivation* to express one's identity through purchases of brands (Chernev *et al.*, 2011; He *et al.*, 2018; Kokkoris and Kuhnen, 2013; Morewedge *et al.*, 2021; Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018; Saenger *et al.*, 2013; Smith *et al.*, 2021), as the actual *act* of expressing oneself (i.e. one's identity) via specific activities or contexts (Bosnjak *et al.*, 2016; Pagani *et al.*, 2011; Perera, 2014; Peters *et al.*, 2012; Rifkin *et al.*, 2021) (e.g. "behavior that can be interpreted both by oneself in the self-construction of identity," Pagani *et al.*, 2011, p. 445) or the *perception* of a product's ability to express identity (Cho and Hwang, 2020; Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007) (e.g. "Identity expressiveness reflects consumer perceptions about how an object helps express one's social/personal identity," Cho and Hwang, 2020, p. 245).

Furthermore, our SLR identifies some studies that refer to *identity signaling* (Berger and Heath, 2007; Berger and Rand, 2008; Chernev *et al.*, 2011; Grewal *et al.*, 2019; Savary and Dhar, 2020), defined as behavior that "conveys particular information about the individual to the self or to others" (Gal, 2015, p. 257). In the context of consumer behavior, Belk (1988) denotes that identity signaling is used to communicate or convey identity via choices and/or consumption of products in line with self-concept/identity theories. In a similar vein, Grewal *et al.* (2019) highlight the "instrumental role" of consumption of products in signaling one's identity, indicating that "owning and consuming identity relevant products enables consumers to communicate something about themselves" (p. 199). Warren and Mohr (2019) also argue that signaling involves a consumer sending a signal via the use of a product while observers decode the signal. Of note, Savary and Dhar (2020) and Touré-Tillery and Kouchaki (2021) use the term "self-signaling" to indicate that individuals select options that signal their self (e.g. self-identity).

Building on this, identity signaling and IE are seen as very similar concepts in the literature, pointing to the same phenomenon because they both highlight:

- the aspect of "communicating" one's identity to the self and/or others; and
- the instrumental role of brands/products in communicating/expressing or signaling one's identity.

However, IE seems to be a "more dynamic and holistic process" (compared to identity signaling) whereby the consumption of products/brands to express one's identity is intertwined with other individual activities simultaneously involved in the expression of one's identity (e.g. speech, writing and so on).

In addition, scholars argue that brands have self-expressive functions, allowing consumers to express their identity (Chernev *et al.*, 2011; Keller, 2021). Indeed, in reviewing the identified studies, we find that some studies indicate that products or brands can be thought as self-expressive (Iyer *et al.*, 2020), with self-expressiveness being seen as an attribute or "property of the brand" (Xie *et al.*, 2015, p. 54); hence, defining IE as "the capability of a particular brand to construct and signal a person's self-identity to himself as well as his social identity to important others" (Xie *et al.*, 2015, p. 53). Self-expressive brands allow individuals to construct and express their identity through purchase, usage and/or consumption of such brands (see also Maimaran and Simonson, 2011; Saenger *et al.*, 2013). These studies emphasize that brands are seen as carrying symbolic meanings that individuals transfer to themselves through usage and consumption (McCracken, 1988), thus allowing them to define and express their identities (Chernev *et al.*, 2011; Hollenbeck and Kaikati, 2012; Savary and Dhar, 2020). Identity expressive brands are, therefore, those brands that establish a fit or connection with consumers, allowing them to reflect their personal and social identities (Ruane and Wallace, 2015; Styvén *et al.*, 2020). For instance,

luxury brands are underpinned by values of perceived hedonism, extended self and uniqueness (Christodoulides *et al.*, 2009; Vickers and Renand, 2003) and are therefore seen as carrying self-expressive abilities. Equally, in the case of customized products, symbolic meaning can be transferred to the products from the individual (Kaiser *et al.*, 2017; Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018). In this instance, customization offered by various brands allows self-expression by engaging consumers in designing and altering products to make them closer to the *me* in their own minds. These aforementioned studies (Maimaran and Simonson, 2011; Saenger *et al.*, 2013; Xie *et al.*, 2015) view IE as a key attribute of brands or products, thus allowing researchers to categorize products according to their level of expressiveness (Chernev *et al.*, 2011; Maimaran and Simonson, 2011).

In sum, in attempting to unify different conceptualizations of IE, we posit that IE is driven by identity-relevant motives (Vignoles *et al.*, 2006); for example, need for uniqueness, need to belong and so on, and other cognitive functions (evaluations or products/brands) that lead individuals to use product/brands and/or engage in behaviors that according to themselves allow them to express their identity (Cho and Hwang, 2020; Pagani *et al.*, 2011; Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007). For instance, an individual who is driven by the need to be unique will purchase and consume products/brands or engage in behaviors (e.g. experiences) that allow them to express that uniqueness.

3.3 Synthesis

In synthesizing extant research, this section aims to summarize the current state of relevant studies and serves as a foundation for researchers to draw upon. This section contains a theme-based analysis of the selected studies that include the three categories according to the *antecedents-phenomenon-consequences* framework applied. In each of the three categories (Table 7), we group the representative studies that focus on the broad themes, identify the main frameworks and theories used and summarize the key findings of the studies. In addition, the main theoretical frameworks which are applied in the representative studies are examined (see Table 8). Specifically, this table provides explanations of the main theoretical frameworks used and how they are applied in the relevant, extant research.

3.3.1 The antecedents. Following the approach adopted by Pisani *et al.* (2017), studies are categorized based on the level of analysis when examining the drivers of IE in the antecedents category. Studies in this category examine the drivers which trigger or affect the concept and/or phenomenon, i.e. IE, at the following levels:

- individual (micro-) level;
- individual (micro-) and social (contextual) combined level;
- brand/company (institutional) level; and
- brand/company and individual combined level (Table 7 – Antecedents).

As discussed, the extant literature shows two angles in conceptualizing this notion, first as an individual's perception (Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007) and second, as a property of the brand (Xie *et al.*, 2015). As such, it is logical for the selected studies to have individual-level and/or brand/company-level drivers. In addition, IE, as indicated by Thorbjørnsen *et al.* (2007) and Rozenkrants *et al.* (2017), captures both self IE, which concerns individuals' expressiveness of their distinctiveness, as well as social IE, which concerns the expressiveness of a group level identity (see individual and social, combined level antecedents in Table 7). Even though the concept of IE is still underdeveloped, in examining its antecedents, researchers draw on various well-developed theories (See Table 7 – Antecedents). It is noticeable that a

Table 7.
Antecedents-
phenomenon-
consequences

Themes	Representative references	Antecedents Main theoretical frameworks ^a	Key findings
<i>Individual (micro)-level drivers</i>	Savary and Dhar (2020)	Construal level theory	• Clarity of self-concept influences subscription decisions that consumers use to signal identities • The level of consumers' construal (also known as mindset) is positively related to their self-expressiveness • Consumers' need to validate their self-image facilitates them to use brands to express their identities • Consumers are motivated by their need for uniqueness to differentiate themselves from others in the same group to varying degrees. Those who have higher needs for uniqueness tend to choose products which are more distinct • People's self-expression is motivated by their psychological need for autonomy • The need for uniqueness and self-monitoring can be seen as motivations of attitudinal behaviors of self-expression and self-presentation
	He <i>et al.</i> (2018)		
	Harmon-Kizer <i>et al.</i> (2013)		
	Chan <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Optimal distinctiveness theory	• Those who believe in global citizenship through global brands (GCGB) are more inclined to use brands as symbolic signals and to express their identities through these brands • Attitudes encourage self-expression when it is serving the value-expressive function and facilitate self-presentation when it is serving the social-adjustive function • Consumers discussing and sharing their opinions about brands and products can psychologically substitute for making their choices because opinion and choice represent two alternative routes to self-expression
	de Vries <i>et al.</i> (2017)		
	Kauppinen-Räsänen <i>et al.</i> (2018)	The functional theory of attitudes	• Having low-memory efficacy (e.g. I generally do not remember things) reduces the diagnostic value of actions (e.g. this does not mean anything) and therefore reduces consumers' need to signal themselves • Purchasing a gift that is contrary to the giver's identity may cause an identity threat to the giver, and givers will then engage in identity expressive behaviors, such as purchase identity expressive products, to reestablish their threat identities • Consumer types (which are categorized according to their wealth and need for status) are associated with their preference for quiet or loud branding to express themselves
	Sirizhakova <i>et al.</i> (2011)		
	Wilcox <i>et al.</i> (2009)	The functional theories of attitudes	• Consumer types (which are categorized according to their wealth and need for status) are associated with their preference for quiet or loud branding to express themselves
	Kokkoris and Kuhnen (2013)		
	Touré-Tillery and Kouchaki (2021)	Self-verification theory	
	Ward and Broniarczyk (2011)		
	Han <i>et al.</i> (2010)	The theory of the leisure class	

(continued)

Themes	Representative references	Antecedents Main theoretical frameworks ^a	Key findings
<i>Individual (micro) level and social (contextual) combined level drivers</i>	Styvén <i>et al.</i> (2020, p. 542)	Attachment theory	• Place attachment (<i>emotional ties that people develop with a particular geographic area</i>) enhances local residents' self-expressiveness • Expressing likes/dislikes facilitates consumers' self-expressiveness in a deep and global (vs narrow) sense • Sports activities' perceived difficulty, perceived effort, perceived importance and potential for self-realization influence a tourist's self-expressiveness when experiencing a sports activity • Consumers are less self-expressive when they are told their choices are made accountable and might be judged by others • People might worry about their self-image and dislike identity-congruent ads when they think others may hold negative views (a.k.a. unfavorable reflected appraisals) of them if they are associated with these ads • Subjective norms strongly influence social identity expressiveness
	He <i>et al.</i> (2019)		
	Bosnjak <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Eudaimonistic identity theory	
	Maimaran and Simonson (2011) Thomas <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Cooley's looking-glass self-theory	
<i>Brand/company (institutional) level drivers</i>	Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i> (2007)	The theory of planned behavior	• Perceived sense of agency in identity expression can be hindered by brand anthropomorphism when the brand is positioned as being distinctive • Self-expressive customization of products can extend consumer identities (personal and group) to the products • "Dueling preferences" (giving people the choice between two options, e.g. cats vs dogs) provide greater opportunities for small prosocial gifts givers (e.g. tips or small donations) to self-express • A self-expressive assortment is one in which a person can incorporate his or her personal qualities into a product (e.g. show favorite music types on Apple Music). By constructing assortments, consumers can communicate and express who they are
	Puzakova and Aggarwal (2018)		
	Kaiser <i>et al.</i> (2017)		
	Rifkin <i>et al.</i> (2021)		
<i>Brand/company level and individual level combined drivers</i>	Rifkin and Etkin (2019)	Self-perception theory	
	Escalas and Bettman (2003)	Social comparison theory	• Brands which are used by reference groups can contribute to the links between consumers and brands when consumers use brands to develop and construct their self-concepts • Both perceived brand globalness and perceived brand localness can positively impact on brand identity expressiveness • Polarizing products (strongly liked and disliked by different consumers), which indicate consumers' tastes and personality, are considered as vehicles for consumers' self-expression
	Xie <i>et al.</i> (2015)		
	Rozenkrants <i>et al.</i> (2017)		

(continued)

Review and future research agenda

Table 7.

Table 7.

Themes	Representative references	Antecedents Main theoretical frameworks ^a	Key findings
Self and social identity expressiveness (consumer perspective)	Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Phenomenon Identity theory, social identity theory	• Based on identity theory as well as social identity theory, the concept of identity expressiveness can potentially be explained by the two parallel concepts of self-identity expressiveness and social identity expressiveness • Individual/group level of identity expression: individual identity expression entails showing one's uniqueness and distinctiveness. Group identity expression includes expressing one's similarity to other group members and belongingness within a group • A concept of identity expressiveness can be broken down into two concepts: "self-identity expressiveness" and "social identity expressiveness." Self-identity expressiveness refers to how and to what extent consumers use social networking sites to convey their identities and values to themselves and others, whereas social expressiveness refers to the ability to communicate verbally and effectively during social interaction <i>Self-expression needs:</i> • Self-expression is a finite need, and people's preference for self-expressive brands depends on the accessibility of alternative methods of self-expression • As one way to meet one's self-expression needs, certain brands and products can be used to materialize and communicate a desired representation of one's actual and/or ideal self <i>Sense of agency in self-expression:</i> • Consumers' perceptions of agency in identity expression decrease when connections between brands and consumers' identity are made explicit by brand messages • Consumers' sense of agency in identity expression is facilitated through an anthropomorphized brand-as-supporter, as opposed to through an anthropomorphized brand-as-agent or an anthropomorphized brand as controller <i>Self-authenticity/Acuracy of self-concept in self-expression:</i> • Individuals who strive for self-authenticity align their inner thoughts and feelings with their outward self-expressions and behaviors • Individuals tend to select highly symbolic products when their ability to accurately express themselves is restrained or challenged to reestablish their precarious self-concept <i>Options/means of self-expression:</i>
	Rozenkrants <i>et al.</i> (2017)		
	Pagani <i>et al.</i> (2011)		
Self-expression (consumer perspective)	Chernev <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Self-verification theory	
	Kokkoris and Kuhnen (2013)		
	Bhattacharjee <i>et al.</i> (2014)		
	Puzakova and Aggarwal (2018)		
	Goor <i>et al.</i> (2020)		
	Ward and Broniarczyk (2011)		

(continued)

Themes	Representative references	Antecedents Main theoretical frameworks ^a	Key findings
<i>Identity-signaling (consumer perspective)</i>	Thomas <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Social identity theory, self-categorization theory	- Identity-congruent ads are viewed by consumers as a form to express themselves. As it is in people's interests to present themselves in a positive light, it will not appeal to consumers when identity-congruent ad contains information that they would not like to show publicly - Brands can be used to satisfy people's self-expression needs publicly. Consumers with high BESC (brands as part of their self-concept) might use luxury brands to achieve social integration - Other-expressive options refer to those options can be chosen by the majority of people which are more conventional and less likely to receive criticism. Self-expressive options are those options more controversial and can more explicitly express one's personal tastes and preferences - Fashion products can be used to communicate social identity and as a mean of self-expression - Pride can be used as a form of self-expression in social relations "A consumer's propensity to connect with brands" is "an important means of expressing and confirming who they are to others." - New channels for self-expression include: providing brand feedback (e.g. comment, review, discussion), display brand use on social media; discussing, creating and sharing music on music apps; disclosing health and wellness data to social media or wellness apps - Rather than wanting to be seen as more knowledgeable or more innovative, those who spread word of mouth want to express who they are. These consumers use brands or products to communicate their self-concept and attract attention to satisfy their emotional needs
	Giakoumaki and Krepapa (2020)		
	Maimaran and Simonson (2011)	Uniqueness theory	
	Cardoso <i>et al.</i> (2010)		
	Derbaix <i>et al.</i> (2002) Harmon-Kizer <i>et al.</i> (2013, p. 492)	Attachment theory	
	Morewedge <i>et al.</i> (2021)		
	Saenger <i>et al.</i> (2013)		
	Rajavi <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Inglehart's theory	<i>Cultural values of self-expression:</i> - Self-expressive cultural values are opposite to survival cultural values. E.g. the rate of self-expression in the USA is high and in China is low
	Berger and Heath (2007), Berger and Heath (2008)	McCracken's (1988) theory of meaning movement Trickle-down theory of fashion, balance theory, optimal distinctiveness theory, social identity theory	<i>Signaling convergence and differentiation:</i> - Identity signaling is both convergent and differentiating. People from the same group converge to provide signals with the same meanings while diverging from outsiders to avoid signaling unwanted tributes
			(continued)

Review and
future research
agenda

Table 7.

Table 7.

Themes	Representative references	Antecedents Main theoretical frameworks ^a	Key findings
	Han <i>et al.</i> (2010)	Veblen's (1899) theory of conspicuous consumption (The theory of the leisure class)	• Wealthy consumers low in need of status would only like to be associated with people who have the same social status prefer to pay for quiet but luxury products. Wealthy consumers high in need of status prefer to use loud luxury products to show that they are not the same as people who have lower social status • Individuals tend to prefer using signals that can efficiently communicate their identities; they prevent using signals which may lead others to think they belong to an undesired group or have traits associated with undesired groups <i>Identity signaling domains/dimensions:</i> • In product domains which are perceived as symbolic of identity, it is more likely for consumers to signal their uniqueness and distinctiveness • Individuals are highly consistent about which domains they use to express their own identity and infer others' identities. It is believed that people express their identities in most of the same domains that others use to infer their identities • There are two ways individuals can distinguish themselves from others using brands: horizontal brands, which allow individuals to express their personality, tastes and so on; and vertical brands, which allow people to show their superior status • The elites can mix and match signals in multiple signaling dimensions to stand out from every other social tier in a distinctive way • When consumers' status is threatened by higher status and wealthier others, consumers cope by signaling success and achievement in alternative domains that they believe they outperform the higher status individuals <i>Ways of identity-signaling:</i> • People can signal their identities by using social media and posting identity-related products • People tend to find and purchase products to compensate and repair the identity and to signal success in the same domain when one of their identities is threatened • Millennial's socially responsible consumption behaviors are a form of both self and social signaling
	Matherly and Pocheptsova Ghosh (2017)		
	Berger and Heath (2007)	McCracken's (1988) theory of meaning movement	
	Berger and Heath (2008)	Social identity theory	
	Dommer <i>et al.</i> (2013)		
	Bellezza and Berger (2020)		
	Goor <i>et al.</i> (2021)		
	Grewal <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Self-perception theory, self-signaling theory	
	Rustagi and Shrum (2019)		
	Johnson and Chattaraman (2019)	Signaling theory	

(continued)

Themes	Representative references	Antecedents Main theoretical frameworks ^a	Key findings
<i>Desired identity (brand perspective)</i>	Warren and Mohr (2019) Xie <i>et al.</i> (2015, p. 53)		• Consumers generally use products to signal the same meaning associated with the product. However, they occasionally use products in an ironic way by signaling meaning that is contradictory to the conventionally perceived meaning of the products • “Brand identity expressiveness includes, but extends beyond, a desired ‘global consumer identity’”
<i>Themes</i> <i>Individual (micro-) level</i>	<i>Representative references</i> Bosnjak <i>et al.</i> (2016) Rifkin and Etkin (2019) Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i> (2007)	<i>Consequences</i> <i>Main theoretical frameworks</i> Eudaimonistic identity theory	• Self-expressiveness functions as a moderator in the relationship between hedonic enjoyment and personal happiness • When consumers perceive greater diversity in self-expressive assortments, it undermines their self-continuity • Self-identity expressiveness strongly influences attitudes toward intentions to use multimedia messaging
<i>Individual (micro-) level and brand/company (institutional) level</i>	de Vries <i>et al.</i> (2017) Cho and Hwang (2020) Shen and Sengupta (2018) Maimaran and Simonson (2011) Dittmar and Bond (2010)	The theory of planned behavior Self-determination theory	<i>Links between consumer identity expressiveness and brand/products</i> • Self-expression facilitates people’s brand-related activities on social media more in the sense of creating activities (e.g. posting a picture of a product) than contributing to the activities (e.g. commenting on the brand) • Identity expressiveness moderates the effect of the three associations (cognitive, sensory and affective associations) on brand love • The self-brand connection (SBC) can be increased by oral communication, which involves more expression of self-related perceptions than written communication • Priming self-expression leads to a greater willingness of consumers to choose self-expressive products/brands, as opposed to suppressing self-expression (e.g. telling consumers their choices will be evaluated by others) • Identity expression is one of the powerful psychological determinants in deciding the importance of goods for individuals, and goods with high identity-expressive potential tend to be bought on impulse more than those are low identity-expressive

(continued)

Review and future research agenda

Table 7.

Table 7.

Themes	Representative references	Antecedents Main theoretical frameworks ^a	Key findings
<i>Individual (micro-) level and social (contextual) level</i>	Sheehan <i>et al.</i> (2020)	Identity theory	● The identity conservation effect (comparatively to nonidentity goods, consumers are less likely to use nondurable identity goods) decreases when self-presentation motives are high. As the desire to signal identity decreases, the in-use value of the identity good decreases, but the identity conservation effect increases
	Wang and John (2019)		● Consumers who have strong self-brand connections believe brand is part of their identity and can express themselves; thus, they are more likely to upgrade to a brand's more exclusive products
	Pagani <i>et al.</i> (2011)		● Self-identity and social identity expressiveness both have positive and significant effects on the active use of social network sites
	Smith <i>et al.</i> (2021)		● Reframing a beauty brand as a tool of self-expression can increase consumers' engagement in beauty product WOM
	Styvén <i>et al.</i> (2020)		● Place ad-brand congruity, self-expressiveness of the place brand message and place attachment can positively impact on eWOM (e.g. sharing a place brand video online)
	Moreau <i>et al.</i> (2020)		● Consumers' need for self-expression may undermine products' signaling value when luxury brands go too far with customization and lose their designer equity
	Xie <i>et al.</i> (2015)	McCracken's (1988) theory of meaning movement	<i>Link between brand identity expressiveness and consumer behavior</i>
	Iyer <i>et al.</i> (2020)		● Brand trust and brand affect are strongly influenced by brand identity expressiveness, thereby leading consumers to have a more positive behavioral response to brands
	Escalas and Bettman (2003)		● Products with high expressiveness are more likely to facilitate impulsive purchases and suppress the impact of subject norms
	He <i>et al.</i> (2018)		● It does not appeal to consumers when identity-congruent ad contains information that they would not like to show publicly. Once that is the case, these ads may trigger negative responses if consumers believe they are publicizing consumers' undesired identity
	Smith <i>et al.</i> (2021)		● Other consumers' unethical behavior moderates focal consumers' unethical behavior, while self-expressiveness mediates this relationship
			● Self-expression increases authenticity by making others see beauty work as a form of creation instead of concealment
Note: ^a Any gap in this column indicates that the author(s) do not specify a theoretical framework			
Source: Authors' own work			

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a : direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
Attachment theory	Attachment theory conceptualizes “the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional bonds to particular others. . .” (Bowlby, 1977, p. 201) According to attachment theory, humans are innately driven to establish psychologically secure relationships (Pietromonaco and Barrett, 2000).	Styvén <i>et al.</i> (2020) Liu and Hogg (2018)	It refers to attachment theory to conceptualize place attachment enhancing ‘local residents’ self-expressiveness’ The qualitative study uses attachment theory to understand consumers’ internal debates about which goals to pursue and which self to present in different interpersonal contexts (i.e. secure, preoccupied, fearful-avoidant and dismissing-avoidant)	Indirect: antecedent This qualitative study uses the theory to build its theoretical background
Balance theory	Balance theory concerns attitude change and conceptualizes cognitive consistency as a drive for psychological balance (Heider, 1946)	Berger and Heath (2008)	According to balance theory, it is more likely that people will dislike a certain cultural taste if a disliked other (or group) enjoys it (Berger and Heath, 2008). It predicts that people diverge from people they dislike. Thus, this study uses the theory to explain how identity signaling is differentiating	Direct: phenomenon
Belk’s (1988) theory of the extended self	According to Belk’s (1988) theory of the extended self, consumers are the sum of their possessions	Ahuvia (2005)	Inspired by Belk’s (1988) theory of the extended self, this qualitative study examines how possessions	This qualitative study uses the theory to build its theoretical background

(continued)

Review and future research agenda

Table 8.
Main theoretical frameworks and their application in representative articles

Table 8.

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a : direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
Construal level theory	and objects are part of the self in the sense that they are created, appropriated or known	Schembri et al. (2010)	influence the construction of an identity narrative and uses case studies to reflect on the theory This study applies the theory to examine how brand consumption contributes to the construction of the self by interpreting consumer narratives	This qualitative study uses the theory to build its theoretical background
	Construal level theory (CLT) argues that psychologically distant objects (e.g. events from a month ago) are construed abstractly, while psychologically proximal objects (e.g. events from a day ago) are construed more concretely (Trope and Liberman, 2010). CLT also predicts that intentions related to psychologically distant (versus proximal) objects are influenced by higher-order values associated with their abstraction level (He et al., 2018)	He et al. (2018)	Following the logic of CLT, this study suggests that different mental “construal” of unethical behavior result in different reactions by focal consumers to unethical behavior from other consumers, and consumers with a high-level mindset tend to see their behavior as more self-expressive (higher degree of self-expressiveness)	Indirect: antecedent

(continued)

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a : direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
Cooley's looking-glass self-theory	Cooley's (1922) looking-glass self-theory suggests that interactions with others create an individual's sense of self or sense of identity. In other words, person's concept of self is shaped by how others perceive them	Thomas <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Based on the looking-glass self-theory, the study hypothesizes that consumers incorporate how they believe others view them into their self-perceptions when evaluating an ad based on their perception of others' identity	Indirect: antecedents
Congruity theory	According to congruity theory, individuals tend to be positive toward an object when it matches their beliefs and schemata (i.e. cognitive frameworks that individuals develop to organize, categorize and interpret information) about themselves and the external world (Styven <i>et al.</i> , 2020)	Styven <i>et al.</i> (2020)	Congruity theory and ad-brand congruity are applied in this study to place branding. As a result, place ad-brand congruity in this study refers to the fit between the advertisement's image of the place and the residents' own impressions of the place. Place ad-brand congruity is identified as one of three main antecedents of residents' intention to share a place brand message online, along with place attachment and self-expressiveness	The theory is used to conceptualize a parallel antecedent alongside self-expressiveness
Eudaimonistic identity theory	Based on the eudaimonistic identity theory, individuals experience self-expressiveness through	Bosnjak <i>et al.</i> (2016)	In investigating the psychological conditions that make physical activities self-expressive, this study uses the eudaimonistic identity	Antecedents and consequences

(continued)

Review and future research agenda

Table 8.

Table 8.

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a : direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
Identity theory (also known as role identity theory)	their activities if they satisfy their need for self-actualization through these activities (Waterman, 1990, 1993). Eudaimonistic identity theory also asserts that self-expressive physical activities are beneficial to subjective well-being (Waterman, 1990, 1993)	Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i> (2007)	theory to identify antecedents. It suggests that tourists' self-expressiveness in a sports activity should be affected by the perceived difficulty, perceived effort, perceived importance and potential for self-realization	Direct: phenomenon
	Role identity theory denotes how people see themselves as unique and distinct individuals and as different from others. McCall and Simmons (1978, p. 65) define role identity as "the character and the role that an individual devises for himself as an occupant of a particular social position... his imaginative view of himself... as an occupant of that position." Social identity theory, on the other hand, explains	Styvén <i>et al.</i> (2020)	Underpinned by role identity theory and social identity theory, respectively, this study defines the concept of identity expressiveness by the twin concepts of self-identity expressiveness and social identity expressiveness According to identity theory, sharing place brand messages online might give individuals a chance to express themselves through the symbolism of the brand. Hence, this study argues that residents' willingness to share a place brand message	Indirect: consequence

(continued)

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a : direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
	group processes, intergroup relations, as well as the relationship between individual psychological functioning and wider social processes (Hogg <i>et al.</i> , 1995; Tajfel, 1981; Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i> , 2007)		online is likely to be influenced by how self-expressive the message is	
Inglehart's theory	Inglehart's theory suggests that there are two bipolar cultural dimensions: traditional vs secular-rational values and survival vs self-expression values (Inglehart and Baker, 2000; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). Inglehart and Welzel (2005, p. 115) also argue that "materialist/postmaterialist values are a key component of the survival/self-expression dimension."	Rajavi <i>et al.</i> (2019)	This study uses Inglehart's theory to focus on cultural differences of identity expressiveness. Following the theory, the study sees countries with higher scores on the dimension of self-expression as having a relative deemphasis of materialistic ideologies and emerging postmaterialist ideologies	Direct: phenomenon
McCracken's (1988) theory of meaning movement	According to McCracken (1988), a culture is a group of people who share values, rules and	Berger and Heath (2007)	Based on McCracken's (1988) theory of meaning movement, this research sees tastes can communicate	Direct: phenomenon

(continued)

Review and future research agenda

Table 8.

Table 8.

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a : direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
Optimal distinctiveness theory	traditions. McCracken (1988) essentially asserts that we live in a culturally constituted world of neoliberal capitalist consumption in which cultural meaning changes constantly. Consumer consumption is explained as a cultural meaning transfer procedure (McCracken, 1988)	Escalas and Bettman (2005)	identity, and suggests that people infer particular identities from another's choice depending on who shares their tastes Building on McCracken's (1988) theory of meaning movement, this research proposes that a reference group's symbolic properties are associated with the brands that the group uses. By choosing brands that represent aspects of their self-concept, consumers can transfer these associations from reference groups to themselves. Therefore, it does not appeal to consumers when identity-congruent ad contains information that can link them to perceived negative associations. Once that is the case, these ads may trigger negative responses if consumers believe they are publicizing consumers' undesired identity	Indirect: consequence
	Optimal distinctiveness theory suggests that by	Berger and Heath (2008)	Optimal distinctiveness theory predicts that people	Direct: phenomenon

(continued)

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a : direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
	belonging to a group, individuals reconcile opposing needs for assimilation and differentiation (Brewer, 1991). These opposing needs are satisfied by contrasting social identities so that “the need for deindividuation is satisfied within in-groups, while the need for distinctiveness is met through intergroup comparisons” (Brewer, 1991, p. 477)	Chan <i>et al.</i> (2012)	should diverge due to feelings of too much similarity. Therefore, this research uses the optimal distinctiveness theory to explain when and how consumers signal differentiation Following optimal distinctiveness theory, this research predicts that various degrees of distinctiveness motivate consumers to choose products that are more distinctive, and those with higher distinctiveness needs tend to choose more distinctive products	Indirect antecedents
Self-determination theory	In the field of human motivation and personality, self-determination theory is a macro theory that focuses on people’s innate needs for growth and psychological needs (Ryan and Deci, 2000). It focuses on the motivations behind people’s choices when	de Vries <i>et al.</i> (2017)	This study examines the motivations behind social media activity related to brands based on self-determination theory. It provides evidence to support the argument that self-expression facilitates people’s brand-related activities on social media more in the sense of creating activities (e.g. posting a	Indirect consequence

(continued)

Review and future research agenda

Table 8.

Table 8.

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a : direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
Self-perception theory	they are not distracted by external factors or influences and examines how self-motivated and self-determined human behavior is (Ryan and Deci, 2000)		picture of a product) than contributing to the activities (e.g. commenting on the brand)	
	According to self-perception theory, people's attitudes and emotions are developed by observing their own behavior and inferring what attitudes led it to happen (Bem, 1972)	Rifkin and Etkin (2019)	Following self-perception theory, this study suggests that a consumer's choice of products can provide insight into their identity, and consumers can gain understanding of their identity through the choices they make. It predicts that by constructing assortments, consumers can communicate and express who they are. A self-expressive assortment is one in which a person can incorporate his or her personal qualities into a product, such as show favorite music types on Apple Music	Indirect: antecedent
		Grewal et al. (2019)	In line with self-perception theory and self-signaling theory, this study suggests that posting identity-relevant products gives consumers a	Direct: phenomenon
(continued)				

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a : direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
Self-verification theory	Self-verification theory suggests that people seek a way to restore their threatened identities in their subsequent decisions, and they wish for others to see them as they see themselves (Swann, 1983)	Ward and Broniarczyk (2011)	self-diagnostic signal, which then influences how much identity-signaling they've accomplished. In other words, people can signal their identities by using social media and posting identity-related products Inspired by self-verification theory, this research indicates that purchasing a gift that is contrary to the giver's identity may cause an identity threat to the giver, and givers will then engage in identity expressive behaviors, such as purchase identity expressive products, to reestablish their threat identities	In direct: antecedent
Self-signaling theory (Bodner and Prelec, 2002)	According to Bodner and Prelec (2002), prior to making a decision, people consider how their choices might reveal who they are. Consequently, they would consider this potential diagnostic value as part of their total utility, which affects their decision	Grewal <i>et al.</i> (2019)	In line with self-perception theory and self-signaling theory, this study suggests that posting identity-relevant products gives consumers a self-diagnostic signal, which then influences how much identity-signaling they've accomplished. In other words, people can signal their identities by using	Direct: phenomenon

(continued)

Review and
future research
agenda

Table 8.

Table 8.

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a , direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
Signaling theory	According to signaling theory, brands can use market signals to convey information to imperfectly informed consumers based on the asymmetrical information structure of the market (Connelly <i>et al.</i> , 2011)	Johnson and Chattaraman (2019)	social media and posting identity-related products This research uses self-signaling theory to identify the research gap. It argues that extent research indicated that people tend to choose products/brands to signal their identity, yet there is no answer to whether choices which signal identity changes can affect consumer preferences in different identity-related categories Signaling theory provides insights for this research into how consumers use brands/products to signal themselves. Thus, this research looks into millennial's socially responsible consumption behaviors and suggests that millennials draw value from such behavior as it is a form of self and social signaling Based on social comparison theory, reference-group research, including Escalas and Bettman (2003), believes that consumers see other	The study uses the theory to identify research gap
	Social comparison theory suggests that it is a human's innate tendency to evaluate himself or herself against others, and	Escalas and Bettman (2003)		Indirect: antecedent

(continued)

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a : direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
Social identity theory	social comparison is one of the key ways we judge ourselves or analyze ourselves in comparison with others (Suls and Wheeler, 2000)		people as their source of information in viewing the world and evaluation their own values. Escalas and Bettman (2003) further suggest that brands which are used by reference groups can contribute to the links between consumers and brands when consumers use brands to develop and construct their self-concepts	Direct: phenomenon
	Social identity theory explains group processes, intergroup relations, as well as the relationship between individual psychological functioning and wider social processes (Hogg <i>et al.</i> , 1995; Tajfel, 1981; Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i> , 2007)	Berger and Heath (2008)	This research uses social identity theory to explain why people seek to signal differentiations when they see a product/brand share too much intergroup similarities	
		Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Underpinned by role identity theory and social identity theory, respectively, this study defines the concept of identity expressiveness by the twin concepts of self-identity expressiveness and social identity expressiveness	
		Thomas <i>et al.</i> (2015)	Inspired by social identity theory and self-categorization theory, which indicate that a person's	Direct: phenomenon

(continued)

Review and future research agenda

Table 8.

Table 8.

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a : direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
Self-categorization theory	Self-categorization theory is seen as the subtheory of social identity theory, which describes how an aggregate group of individuals is transformed into a psychological group, and the resulting cohesion, cooperation, and shared goals are influenced by this transformation (Willer <i>et al.</i> , 1989)	Thomas <i>et al.</i> (2015)	identity is defined by his/her membership in a group, and he/she is perceived as an integral part of it, this study suggests that an identity appeal could be disliked by consumers because the ad portrays the identity unfavorably to a broad audience Inspired by social identity theory and self-categorization theory, which indicate that a person's identity is defined by his/her membership in a group, and he/she is perceived as an integral part of it, this study suggests that an identity appeal could be disliked by consumers because the ad portrays the identity unfavorably to a broad audience	Direct: phenomenon
The functional theories of attitudes	The functional theories of attitudes suggest that attitudes are formed when they are perceived to serve a useful purpose (Katz, 1960; Shavitt, 1989). The theories further	Wilcox <i>et al.</i> (2009)	Following the functional theories of attitudes, this study provides empirical evidence to the argument that attitudes encourage self-expression when it is serving the value-expressive function	Indirect: antecedent

(continued)

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a : direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
	suggest that there are several psychological functions of attitudes, including organizing and structuring the environment (knowledge function), avoiding punishments and gaining rewards (utilitarian function) and retaining self-esteem (ego defense function) (Katz, 1960; Shavitt, 1989). There are also social functions of attitudes, which include allowing self-expression (value-expressive function) and facilitating self-presentation (social-adjustive function) (Wilcox <i>et al.</i> , 2009)	Kauppinen-Raisänen <i>et al.</i> (2018)	and facilitate self-presentation when it is serving the social-adjustive function Based on the functional theories of attitudes, this study hypothesized and then provided evidence that the need for uniqueness and self-monitoring can be seen as motivations of attitudinal behaviors of self-expression and self-presentation	Indirect: antecedent
The theory of planned behavior	According to the theory of planned behavior, behaviors arise from behavioral intentions, which are formed by attitude toward the behavior; subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991)	Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i> (2007)	This study suggests that subjective norms as part of the planned behavior model strongly influence social identity expressiveness. Meanwhile, self and social identity expressiveness can complement the theory of planned behavior and self-identity expressiveness	Indirect: antecedent and consequence

(continued)

Review and future research agenda

Table 8.

Table 8.

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a : direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
The theory of the leisure class (Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption)	According to Thorstein Veblen (1899), status is not really conferred by the accumulation of wealth, but by the evidence that wealth exists, which requires wasteful display. Such displaying behavior, Veblen names it, "conspicuous consumption."	Han <i>et al.</i> (2010)	strongly influences attitudes toward intentions to use Multimedia Messaging Inspired by Veblen's (1899) theory of conspicuous consumption, this study categorizes consumers into four types according to their wealth and need for status and suggests that consumer types are associated with their preference for quiet or loud branding to express themselves	Direct phenomenon
	Trickle-down theory of fashion suggests that fashion is initiated by people of higher status and imitated by those of lower status, and high-status people abandon the taste when the lower strata adopt it since the status signal value is lost (Berger and Heath, 2008)	Berger and Heath (2008)	This research uses trickle-down theory of fashion to partially explain signaling divergence, especially in the situation that people with higher social status abandon their tastes to set themselves apart from those from lower social status. But it also points out that signaling divergence is not entirely driven by unidimensional status	
Uniqueness theory	According to uniqueness theory (Snyder and Fromkin, 1980), excessive similarities between	Maimaran and Simonson (2011)	Applying uniqueness theory, this study recognizes that individuals may express unconventional opinions and	Direct phenomenon

(continued)

Main theoretical frameworks	Explanation of the theory	Representative references	Application	Notes ^a , direct/indirect application or apply in other ways
	oneself and others will be interpreted negatively, so individuals will seek greater differences to assert their own identity		exhibit unique behaviors to differentiate themselves from others. As a result, it distinguishes between two types of consumers options: options that are more conventional and those options which are seen as more self-expressive	

Notes: ^a“Direct application” denotes where authors use the respective theory in their research to explain or describe the phenomena of IE; “Indirect application” denotes where authors refer to the respective theory in examining antecedents or consequences of IE. “Apply in other ways” denotes where authors use a theory to gain understanding in qualitative studies of the research context or of other elements that co-exist with IE in other causal relationships; *References in Table 8:* Ajzen (1991), Bem (1972), Bodner and Prelec (2002), Bowlby (1977), Brewer (1991), Connelly *et al.* (2011), Cooley (1922), Heider (1946), Inglehart and Baker (2000), Inglehart and Welzel (2005), Katz (1960), Pietromonaco and Barrett (2000), Ryan and Deci (2000), Shavitt (1989), Snyder and Fromkin (1980), Suls and Wheeler (2000), Swann (1983), Trope and Liberman (2010), Waterman (1990), Waterman (1993), Willer *et al.* (1989)

Source: Authors’ own work

Review and future research agenda

Table 8.

range of theories have been used in framing the drivers of IE at all four levels, with most theories pertaining to the interpretation and construction of self, both individual and social.

Studies that analyze the individual drivers of IE focus on consumers' construction of the self, including the maintenance of an individual's self-concept (e.g. self-concept clarity, self-construal level), attitudes and beliefs, need for status and other psychological needs (including an individual's need for autonomy and need for uniqueness). For example, [Chan et al. \(2012\)](#) argue that consumers are motivated by their need for uniqueness to differentiate themselves from others in the same group to varying degrees and that those with higher needs for uniqueness tend to choose products that are more expressive. This supports previous conceptual research that suggests identity-based motivation is relevant in consumption contexts, where the need for uniqueness is recognized as a driver of IE ([Oyserman, 2009](#)).

Furthermore, clarity of self-concept is seen as an antecedent of IE as it influences subscription decisions that consumers use to express their identities ([Savary and Dhar, 2020](#)). It echoes previous research, which suggests that clarity of self-concept allows individuals to avoid ambiguity and achieve consistency between the self and the behavior exhibited ([Mittal, 2015](#); [Rozenkrants et al., 2017](#)). The theoretical frameworks applied at the individual level mainly concern the psychological functions of individuals as well as individuals' self-positioning in social interaction. Construal level theory ([He et al., 2018](#); [Touré-Tillery and Kouchaki, 2021](#)) and self-verification theory ([Ward and Broniarczyk, 2011](#)) are used to explain identity-related antecedents of IE such as self-perception and clarity of their self-perception. Further, [Kauppinen-Räsänen et al. \(2018\)](#) and [Wilcox et al. \(2009\)](#) draw on functional theories of attitudes to present attitudes as an antecedent of self-expression, while [Styvén et al. \(2020\)](#) refer to attachment theory to conceptualize place attachment enhancing local residents' self-expressiveness. Other scholars refer to the theory of the leisure class ([Han et al., 2010](#)), identifying the need for status as a driver of using conspicuous or inconspicuous goods to self-express, or to optimal distinctiveness theory ([Chan et al., 2012](#)) to infer individuals' need for uniqueness as an antecedent of IE or to Eudaimonistic identity theory ([Bosnjak et al., 2016](#)) to suggest a sports activity's perceived difficulty, perceived effort, perceived importance and potential for self-realization as antecedents of tourists' self-expressiveness when experiencing a sports activity.

Moreover, in analyzing individual and contextual combined level drivers, studies emphasize how individuals would like to be seen by others in making decisions for self-expressiveness. For example, [Maimaran and Simonson \(2011\)](#) show that individuals are less self-expressive if they are told that their consumption choices will be evaluated by others. Two theoretical frameworks were applied at this level to conceptualize antecedents of IE. First, [Thomas et al. \(2015\)](#) refer to Cooley's looking-glass self-theory to explain that individuals' evaluation of ads that bear considerations of others' perceptions has an important impact on whether they would like to show others their associations with such ads. Second, [Thorbjørnsen et al. \(2007\)](#) use the theory of planned behavior to conceptualize subjective norms as antecedents of social IE.

Other studies indicate brand anthropomorphism, self-expressive customization of products and self-expressive assortments of online service as drivers of IE at the brand/company level ([Kaiser et al., 2017](#); [Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018](#); [Rifkin et al., 2021](#); [Rifkin and Etkin, 2019](#)) (e.g. Spotify ask users to list favorite artists/genres). For example, brand anthropomorphism, which indicates the assignment of human-like features to brands ([Aggarwal and McGill, 2007](#)), can lead to positive effects on IE in instances where the positioning of the brand focuses on the needs of the individuals ([Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018](#)). Finally, three antecedents:

-
- (1) perceived brand globalness/localness (Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007; Xie *et al.*, 2015);
 - (2) polarizing products (i.e. products with bimodal consumer rating distributions, Rozenkrants *et al.*, 2017); and
 - (3) brands perceived as used by reference groups (Escalas and Bettman, 2003) are grouped into the category of *brand/company and individual-level drivers*.

Review and
future research
agenda

This is because they concern the interaction between consumers' perspectives and brands/products. For instance, when consumers see products with bimodal rating distributions, they are more likely to choose such products to express themselves.

In summary, our analysis highlights a set of antecedents of IE, such as the need for uniqueness, clarity of self-concept, attitudes, subjective norms, brand anthropomorphism, as well as specific brand perceptions, integrating them across a classification of individual-versus brand-related antecedents.

3.3.2 The phenomenon. The phenomenon category includes articles that examine aspects related to the concept of IE. From these studies classified in this phenomenon category, we identified four broad themes that naturally emerged:

- self and social IE;
- self-expression;
- identity-signaling; and
- desired identity (Table 6 – Phenomenon).

In setting out these themes, we are not suggesting that IE should be defined on the basis of these themes; rather that these are key aspects that relate to IE and have been investigated in the studies included in our SLR. Studies grouped in the first three themes investigate IE from the perspective of the individual. The study on the last theme focuses on the specific identity of *global consumer identity* being part of brand IE (Xie *et al.*, 2015, p. 53).

The studies grouped under the first theme, *self and social IE*, identify two dimensions of IE – the self/individual dimension and the social/group dimension (Pagani *et al.*, 2011; Rozenkrants *et al.*, 2017; Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007). They posit that these two dimensions are underpinned, respectively, by role identity theory and social identity theory. Role identity theory denotes how people see themselves as unique and distinct individuals and as different from others. McCall and Simmons (1978, p. 65) define role identity as “the character and the role that an individual devises for himself as an occupant of a particular social position [...] his imaginative view of himself [...] as an occupant of that position.” Social identity theory, on the other hand, explains group processes, intergroup relations, as well as the relationship between individual psychological functioning and wider social processes (Hogg *et al.*, 1995; Tajfel, 1981; Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007).

All three aforementioned studies suggest that the self/individual dimension focuses on how self-concept and distinctiveness are expressed, while the social/group dimension focuses on how individuals' similarity and belongingness with others are expressed (Pagani *et al.*, 2011; Rozenkrants *et al.*, 2017; Thorbjørnsen *et al.*, 2007). Role identity theory and social identity theory represent the primary theoretical underpinnings adopted widely by scholars in the field of IE, including articles clustered in other phenomenon categories; for example, Thomas *et al.* (2015) in the *self-expression* category and Berger and Heath (2008) in the *identity signaling* category. These theories lay the ground for understanding how individuals view themselves as well as position themselves in a community, and also their need to express self and social identities. Apart from identity theory and social identity theory (and its subtheory, self-categorization theory), articles clustered in the self-expression

category and in the identity signaling category also draw on signaling theory to explain how consumers use elements of marketing activity as signals to express their identities (Johnson and Chattaraman, 2019). Secondary theories are also used in some studies, such as uniqueness theory (Maimaran and Simonson, 2011), Veblen's (1899) theory of conspicuous consumption (Han *et al.*, 2010) and self-perception theory (Grewal *et al.*, 2019).

The theme "*self-expression*" includes studies that investigate consumers' needs for self-expression (Chernev *et al.*, 2011; Kokkoris and Kuhnen, 2013), consumers' agency in self-expression (Bhattacharjee *et al.*, 2014; Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018), authenticity and accuracy in self-expression (Goor *et al.*, 2020; Ward and Broniarczyk, 2011), the options/means of self-expression (Cardoso *et al.*, 2010; Derbaix *et al.*, 2002; Giakoumaki and Krepapa, 2020; Harmon-Kizer *et al.*, 2013; He *et al.*, 2019; Maimaran and Simonson, 2011; Morewedje *et al.*, 2021; Savary and Dhar, 2020; Thomas *et al.*, 2015) and also the different cultural values of self-expression (Rajavi *et al.*, 2019). The key findings within this thematic category show that an individual's self-expression need is finite and can be met through brands, i.e. using brands as a means of self-expression, as well as through nonbrand means of self-expression, such as listing favorite books (Chernev *et al.*, 2011; Giakoumaki and Krepapa, 2020). Consumers' sense of agency, self-authenticity and accuracy of self-expression play significant roles in self-expression through brands. For example, the importance of agency as a person's inner essence is stressed (Bhattacharjee *et al.*, 2014; Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018). Individuals' perceived sense of agency creates a feeling of control over their environment in identity expression (Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018). Certain identity-related marketing messages (i.e. explicit identity-related cues) can reduce consumers' perceived agency and diminish the extent to which identity-expressive decisions are perceived to be chosen by the self (Bhattacharjee *et al.*, 2014), thus leading to less favorable attitudes toward brands (Puzakova *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, when consumers participate in consumption, which cultivates IE, consumer agency can be facilitated (Liu and Hogg, 2018). In other words, providing consumers with choices to express themselves allows them to be "meaningful agents," and thus to achieve a general sense of felt security (Botti and McGill, 2006, p. 212; Liu and Hogg, 2018; Robinson *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, Rajavi *et al.* (2019) focus on self-expression at a "national level," identifying *self-expressive cultural values* as the opposite of *survival cultural values*, which emphasize economic and physical security (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005).

Within the broad theme of *identity-signaling*, three subthemes emerged. Studies in the first subtheme, *signaling convergence and differentiation*, suggest that identity signaling involves both being a part of a group and diverging from a group depending on whether the characteristics of the group are desirable (Berger and Heath, 2007, 2008; Han *et al.*, 2010; Matherly and Pocheptsova Ghosh, 2017). *Identity signaling domains/dimensions* is the second subtheme.

For example, studies suggest that consumers are highly consistent about which domains they use to express their own identity, and they are more likely to signal their uniqueness and distinctiveness in product domains that are seen as symbolic of identity (Berger and Heath, 2007, 2008). Meanwhile, elite consumers (i.e. consumers with higher social status) are able to signal across social status when multiple signaling dimensions are available (Bellezza and Berger, 2020, p. 100). The last subtheme includes studies that describe *the ways of identity-signaling* (Grewal *et al.*, 2019; Johnson and Chattaraman, 2019; Rustagi and Shrum, 2019; Warren and Mohr, 2019). For example, Grewal *et al.* (2019) identify posting identity-relevant products on social media as a way of identity signaling; however, this may fulfill consumers' identity-signaling needs, thus reducing their interest in the actual products. Rustagi and Shrum (2019) find that consumers use products associated with one

aspect of their identity to signal themselves when they feel this aspect of identity is threatened, although it may not successfully assist consumers to repair their self-concept.

3.3.3 The consequences. Following [Pisani et al. \(2017\)](#), we categorize articles that investigate the consequences of IE forming the outcome-related themes at individual (micro) level, individual and brand/company (institutional) combined level and at the individual and social (contextual) combined level. The studies from [Bosnjak et al. \(2016\)](#), [Rifkin and Etkin \(2019\)](#) and [Thorbjørnsen et al. \(2007\)](#) are categorized as showing the individual level effect of IE. Specifically, self-identity expressiveness positively relates to individuals' intention to use multimedia messaging ([Thorbjørnsen et al., 2007](#)) and has an effect on the relationship between hedonic enjoyment and personal happiness ([Bosnjak et al., 2016](#)). In addition, [Rifkin and Etkin \(2019\)](#) indicate self-continuity as a consequence of IE. The authors explain that when individuals perceive a larger variety of self-expressive assortment (Spotify, for instance, allows users to create their own assortment of favorite artists/genres), they might feel their choices are not stable, undermining their "belief that one's identity stays the same over time" (i.e. "self-continuity," [Rifkin and Etkin, 2019](#), p. 726). This is because the variety of self-expressive assortment that individuals can construct causes them to infer that their tastes are less constant, thereby decreasing self-continuity ([Rifkin and Etkin, 2019](#)). In this instance, the variety in the self-expressive choice can affect self-continuity ([Rifkin and Etkin, 2019](#)).

We then grouped studies that focus on the individual level and brand/company combined level effects of IE. More specifically, ten studies in the consequences category focus on links between IE (individual level) and brands/products (institutional level). In general, these studies suggest that promoting (versus suppressing) self-expression encourages consumers to choose more self-expressive products ([Dittmar and Bond, 2010](#); [Maimaran and Simonson, 2011](#)) and to pay less attention to the durability of these products ([Sheehan and Dommer, 2020](#)). Studies also show that self-expression encourages self-brand connection ([Dittmar and Bond, 2010](#); [Shen and Sengupta, 2018](#)), motivates brand-related activities ([Pagani et al., 2011](#); [de Vries et al., 2017](#)), increases the likelihood of consumers upgrading to the brand's more exclusive products ([Wang and John, 2019](#)) and shapes the relationship between cognitive, sensory and affective associations of brand love ([Cho and Hwang, 2020](#)). [Moreau et al. \(2020\)](#), on the other hand, point out that consumers' need for self-expression may undermine a product's signaling value when luxury brands go too far with customization and lose their designer equity. Additionally, eWOM/WOM is another consequence of IE, illustrated by two studies in this category. For instance, rebranding a beauty brand as a tool of self-expression (for example, using a slogan like "I Am What I Make Up") can increase individuals' engagement in beauty product WOM ([Smith et al., 2021](#)). Also, self-expressiveness, along with place ad-brand congruity and place attachment, positively impact on local residents' eWOM (e.g. sharing a place brand video online) ([Styvén et al., 2020](#)). The studies by [Xie et al. \(2015\)](#) and [Iyer et al. \(2020\)](#) also draw on the individual level and brand/company level effects of IE. They focus on the link between brand IE and brand perceptions/behavior. [Xie et al. \(2015\)](#) suggest that brand trust and brand affect are influenced by IE, which increases purchase intention. In addition, [Iyer et al. \(2020\)](#) find that products with high expressiveness are more likely to facilitate impulsive purchases and suppress the impact of subject norms.

The studies included in the individual and social combined level concern the influence of others on consumers' perceptions and behaviors with regard to brands. The study from [Smith et al. \(2021\)](#) indicates that others would see consumers who engage in beauty work for self-expression as being more authentic. Thus, in this sense, self-expression leads to the formation of perceptions of authenticity by others. [He et al.'s \(2018\)](#) findings show that the

relationship between unethical behavior of other consumers and focal consumers' unethical behavior is moderated by construal level, and this effect is mediated by self-expressiveness.

Finally, [Escalas and Bettman \(2003\)](#) find that identity-congruent ads containing information which individuals would not like to display in public might trigger negative responses if individuals believe these ads are publicizing their undesired identity ([Escalas and Bettman, 2003](#)).

In establishing a linkage between antecedents, the phenomenon identified and their resulting consequences, we present [Table 9](#). More specifically, this table shows which phenomena identified are linked to which particular antecedents and/or consequences in the selected empirical studies. It also shows which phenomena have not yet been empirically tested to indicate any chain-of-effects, thus suggesting potential directions for future research.

4. Research priorities and future research directions in the study of identity expressiveness

Given that IE as a field of enquiry is emerging, it highlights the potential for additional research. In addition, our review identifies some gaps in the current understanding of IE, and these present fruitful opportunities for additional research on the topic. In relation to IE as a concept, we identify that a limited number of studies examine specific identities and how they are expressed via consumption. For instance, [He et al. \(2018\)](#) examine ethical/moral identities, [Strizhakova et al. \(2011\)](#) and [Xie et al. \(2015\)](#) examine global/local identities, while [de Vries et al. \(2017\)](#), [Grewal et al. \(2019\)](#), [Giakoumaki and Krepapa \(2020\)](#) focus on social media identities and how these are expressed. There is more scope for studies to examine different sets of identities and how they are expressed through consumption and/or engagement with products and/or activities and behaviors.

Furthermore, in considering the current work on antecedents of IE, there is still scope for more research on identity-relevant motives (e.g. need to belong), personality traits in relation to IE (e.g. materialism, narcissism, [Shrum et al., 2013](#)), as well as agency. Scholars could also focus on delineating between internal and external motives driving self and social IE (e.g. based on self-determination theory), and shedding light on possible manifestations of IE such as conspicuous consumption, and other key marketing (e.g. brand loyalty) and individual outcomes (e.g. dissonance). Agency is also an exciting concept that warrants further study as it is crucial in individuals' self-expression, though the extent of agency that is exercised might differ in different contexts ([Bhattacharjee et al., 2014](#)). New research can examine agency in different consumption situations involving, for instance, both online and digital environments (e.g. social media, apps and so on). While we have identified that there is a connection between IE and eWOM/WOM, further research is needed in this domain. Additionally, little research has examined instances where IE might backfire ([Bhattacharjee et al., 2014](#)). Marketers attempt to create communication campaigns that consist of identity cues to trigger perceptions that their brands allow individuals to express their identities. It would be interesting to see under what circumstances such attempts fail and what factors are involved in this process.

Moreover, our review highlights that most studies in the domain of IE are carried out in a single developed country. Therefore, there is plenty of scope for empirical studies to be conducted in different cultural contexts, including in developing/emerging economies; this would provide valuable insights for international marketers. In the same spirit, studies that draw comparisons in different national cultures can offer insights into the IE of individuals in different countries and the related outcomes, allowing researchers to identify the weight of impact of IE on outcomes such as purchase intention and eWOM/WOM. Indeed, national

Antecedents ^a	Phenomenon ^b	Consequences ^c
Consumer construal (mindset) (He <i>et al.</i>, 2018) Need to validate self-image (Harmon-Kizer <i>et al.</i>, 2013) Belief in global citizenship through global brands (Strizhakova <i>et al.</i>, 2011) Expressing likes/dislikes (He <i>et al.</i>, 2019) Choices made accountable (Mammaran and Simonson, 2011) Place attachment (Styvén <i>et al.</i>, 2020) Self-expressive customization of products (Kaiser <i>et al.</i>, 2017) “Dueling preferences” to small prosocial gift givers (Rifkin <i>et al.</i>, 2021) Self-expressive assortment (supporting putting personal qualities into a product) (Rifkin and Etkin, 2019) Sports activity’s perceived difficulty, perceived effort, perceived importance and potential for self-realization (Bosnjak <i>et al.</i>, 2016) Need to validate self-image (Harmon-Kizer <i>et al.</i>, 2013) Belief in global citizenship through global brands (Strizhakova <i>et al.</i>, 2011) Subjective norms (Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i>, 2007) Self-expressive customization of products (Kaiser <i>et al.</i>, 2017)	<i>Self and social IE (consumer perspective)</i> (Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i>, 2007; Rozenkrants <i>et al.</i>, 2017; Pagani <i>et al.</i>, 2011) Self-identity expressiveness (Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i>, 2007; Pagani <i>et al.</i>, 2011) Individual/group level of identity expression (Rozenkrants <i>et al.</i>, 2017) Self-expression (<i>consumer perspective</i>) (Chernev <i>et al.</i>, 2011; Moreau <i>et al.</i>, 2020; Kokkoris and	Brand love (Cho and Hwang, 2020) Active use of social network sites (Pagani <i>et al.</i>, 2011) Personal happiness (Bosnjak <i>et al.</i>, 2016) Intentions to use multimedia messaging (Thorbjørnsen <i>et al.</i>, 2007) Impulse purchasing (Dittmar and Bond, 2010) eWOM (Styvén <i>et al.</i>, 2020) Self-continuity (Rifkin and Etkin, 2019)

(continued)

Review and
future research
agenda

Table 9.
Antecedents
phenomenon
consequences:
coverage and gaps in
the empirical study
of antecedents and
consequences

Table 9.

Antecedents ^a	Phenomenon ^b	Consequences ^c
<i>Need for uniqueness/self-monitoring</i> (Kauppinen-Räsänen <i>et al.</i> , 2018) <i>Attitudes linked to value-expressive/social-adjustive function</i> (Wilcox <i>et al.</i> , 2009) <i>Consumers discussing opinions on brands/products</i> (Kokkoris and Kuhnen, 2013)	Kuhnen, 2013; Bhattacharjee <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018; Goor <i>et al.</i> , 2020; Ward and Broniarczyk, 2011; Thomas <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Giakoumaki and Krepapa, 2020; Maimaran and Simonson, 2011; Cardoso <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Derbaix <i>et al.</i> , 2002; Harmon-Kizer <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Morewedge <i>et al.</i> , 2021; Saenger <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Rajavi <i>et al.</i> , 2019)	Choose self-expressive products/brands (Maimaran and Simonson, 2011) Upgrade to brand's more exclusive products (Wang and John, 2019) WOM (Smith <i>et al.</i> , 2021) Focal consumers' unethical behavior (He <i>et al.</i> , 2019) Perceptions of authenticity by others (Smith <i>et al.</i> , 2021) Products' signaling value (Moreau <i>et al.</i> , 2020)
<i>Brand anthropomorphism</i> (Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018)	<i>Self-expression needs</i> (Chernev <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Kokkoris and Kuhnen, 2013) Finite nature of self-expression needs (Chernev <i>et al.</i> , 2011) Actual and/or ideal self (Kokkoris and Kuhnen, 2013) <i>Sense of agency in self-expression</i> (Bhattacharjee <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Puzakova and Aggarwal, 2018) <i>Self-authenticity/Accuracy of self-concept in self-expression</i> (Goor <i>et al.</i> , 2020; Ward and Broniarczyk, 2011) <i>Options/means of self-expression</i> (Thomas <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Giakoumaki and Krepapa, 2020; Maimaran and Simonson, 2011; Cardoso <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Derbaix <i>et al.</i> , 2002; Harmon-Kizer <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Morewedge <i>et al.</i> , 2021; Saenger <i>et al.</i> , 2013): Identity-congruent ads (Thomas <i>et al.</i> , 2015) Consumers with high BEC as part of self-concept (Giakoumaki and Krepapa, 2020)	Negative response to advertising (Escalas and Bettman, 2003)

(continued)

Antecedents ^a	Phenomenon ^b	Consequences ^c
<i>Polarizing products linked to consumer tastes/ personality (Rozenkrants et al., 2017)</i>	Self-expressive options to expression personal preferences (Maimaran and Simonson, 2011) Propensity to connect with brands (Harmon-Kizer et al., 2013) New channels for self-expression (e.g. social media) (Morewedge et al., 2021) <i>Cultural values of self-expression (Rajavi et al., 2019)</i> <i>Identity-signaling (consumer perspective)</i>	In-use value of the identity good identity conservation effect (Sheehan et al., 2020)
	(Berger and Heath, 2007; Berger and Heath, 2008; Han et al., 2010; Matherly and Pocheptsova Ghosh, 2017; Dommer et al., 2021; Grewal et al., 2019; Rustagi and Shrum, 2019; Johnson and Chattaraman, 2019; Warren and Mohr, 2019) <i>Signaling convergence and differentiation</i> (Berger and Heath, 2007; Berger and Heath, 2008; Han et al., 2010; Matherly and Pocheptsova Ghosh, 2017) Low in need of status versus high in need of status (Han et al., 2010) Signaling to communicate belonging to desired group (Berger and Heath, 2007; Berger and Heath, 2008; Matherly and Pocheptsova Ghosh, 2017) <i>Identity signaling domains/dimensions</i> (Berger and Heath, 2007; Berger and Heath, 2008; Dommer et al., 2013; Bellezza and Berger, 2020; Goor et al., 2021)	
<i>Low-memory efficacy/reduced diagnostic value of actions (Touré-Tillery and Kouchaki, 2021)</i>		

(continued)

Review and
future research
agenda

Table 9.

Table 9.

Antecedents ^a	Phenomenon ^b	Consequences ^c
<i>Consumer types (wealth/need for status)</i> (Han <i>et al.</i> , 2010) <i>Need for uniqueness/differentiation</i> (Chan <i>et al.</i> , 2012)	Product domains perceived as symbolic of identity (Berger and Heath, 2007) Multiple signaling dimensions (Berger and Heath, 2008; Dommer <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Bellezza and Berger, 2020) Signaling superiority in alternative domains when status are threatened (Goor <i>et al.</i> , 2021) <i>Ways of identity-signaling</i> (Grewal <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Rustagi and Shrum, 2019; Johnson and Chattaraman, 2019; Warren and Mohr, 2019) Using social media (Grewal <i>et al.</i> , 2019) Find/purchase products to compensate and repair identity (Rustagi and Shrum, 2019) Socially responsible self and social signaling (Rustagi and Shrum, 2019) Signaling in ironic way/contrary to conventionally-perceived meaning of the product (Warren and Mohr, 2019) <i>Desired identity (brand perspective)</i> (Xie <i>et al.</i> , 2015) Brand identity “includes, but extends beyond, a ‘global consumer identity’” (Xie <i>et al.</i> , 2015)	Positive behavioral response to brands (based on brand trust/brand affect) (Xie <i>et al.</i> , 2015)
<i>Perceived brand globableness/localness</i> (Xie <i>et al.</i> , 2015)		

Notes: a: These column cells identify antecedents to specific identity expressiveness (IE) phenomenon as identified in the respective row for each empirical study. An empty cell indicates that no variables have been empirically studied as antecedents to the IE phenomenon identified in the row. b: These column cells identify IE phenomena studied in the respective study. These are further organized under the “themes” highlighted first in Table 6. In this column b, these themes are highlighted in title typeface. c: These column cells identify consequences of specific IE phenomena as identified in the respective row in the empirical studies. An empty cell indicates that no variables have been empirically studied as consequences to the IE phenomenon identified in the row

Source: Authors’ own work

culture plays an important role in relation to IE (Rajavi *et al.*, 2019; Rozenkrants *et al.*, 2017), yet scarce research has been conducted on IE in cross-national and cross-cultural contexts.

Further research can also focus on IE in digital contexts such as online communities and/or social media, as well as in metaverse contexts. For example, this might include the study of how individuals express their identities through various virtual possessions and branded products in these spaces (Marr, 2022). Social networking platforms such as Facebook and Instagram provide individuals with ample opportunities to express specific identities while hiding others – in an effort to provide an authentic image of themselves to their viewers (Caliandro, 2018; Hogan, 2010; Michaelidou *et al.*, 2021; Uski and Lampinen, 2016). Further research can investigate online users' IE in terms of how individuals publicly link themselves to the use and consumption of brands and products. Future research may also shed light on the link between online and offline IE since users primarily tend to reproduce their offline identity to establish a strong feeling of continuity and consistency between their online and offline identities (Caliandro and Gandini, 2016; Lin *et al.*, 2018). This can be achieved using qualitative methodologies such as netnography (Kozinets, 2022) or quantitative methodologies such as content analysis. Notably, netnography involves the observation of online textual discourses to understand behaviors and consumption of online users (Kozinets, 2009; Moraes *et al.*, 2014), thus representing a very good method to study IE in digital contexts. Moreover, future research can use qualitative methodologies to explore IE as a primary and necessary step in developing measurement tools to capture IE. Finally, another direction that researchers can take is that of conceptual studies, including reviews focusing on developing a metatheory, meta-analytic reviews, method and/or theory-based reviews (Paul and Criado, 2020), which are scarce when it comes to the study of IE. Table 10 shows a list of priority future research themes and examples of research questions.

5. Conclusions, contributions and limitations

5.1 Theoretical contributions

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first framework-based review to present a synthesis of current knowledge on IE while identifying research priorities and future research directions for researchers working in the area. On these grounds, our work is novel and contributes to the literature by synthesizing current understanding of the extant work conducted on the topic of IE, helping to identify the phenomenon itself, as well as categorizing its *antecedents* and *consequences* against an overarching framework. In doing so, several theoretical implications emerge, which help advance understanding of how IE is understood, defined and empirically approached in the current marketing literature. For instance, we identify that IE is viewed as either a motivation to self-express, as the actual act of self-expression and/or the perception that products/brands help express. At the same time, we identify and categorize various antecedents and consequences of IE that have received research attention in the marketing literature, helping to point out key research gaps. Indeed, through this review, we identify gaps in the extant knowledge on IE, and we put forward a set of research priorities and research questions with the aim to pave the way for further research on this topic. Overall, our future research agenda encourages scholars to focus on IE as there is ample scope for research in terms of more antecedents of IE (e.g. vis Table 10, and to name a few, personality traits, brand elements and anthropomorphic cues), studying IE in different contexts (e.g. digital, metaverse, cross-national) and using different methodologies.

5.2 Practical contributions

Identity-based marketing is evolving, with marketers aiming to make a connection between their brands and the consumer in terms of identity. Integrative reviews “typically facilitate

Antecedents	Phenomenon	Consequences
<i>Priority research areas:</i> • Identify individual, brand and social level drivers • Identity-relevant motives • Personality traits • Level of elaboration • Creative cues, types of advertising messages, creative strategies • Triggers that cause identity expressiveness to backfire • Level of brand-related information, credibility and type of source • Brand elements (e.g. logos, taglines, etcetera) • Brand anthropomorphism <i>Research questions examples:</i> <i>What motivates identity expressiveness, and what specific motives/needs lead to consumers expressing their identities?</i> <i>What personality traits underpin self and social identity expressiveness?</i> <i>What anthropomorphic cues trigger identity expressiveness?</i> <i>What undermines identity expressiveness?</i>	<i>Priority research areas:</i> • Differences in identity expressiveness in different contexts (digital, metaverse) • Differences in identity expressiveness across cultures and national-cultures, genders and age groups • Identity expressiveness via different product categories (e.g. luxury vs nonluxury brands) and consumption situations? • Produce a measurement of identity expressiveness • More qualitative studies in identity expressiveness (e.g. netnography) • Identity expressive vs nonidentity expressive consumers • Identify levels/types of self-expressiveness (e.g. actions) • Expressive vs nonexpressive products • Self-expressive places <i>Research questions examples:</i> <i>How do consumers express their identities in different contexts, including digital and metaverse contexts?</i> <i>How do individuals from different countries express their identity in different contexts, and are there any cross-national differences?</i> <i>What types of digital channels are more expressive (social networking sites, apps, games, etcetera)?</i>	<i>Priority research areas:</i> • Identify individual, brand and social level outcomes of identity expressiveness • Studies on eWOM/WOM • Studies on impulse buying • Studies on willingness to buy more or pay more • Studies on emotions and trust • Studies on brand loyalty • Brand engagement <i>Research questions examples:</i> <i>- What are the consequences of identity expressiveness?</i> <i>- What are the positive-negative outcomes of identity expressiveness?</i> <i>- What are the consumer and marketing benefits of identity expressiveness?</i>
Table 10. Future research avenues	Source: Authors' own work	

the exchange of knowledge between academia and the industry” (Stocchi *et al.*, 2022, p. 196). A valuable practical contribution of our review is the integration of IE’s antecedents and consequences in a framework which clearly identifies specific domains where practitioners can focus on shaping IE, leading to favorable marketing outcomes. For example, brands that

have specific human-like identity features (e.g. brand anthropomorphism as an antecedent of IE) are likely to achieve a better connection with the individual, thus shaping IE, and leading to outcomes such as impulse buying and/or eWOM. In a similar line, marketers can focus on aspects such as uniqueness, self-expressive customization of products (e.g. initials on handbags, unique external and internal trim combinations in automotive purchasing) or the importance of others (e.g. subjective norms) in making consumption decisions in their messages to trigger IE (e.g. car ads may show children as “important others” in such decisions). Furthermore, practitioners can also enhance IE through using “agency” in their marketing communication messages to create a feeling of control over one’s identity linked to a specific product and or brand. Overall, a crucial managerial implication of this review is that by enhancing IE, it is possible for practitioners to enhance brand perceptions and, thus, behavior. For instance, consumer-congruent IE could positively correlate with brand trust and positive brand affect, which, in turn, would have the propensity to drive purchase intention.

5.3 Limitations of the review method

Despite the robust approach we used to conduct our SLR, some potential limitations should be acknowledged. Our review is a frame-based review using the overarching framework of *antecedents-phenomenon-consequences* (Paul and Criado, 2020). To this end, our scope did not involve the in-depth analysis of specific theories in the field of IE nor the development of a metatheory. Rather, our focus was to offer an integrative review of the current knowledge of the field, presenting a reconciled account of the different approaches to IE, its antecedents and its consequences. Future reviews on the topic of IE might be theory-based to develop a metatheory or adopt meta-analytic approaches where researchers can provide in-depth statistical assessments of the contributions to the field of IE. Another possible limitation is that our synthesis is based on scholarly work that is highly ranked on the ABS2021 list (with the exception of the three specialized consumer behavior journals). We have also excluded articles published in languages other than English. Notwithstanding these limitations, we present a robust review of the current state of research on IE and a set of research priorities that have significant potential to contribute positively to research and to marketing practice.

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