



WOMEN'S SPORTSWEAR ON INSTAGRAM

Original scientific paper
DOI: 10.5937/CT_ITI25033Z

Bruno Završnik¹

¹University of Maribor, Faculty of Economics and Business, Razlagova 14,
2000 Maribor, Slovenia,
e-mail: bruno.zavrsnik@um.si, ORCID ID: 0009-0003-1940-9113

ABSTRACT: Social media is an extremely effective and successful tool for building and increasing brand awareness in the women's sportswear industry today, with Instagram being one of the most used social media platforms. Social media offers women's sportswear brands an extremely powerful tool for promoting products and services, as their broad presence and interactivity enable direct contact with the target group. Creative and attractively designed content, displayed in an innovative and imaginative way, is extremely important. The basic purpose of our research was to present alternative ways of using the social network Instagram for the purposes of marketing communication of women's sportswear brands and to examine the use of Instagram among active Instagram users in connection with women's sportswear.

Keywords: women's sportswear, marketing communications, Instagram, social media.

ŽENSKA SPORTSKA ODEĆA NA INSTAGRAMU

APSTRAKT: Društvene mreže su izuzetno efikasan i uspešan alat za izgradnju i povećanje prepoznatljivosti brenda u industriji ženske sportske odeće danas, a Instagram je jedna od najkorišćenijih platformi društvenih medija. Društvene mreže nude brendovima ženske sportske odeće izuzetno moćan alat za promociju proizvoda i usluga, jer njihovo široko prisustvo i interaktivnost omogućavaju direktan kontakt sa ciljnom grupom. Kreativan i atraktivno dizajniran sadržaj, prikazan na inovativan i maštovit način, izuzetno je važan. Osnovni cilj našeg istraživanja bio je da predstavimo alternativne načine korišćenja društvene mreže Instagram u svrhe marketinške komunikacije brendova ženske sportske odeće i da ispitamo korišćenje Instagrama među aktivnim korisnicima Instagrama u vezi sa ženskom sportskom odećom.

Ključne reči: ženska sportska odeća, marketinške komunikacije, Instagram, društvene mreže.



1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, technology has changed the online environment dramatically and the use of social media has proliferated. While social media advances people's lives, it also creates problems [1].

Sometimes it is believed that the use of print media, radio and television is sufficient to successfully and effectively establish relationships between a company (brand) and consumers, but with the digitization of the world and especially with the development of social networks, this has changed. People's habits and ways of communicating have changed, and consequently also the ways in which brands approach or communicate with their consumers.

Social networks, which are part of the so-called digital marketing, have become one of the most effective and indispensable tools for brand marketing communication, which not only allow companies to present products and services in a unique and extremely creative way, but also allow them to establish continuous personal interaction with consumers (long-term relationships) and strong empathy.

In this paper, we presented, defined and analysed in more detail the social network Instagram, its advantages, disadvantages and its use in women's sportswear shopping habits.

2. USING INSTAGRAM FOR WOMEN'S SPORTSWEAR

The social network Instagram is an online platform that was introduced in 2010 by Kevin Systrom, the founder of Instagram [2]. Initially, the platform served as a blog where individuals could share and present their stories, experiences and photos, but the view of Instagram quickly changed completely. People noticed the extraordinary potential of the application for sharing and exchanging high-quality photos and videos, designed with inspiration and encouragement, which led to a tremendous increase in the number of users and thus to the online platform we know today [3].

Nowadays, Instagram is the central online platform dedicated to creating, sharing and discovering high-quality, attractive visual content in the form of photos and videos. It stands out from other social platforms for its innovativeness, aesthetics and visually appealing nature, which makes the platform a magnet for all users who are enthusiasts of aesthetics, creativity and the fascination with visual content [4].

In the women's sportswear segment, companies have also quickly recognized the potential of Instagram and its business applications, which they can use for the purposes of effective marketing communication and reaching the target audience.

The strong emphasis on visual communication, namely, allows companies, especially in the women's sportswear sector, where visuality, aesthetics and creativity are extremely important factors, to tell and present stories about brands, products, their design inspirations, etc. in an original and unique way, while simultaneously creating a strong connection with the target audience. Also, according to many authors, in today's extremely competitive digital world, it is precisely visual content that is the most effective way to



connect with the audience and one of the strongest marketing strategies for companies in the women's sportswear segment [5].

Instagram has thus provided companies and brands in the women's sportswear segment with an ideal, aesthetically appealing virtual space, where they can not only present themselves, their products, services, etc. on a daily basis through unique visual creations, but also have the opportunity to establish continuous communication with their followers (target audience), which helps them to identify their needs, desires, feelings and opinions in a fairly simple way, so that they can continuously adjust further marketing campaigns, strategies and, last but not least, products. Continuous communication, together with all other factors, consequently, leads to an emotional connection with individuals on a much more personal level. In addition to direct marketing with the help of visual content displayed to the target group in an unobtrusive way, a strong community is created in parallel, which stands behind the company and the brand, supports it and trusts it immensely.

The Instagram social network primarily allows women's sportswear brands to open a business account, which gives them the opportunity to gain insight and use numerous advanced functionalities (analysis and metrics) that help the brand better understand the target audience, in terms of their desires, needs, opinions, wants, possible comments, etc. Based on the continuously monitored results and reactions of the target audience regarding published content, created marketing campaigns, sponsored posts, etc., fashion brands can consequently adapt further strategies, collections, products and planned further content for marketing purposes extremely quickly [6]. One of the key priority functionalities of Instagram for women's sportswear brands is advertising (Ads). Advertising on Instagram plays an indispensable role, as it allows for extremely precise targeting of published content according to various metrics of the target group (demographic factors, lifestyles, searched and liked content, ...). Such targeting of target groups is extremely valuable for women's sportswear brands, as they can reach exactly the desired individuals, members of the target group, with relatively low costs and investments in marketing campaigns (optimization of the financial budget for promotional purposes), without the need for additional investment in marketing campaigns [7]. The "Insights" function also allows women's sportswear brands to view information regarding designed ads (Ads) - posts, stories, videos, etc. and view data if the content was truly increased due to the financial investment (a greater number of people who saw the ads).

The social platform Instagram offers women's sportswear brands numerous advantages that they can use for digital marketing purposes [8]:

- attractive presentation of brands, products, services, various stories, etc.
- effective connection with the target audience (women, active Instagram users, sports fans, fashionable sportswear and healthy lifestyle) and establishment of strong connections.
- increasing brand recognition.
- the possibility of using different content formats for even greater engagement of the target audience.



- reaching a larger number of individuals (targeted targeting).
- cost-effectiveness (fewer financial investments, greater audience reach and greater profitability).
- increasing visibility using Ads
- insights into extremely accurate account statistics (Insights).
- easier collection of information about the target audience.
- tracking competitors and their marketing strategies.
- targeting women's sportswear brands' websites.

3. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

We prepared a completely anonymous and short survey questionnaire on the web portal www.1ka.si. We chose a target population where we focused only on women. 155 women participated in the survey, of which 135 women answered the survey in full. The link to the online questionnaire was shared via online social platform Instagram. First, we wanted to know the age of the respondents.

Table 1: Age of the respondents

Age (years)	Frequency	Percent
Up to 18	0	0%
18-24	38	28 %
25-34	74	55 %
35-44	21	16%
45 and more	2	1%
Total	135	100%

The survey included respondents from various age groups, with the largest number, 74, in the 25-34 age group. This was followed by 38 respondents in the 18-24 age group, and then 21 in the 35-44 age group. The least represented age group of respondents in the survey was the 45 and over age group, with 2 respondents, and no respondents in the under 18 age group.

We were also interested in the employment status of the respondents.

Table 2: Employment status of the respondents

Employment status	Frequency	Percent
Student	18	14%
Employed	115	85 %
Unemployed	2	1 %
Retired	0	0%
Total	135	100%

Table 2 shows that 85% of respondents were employed, 14% were students and 1% were unemployed.

With the next question, we wanted to find out how respondents followed women's sportswear brands.

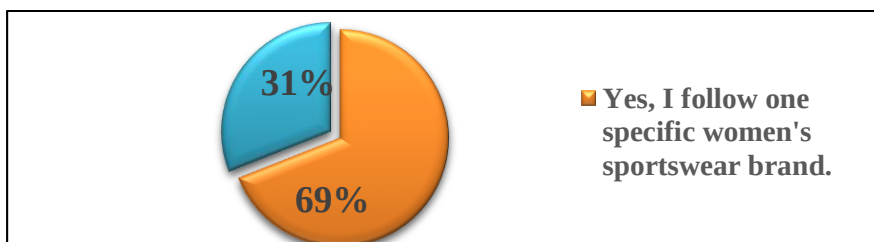


Chart 1: Following women's sportswear brands

The results shown in Chart 1 showed that among the respondents who participated in the study, the majority, 69%, follow one specific brand, while the remaining 31% follow a larger number of brands of women's sportswear.

Then we were interested in what factors make respondents start to trust a women's sportswear brand on Instagram. Since the survey questionnaire was closed-ended, we listed 8 factors for respondents, from which they could choose the 3 most important factors of trust for them.

Table 3: Key factors for trusting women's sportswear brands on Instagram

Factors of trust in women's sportswear brands on Instagram	Frequency	Percent
Visually appealing profile posts (high quality images and regular posting)	62	46%
Brand transparency (clear and honest communication)	61	45 %
Number of followers (higher the number, the more trust the brand)	6	4 %
Brand accessibility (interactivity with followers - active communication and response to comments, questions and messages)	111	82 %
Admitting mistakes	59	44 %
Choosing influencers/ambassadors	14	10 %
Creating entertaining content (product presentations, company events, etc.)	14	10 %

As can be seen from Table 3, among all the factors listed, the most, 111 respondents, chose the factor "Brand accessibility", which showed that for most participants, brand



interactivity and active communication are key to gaining their trust. The factors "Visually attractive content" and "Brand transparency" were also selected.

The results showed that both are approximately equivalent and almost equally important in gaining the trust of the respondents in women's sportswear brands. The factor "Visually attractive content" was chosen by 62 respondents, and brand transparency by 61 respondents. "Admitting mistakes", which was chosen as one of the key factors by 59 participants, was consequently ranked fourth in terms of the importance of the factor in gaining the trust of the respondents in women's sportswear brands. The last, fifth place was shared by the penultimate factor "Choosing influencers" and the last factor "Creating entertaining content", which were chosen by 14 respondents.

In the next question, we tested the usefulness of Instagram in relation to following and searching for women's sportswear from selected brands. We formulated 8 statements, and the respondents rated their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale from 1-5, where 1 meant "I completely disagree" and 5 meant "I completely agree". With the statement "Instagram allows me a wide insight into the details of women's sportswear of selected brands" we wanted to find out from the respondents whether they get enough information about ready-to-wear sizes, quality of materials, cuts, details on clothes, functionality of clothes, etc. with the help of Instagram.

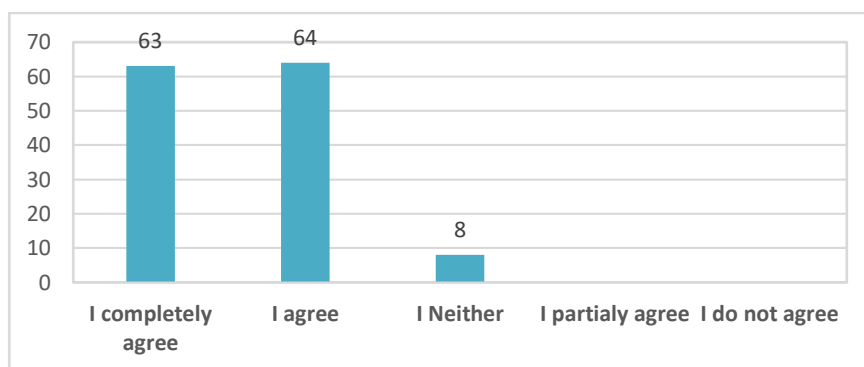


Chart 1: Following women's sportswear brands

Based on these results in Figure 1, we can conclude that users believe that Instagram is a sufficient source of information when searching for and following women's sportswear. With the following question, we checked whether the respondents decide to visit online stores of women's sportswear brands based on the content they see on Instagram.

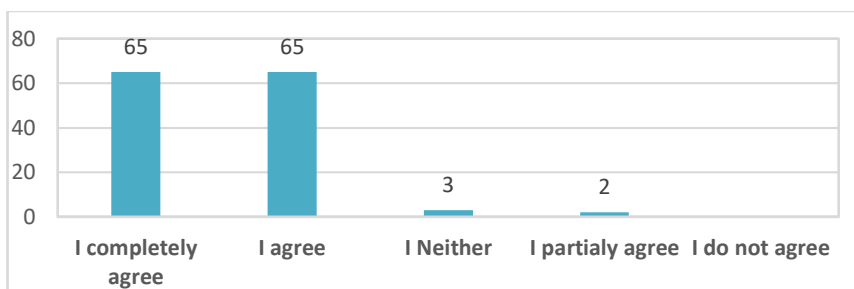


Figure 2: Purchasing decisions based on Instagram content

The results in Figure 2 showed that the content seen from women's sportswear brands influences the respondents' decision to visit online stores, as 65 of them completely agree with the statement, which means that these respondents decide to visit an online store of women's sportswear brands. Also, 65 respondents agreed with the statement, from which we can conclude that these respondents also visit online stores very often. 3 respondents remained undecided, and 2 were those who disagreed with the statement, which means that they usually do not decide to visit online stores of women's sportswear brands based on the content seen on Instagram.

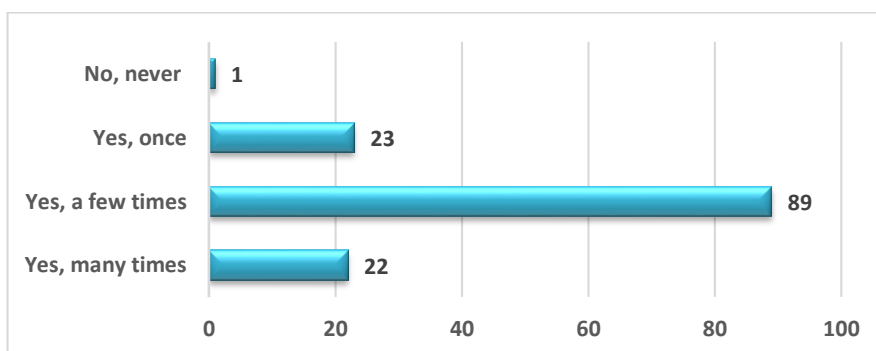


Figure 3: Decision on purchasing women's sportswear from selected brands - Instagram

4. CONCLUSION

The results of our research confirm the research of other authors that Instagram is the most aesthetically and creatively oriented social platform, which has opened the door to an extremely attractive virtual space for brands in the women's sportswear segment, where they not only have the opportunity to present themselves, products, upcoming collections, clothing manufacturing processes, etc. through unique creations, but they can also continuously communicate with followers and target audiences.



Continuous communication through various communication tools such as profile posts, Instagram Story, Instagram Live, Story Highlights, communication with the help of Influencers/ambassadors, Sponsored Posts, Prize Games, etc. primarily enables the transmission of content in various, individually attractive ways, and also enables constant monitoring, quick recognition and good understanding of the needs, desires and wants of the target audience, which allows brands to effectively adapt further marketing strategies. Based on its functionality, Instagram provides respondents with numerous attractive and interesting ways to follow content related to brands and women's sportswear.

REFERENCES

- [1] Mu, W. & Lennon, S. J. (2018). "Objectification of Women in Sportswear Brands' Instagram Accounts", *International Textile and Apparel Association Annual Conference Proceedings* 75(1).
- [2] Blystone, D. (2025). *Investopedia*. What It Is, Its History, and How the Popular App works. <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/102615/story-instagram-rise-1-photo0sharing-app.asp>.
- [3] McGilvrey, J. (2017). Instagram Secrets. *Underground Playbook for Growing Your Following Fast, Driving Massive Traffic & Generating Predictable Profits*, 118-121.
- [4] Meta Business. (2023). *Help Centre Instagram*. Pridobljeno iz About Instagram: <https://help.instagram.com/424737657584573>.
- [5] Business Matters. (2019). How fashion brands can benefit from Instagram: <https://bmmagazine.co.uk/marketing/how-fashion-brands-can-benefit-from-instagram/>
- [6] Nancy. (2021). *Instagram marketing*. Pridobljeno iz Instagram Business Account vs Personal Account: What's the Difference? <https://meetedgear.com/blog/instagram-business-account-whats-the-difference/>
- [7] Sorensen, A. (2018). *SN:D Agency*. Pridobljeno iz The Pros and Cons of Using Instagram Ads: <https://www.socialnicole.com/the-pros-and-cons-of-using-instagram-ads/>
- [8] Yamada, J. (2022). *Elite digital*. From : <https://elitedigitalagency.com/blog/5-pros-and-cons-of-instagram-marketing/>