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Womenswear well-being warriors: a content analysis of female-targeted activewear brands on Instagram.

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Womenswear Well-being Warriors: A Content Analysis of Female-Targeted Activewear Brands on Instagram

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Abstract

In contemporary Western society, people are increasingly focused on well-being, with national well-being statistics reported by numerous developed economies. Wellness is now a consumer mindset, which has gone beyond a trend and become a lifestyle, described as individual, multi-dimensional and influenced by community and environment. Fashion is recognized as a powerful social force, capable of enhancing both physical and emotional well-being. The cultural shift toward prioritizing comfortable clothing and more casual dress has led to the rapid development of female sportswear as fashionwear, described as athleisurewear. This category has seen high levels of growth compared to slowing growth in the overall clothing market.

Existing studies on activewear focus on positivist paradigms and scientific testing, with few examining the sociological or fashion perspective, therefore this research adopts an interpretive, qualitative methodology. An exploratory literature review established several well-being categories related to fashion; safety, time, the body, community, confidence and colour, as well as hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Qualitative content analysis on four female-targeted activewear brands was completed, utilizing posts from each brand's Instagram feed over a six-month period. Results were coded to the well-being categories established in the literature and critiqued using a Baumanian sociological lens. The findings reveal high levels of positivity, a strong sense of community, messages of female empowerment, and inclusivity, underpinning the value of female-targeted activewear brands to the well-being of the women who wear them, and the role of both activewear brands and social media in facilitating community.

Key words: well-being, community, Instagram, activewear, womenswear

Introduction

This research is underpinned by Zygmunt Bauman's (2012) social theory of *Liquid Modernity*. In contemporary society, people are increasingly anxious, linked by Bauman (2012) to the demise of community, the rise of individuality, and the anxiety of choice. In tandem, consumers increasingly spend their disposable income on products, experiences, and activities that improve their lives, described as health creep or the consumerization of health (Krom, 2014). Wellness is now a consumer mindset, going beyond a trend and becoming a lifestyle (Krom, 2014). Worth Global Style Network's (WGSN, 2015) "Wellthness" consumer insight report confirms wellness is a desired status symbol, with many sportswear and fashion brands developing associated clothing products and experiences. Thus, this research explores links between fashion and well-being, using a Baumanian lens.

Literature Review

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Well-Being

Interest in well-being is not new; in 2010, the Office for National Statistics commenced the Measuring National Well-Being program, facilitating the monitoring and understanding of well-being in the United Kingdom (Evans et al., 2015). The report discusses well-being in relation to time, work, leisure, safety and income. The 2019 Global Happiness and Wellbeing Policy Report (Global Council for Happiness and Wellbeing, 2019, p. 4) states that the “‘pursuit of happiness’ should no longer be left to the individual,” arguing that it is a societal (macro-level) concern. However, Davies (2015) suggests that policies related to happiness and well-being seek to alter the behavior of individuals toward goals selected by those in power. This is described as a form of paternalism which Davies acknowledges can relieve the individual from the responsibility of decision-making. In agreement, Bauman notes that freedom from societal constraint does not bring automatic happiness, as human agents find taking responsibility, without norms to follow, stressful. Time spent on leisure activities is said to increase psychological well-being by releasing the stress of everyday life (Evans et al., 2015). Getting active is one of the five evidence-based steps advocated by the UK’s National Health Service (NHS) to improve psychological well-being (NHS, 2015). Similarly, Lomas et al. (2014) stress the value of exercise in promoting well-being.

Well-Being and Community

Bauman defined society as an “imagined being,” replacing God in the supervision of human affairs (2011, p. 57). Where orthodox sociology was concerned with obedience and conformity, sociology in modern times is more concerned with freedom, autonomy, and responsibility (Bauman, 2012). In *Liquid Modernity*, Bauman acknowledged a move toward individualization, with diverse and deregulated opportunities for people’s progress and improvement. Solidity, in the form of societal rules, routines, and norms, once provided stability and collective well-being to *the citizen*, who was committed to the common interests of society. The move toward individualization has led to a lack of solidarity, a more fragmented society, with the citizen now replaced by *the person*, who shows less commitment to society and is more concerned with individual problems. Unpredictability and “uncertainty of prospects” makes community a struggle and strains the individual’s self-confidence (Bauman, 2011, p. 66). Bauman alludes to the false or forced nature of contemporary community, requiring spectacle to bring normally disparate individuals together in a more communitarian perspective. Those individuals temporarily conform, for example by adhering to a sartorial dress code specific to the occasion. These spectacles allow the individual to gain respite from the anxiety of solitary choice.

Social media has been identified as both an inhibitor and a facilitator of community (Casalo et al., 2018; Laroche et al., 2012). The Instagram platform has been widely adopted by both the fashion industry and a variety of niche communities, with hashtags such as #fitspiration bringing together well-being and athleisurewear, facilitating communities of like-minded individuals and brands. Casalo et al. (2018) note that consumers increasingly use platforms like Instagram as a source of advice, and Cukul (2015) notes brands’ use of Instagram to engender loyalty. Laroche et al. found that social media-based brand communities can create value and have positive effects on community markers such as shared consciousness and rituals, stating that “[i]n joining social media, people fulfil their need for belongingness and their need for cognition with those who have shared norms, values and interests” (2012, p. 1756).

Well-Being and Clothing

Davies notes that “as an incredibly powerful social and economic force, fashion is capable of bringing health and well-being to those it touches physically and emotionally” (2015, p. 217). Hefferon (cited in Arts, 2015) states that, “clothes have the ability to influence our confidence, performance, posture and attitude,” recognizing the psychosocial importance of clothing in human interactions and social settings. Masuch and Hefferon (2014) posit two types of psychological well-being gained from fashion and dress. Hedonic well-being involves feelings of pleasure, whereby clothing makes the wearer *feel good*. Eudaimonic well-being is gained through dress practice providing a source of *fulfillment or meaning*. Well-being from clothing and dress practice is also influenced by self-presentation or appearance management (Baron, 2013), color (Solomon and Rabolt, 2009; Eisman, 2006), community (Bauman, 2012; Craik, 1994) and confidence (Arts, 2015).

Sports clothing was traditionally associated with the male consumer as a form of casual wear, rather than for functional purposes (Keynote, 2015). In recent years, women have prioritized comfortable clothing and a more casual look, resulting in the rapid development of female sportswear as fashionwear (Keynote, 2015). Smith (2015) uses the term “athleisure,” described as a “mass movement, not a trend”; a cultural shift over the preceding 5-10 years caused by the prioritization of health and well-being. Petrarca (2017) identifies the proliferation of athleisure as a trend, but one with longevity. Linked to athleisure wear, the term activewear is also described as a lifestyle choice rather than a fashion category, with high levels of growth in the sales of activewear seen in the United States and United Kingdom (WGSN, 2015). Activewear is described as evoking “a sense of athleticism and wellbeing” (WGSN, 2015, p. 6). Concurrently, sports brands have evolved from merely selling sports clothing to providing experiences and personal transformation opportunities that enhance their consumers’ well-being (Sherman, 2016). Keynote (2015) highlights the evolution of female-targeted activewear brands such as Lululemon and Sweaty Betty, and sportswear/designer collaborations such as Stella McCartney with Adidas, as a measure of the importance of sports and leisure wear to the fashion industry. Bauman describes the actions of consumers in pursuit of health and fitness as expensive, with costly fitness clothing and health foods being readily and proactively consumed in the pursuit of confidence and escape from insecurity, positing the body as “a besieged fortress” (2012, p. 81). Similarly, Corner asserts that “the fashion industry is often viewed as the main culprit in undermining women’s self-esteem” (2014: 92). Orbach’s (1978) *Fat is a Feminist Issue* book states that female identity is linked to body image and that limited representation of women in mainstream media pressures women to conform to one standard (tall, thin, white, young). As this is unattainable for the majority to achieve, it results in widespread loss of self-esteem, leading to vulnerability, depression, eating disorders, and cosmetic surgery, all of which can be linked to well-being (or lack of). Several researchers (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014; Pine, 2014) note studies that prove wearing certain items can improve or impede feelings of confidence. Pine (2014) concludes that “it seems indisputable that simply putting on a piece of clothing which carries symbolic meaning can change a person’s self-perception and even their thought processes. It can make them feel more or less attractive, confident, powerful or clever.”

Method

Existing studies on activewear focus on positivist paradigms and the scientific testing of comfort and performance factors (Kamalha et al., 2013), with few examining the sociological or fashion perspective; therefore, this research adopts an interpretive, qualitative methodology to address this gap. The literature established the growth and fashion for athleisurewear clothing, the zeitgeist for well-being, and the role of social media in both, thus

the following key research question for this study emerged: How do female-targeted activewear brands use Instagram to encourage well-being in their consumers?

Instagram was chosen as it has a 51% female demographic (Chen, 2020), is a growth platform for fashion and clothing brands (Moatti & Abecassis-Moedas, 2018; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), and for its provision of rich media messages, incorporating image and text. Instagram also has a social, community element, often involving user-generated as well as firm-generated content (Daugherty et al., 2008; Laroche et al., 2012), and the option for sharing and two-way communication (Guidry et al., 2015). Four female-targeted activewear brands were selected for the study (figure 1), based on their active Instagram feeds and focus on female activewear.



Figure 1. Female-targeted activewear brands and number of posts analyzed.

A qualitative content analysis of each brand’s Instagram feed was conducted; 775 posts (comprising images, text and hashtags) from April to September 2019 were analyzed for content associated with the key well-being categories identified in the literature review: community, confidence, safety, eudaimonic well-being, hedonic well-being and time. These well-being categories were used as topic codes (Richards, 2009), providing a first stage to analysis of the primary data, which was then developed thematically and critiqued using a Baumanian sociological lens. Bauman (2012, p. ix) uses the notion of liquidity as a metaphor for postmodern society, with those living in liquid modernity facing “an infinity of improvement.” Bauman developed this notion to illustrate the constant state of change in contemporary society, and its associated anxieties. Thus, Bauman’s *Liquid Modernity* was considered an appropriate theory to provide a critical lens for this research. As Bauman has not been widely applied to fashion, this study contributes to knowledge from a sociological perspective. The four brands chosen, although important in terms of their size and brand recognition, are a limitation of the study, and cannot be deemed representative of the wider athleisurewear industry. The study also focuses on a female-targeted sample, making it ungeneralizable to the wider concept of well-being.

Analysis and Discussion

Sweaty Betty

Posts from Sweaty Betty’s Instagram feed fall into the community, safety, confidence, eudaimonic well-being, and hedonic well-being categories. The community category was the most prominent. In a community-building move, the brand canvassed its consumers to establish what they were most interested in (April 9). These posts received a high level of engagement, with 199 user-generated posts, some with detailed responses. Sweaty Betty’s consumers indicated they wanted to see “more real women, diversity, wellness, design inspiration, technical details, styling tips and workout videos” (11 April). These were evident in subsequent posts, demonstrating that the brand has listened to its community. Other examples of Sweaty Betty’s community-building customer interaction activities include

“Share your #SweatySelfie” posts, competitions, and simulated conversation using *us* and *you*. The community aspect is further strengthened by the “Meet Our Customers” campaign, with an inclusive “all ages and all sizes” message (14 June). The campaign features diverse Sweaty Betty customers filmed dancing in Sweaty Betty clothing. Inclusivity is further shown in a “Happy Pride London, we’ll be celebrating with you” post (6 July) featuring the first woman to wear a hijab in a competitive horserace (1 August) and a body positivity post celebrating real bodies by showing an unretouched image featuring stretch marks (figure 2).

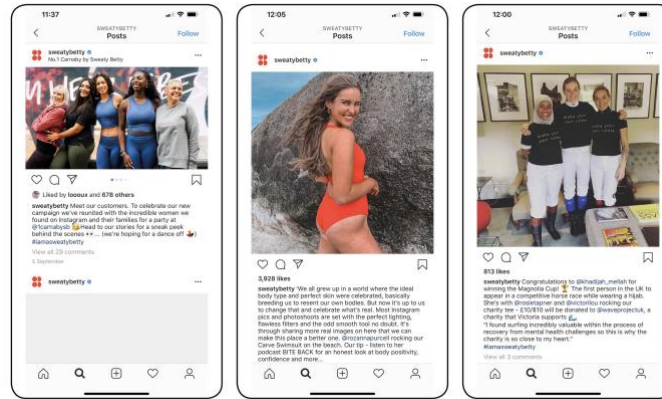


Fig. 2: An inclusive community

There is a strong focus on friendship in some of the posts. These mainly occurred around #nationalbestfriendsday and #nationalfriendshipday, and elicited engagement through activities including a “Tag your best friend” competition (20 July) and calls to action such as “Tag your workout buddy” (20 May) and “Our tip? Grab a friend and try something new” (4 August).

The word *community* appears in one post: “Sweaty Betty is about community, empowering women to support one another” (22 May), and is inherent in several others: “part of a tribe” (9 May), “sharing an adventurous experience, it’s the ultimate human bond” (7 May) and “Sweaty Betty is about an experience of togetherness, connection and supporting each other” (18 June). The female perspective is emphasized (figure 3), using words such as “sisterhood” (10 May) and “like Mother, like daughter” (5 May). Indeed, Sweaty Betty has created a wholly female community on Instagram, using only female influencers and fitness instructors, introducing female head office staff, and using female directors for photo shoots and advertising campaigns.

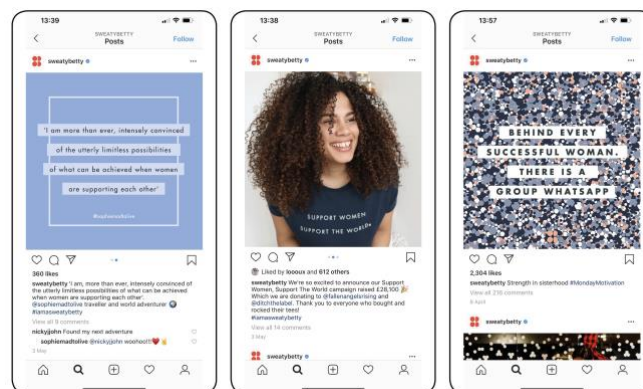


Figure 3. A female community

Thus, this space where women empower women is a safe space, which is significant as feeling safe is an aspect of well-being (Evans et al., 2015). Consumer reaction to the posts is overwhelmingly positive, encouraged by Sweaty Betty's ethos of being kind, evidenced by posts such as, "in a world where you can be anything, be kind to yourself and others around you" (28 September), which received 18,958 views and lots of heart emoji reactions. Another post states, "powerful things happen when we are nice to each other" (26 August), supporting #womensequalityday, and tips on "how to be kinder to yourself" are provided (24 July). In addition to psychological safety, a utilitarian approach to safety is evident, with posts describing a bag "for all your valuables" (9 August) and a "safety first" post showing a swimsuit offering UV sun protection (13 June).

Confidence is important to well-being (NHS, 2015), and several posts encourage women to "be confident in yourself" (9 September) and advising how to conquer anxiety with "tips on becoming a more calm and confident person" (14 May). This links with feeling good, or hedonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014), evident in posts such as "leggings that make you feel good" (25 July) and several posts mentioning happiness. Several of these posts provide inclusive body positivity messages. Another example of hedonic well-being is seen in posts related to self-care, such as "self-care isn't selfish" (9 June). Eudaimonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014) is evident in posts related to environmental sustainability, suggesting a sense of fulfillment can be gained from sustainable Sweaty Betty purchases (figure 4), spreading the community ethos to include the planet.

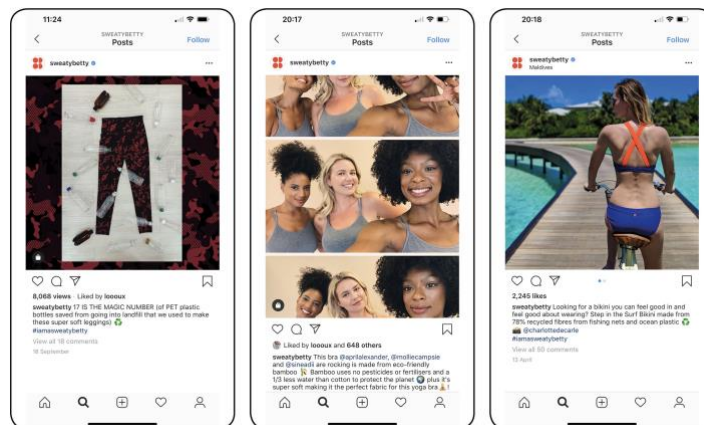


Fig. 4: The wider community

In summary, analysis of the Sweaty Betty Instagram feed suggests that Sweaty Betty can be classed as a Womenswear Well-being Warrior brand. Posts evidence aspects of well-being identified in the literature, including a strong sense of community (Casalo et al., 2018; Bauman, 2012; Laroche et al., 2012) and safety (Evans et al., 2015) within an all-female, supportive, and confidence-building space based on friendship, kindness, and inclusion.

Lorna Jane

Posts from Lorna Jane's Instagram feed fall into the community, safety, time, confidence, eudaimonic well-being and hedonic well-being categories. The eudaimonic well-being category (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014) was the most prominent, with Lorna Jane focusing on personal growth, a positive mindset, and progress, encouraging a sense of fulfillment. Linked to this sense of fulfillment is the notion of self-care (figure 5), categorized as hedonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014). Lorna Jane urges followers to "release the things in life that don't bring you joy" (21 September) and instructs that "self-care is not

selfish. You owe yourself one hour a day of time devoted to you” (19 June), emphasizing the need to feel good. Several mentions of happiness are evident in the posts reviewed. There are also several mentions of time, an important aspect of well-being (Evans et al., 2015). The focus is on leisure time, with posts featuring a “weekend uniform” (10 May) and urging followers to “take time to do what makes your soul happy” (21 May).

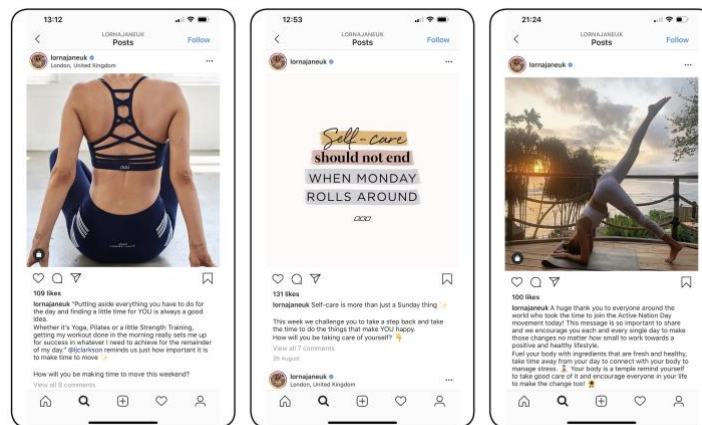


Figure 5. Hedonic well-being

Community is suggested in some self-care posts, with one encouraging followers to take care of themselves and to “encourage everyone in your life to make the change too” (29 September). Although community was not quite as prominent as in the Sweaty Betty posts, it is a reasonably significant theme in the Lorna Jane posts (figure 6). Community-themed posts relate to friendship, relationships, and family, encouraging followers to tag their “no. 1 supporter” (2 April), “sweatsister” (6 June), “tribe” (17 Sept) and their “fellow yogi” (15 July). Impacts on the wider community are evident through phrases such as, “when we move together, we can change the world” (29 September) and mention of Active Nation Day. The word *community* appears in one post: “see how our Active Community all over the world are celebrating this special [International Yoga] day” (21 June).

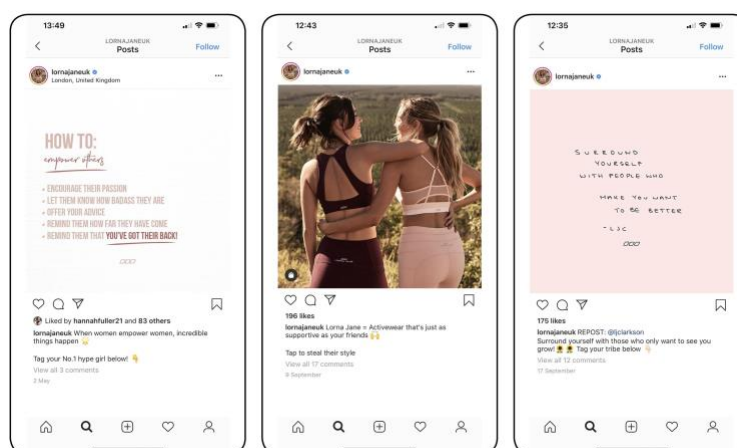


Figure 6. Community

Aligning with Sweaty Betty, Lorna Jane’s posts utilize a female theme, evidenced by phrases such as, “when women empower women, incredible things happen” (2 May) and “behind every great woman is a crowd of women cheering her on” (2 April). There are also posts featuring a “girls do it better” t-shirt (3 June) and a sweatshirt featuring ‘girlgang’ text

(12 May). A point of difference compared to Sweaty Betty is that the women featured in Lorna Jane’s posts are generally slim, fit, and toned. There is diversity in terms of ethnicity, but little diversity in terms of size or age.

Lorna Jane encourage a fearless attitude among their followers (figure 7), addressing the safety category of well-being (Evans et al., 2015), but focuses on overcoming fears rather than the more utilitarian safety concerns shown in the Sweaty Betty posts. Followers are told that “everything you want is on the other side of fear” (4 April), to “stop being afraid of what could go wrong and think about what could go right” (9 April). This links with the eudaimonic posts, with a strong sense that the Lorna Jane brand seeks to empower their female followers to overcome any fears to achieve a sense of fulfillment, leading to well-being. The word *courage* is mentioned often, along with being *brave*; “you are braver than you think” (17 June) and “the bravest thing you can be is yourself” (28 May). This links to confidence, explicitly mentioned in a post urging followers to “move with confidence in our Nothing 2 C here fabric” (7 April), addressing body-confidence issues.

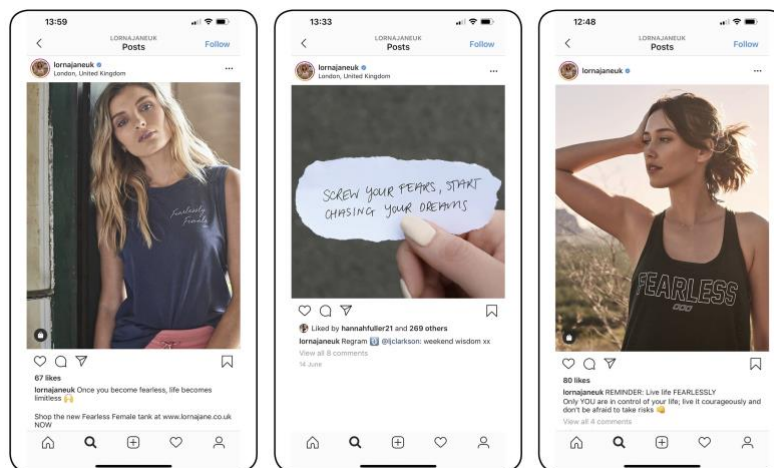


Figure 7. Fearless

In summary, analysis of the UK Lorna Jane Instagram feed suggests that Lorna Jane can be classed as a Womenswear Well-being Warrior brand. Posts evidence aspects of well-being identified in the literature, including a commitment to female empowerment and personal growth. Although there is some emphasis on friendship and community (Casalo et al., 2018; Bauman, 2012; Laroche et al., 2012), personal fulfillment or eudaimonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014) is the key focus, and posts target a specific customer rather than a diverse range of women.

Lucas Hugh

In line with the brand’s tagline, “Driven to advance the future of activewear,” Lucas Hugh’s posts focus on the technical aspects of fabric and garment construction and emphasize design elements such as color and style. Although color is linked with well-being (Solomon and Rabolt, 2009; Eisman, 2006), the posts do not use the psychology of color; they are purely functional posts detailing availability of new colors. Lucas Hugh’s posts have a luxurious high-culture focus, featuring fabulous locations and architecture. Aligning with Lorna Jane, the women featured in the posts are generally of a slim, fit, and toned physique. There is diversity in terms of ethnicity, but little diversity in terms of size or age; most are clearly models in brand-generated photography. Compared to the other brands, Lucas Hugh’s posts feature far fewer people; posts featuring architecture or locations are often people-free, and posts with a person tend to have just one female. Some Lucas Hugh Instagram posts

could be categorized into the community and confidence well-being categories. Very few posts relate to a sense of wider community, although one post mentions, “a team of inspiring women” (16 April), and another asserts “we love our neighborhood” (9 July). Community for the Lucas Hugh brand focuses on the relationship between the brand and its customers; posts frequently address followers using the word *you*, for example, “where would you like to be?” (17 April). Another post uses the hashtag #whatmovesyou (18 April). Several posts invite the customer to interact with the brand, both virtually and in person (figure 8) by visiting the shop or personalizing their purchase. There were no specific mentions of community in the posts analyzed.

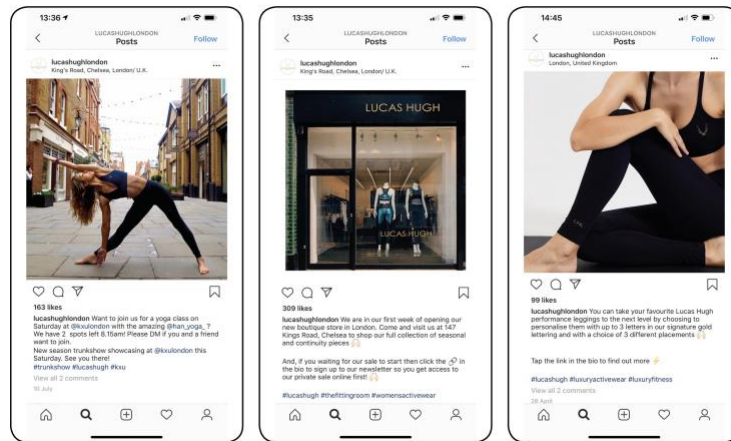


Figure 8. A brand-customer community

Confidence is a key aspect of well-being (NHS, 2015) and this is a feature of Lucas Hugh’s Instagram posts, with several posts explicitly mentioning confidence: “your summer workout wardrobe that will keep you feeling and looking confident” (3 June) and “take on Monday with our strong, vibrant and confident Azure set” (9 June). Body confidence is inherent in several posts (see figure 9), featuring phrases such as “to flatter your figure” (3 April) and “cut to complement” (19 April).

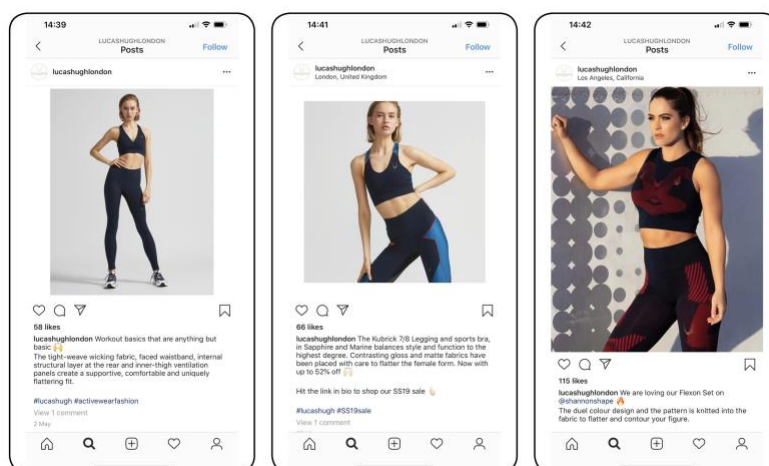


Figure 9. Body confidence

Overall, Lucas Hugh focuses on function and fashion. Posts focus on a combination of performance and look, with personal appearance categorized as a form of hedonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014), where feelings of pleasure and of feeling good are

deemed to engender a sense of well-being. Hedonic well-being is also hinted at in terms of self-care, with one post stating “take some time for yourself,” using the hashtag #yogaselfcare (24 June). This aligns with findings from both Sweaty Betty and Lorna Jane related to self-care, and to literature that suggests time is an aspect of well-being (Evans et al., 2015). Indeed, several of Lucas Hugh’s posts related to time, specifically the weekend, linking with Lorna Jane’s weekend-focused posts.

In summary, analysis of the Lucas Hugh Instagram feed suggests that Lucas Hugh cannot be classed as a Womenswear Well-being Warrior brand. Some posts do evidence aspects of well-being identified in the literature, including hedonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014) gained from looking good and feeling confident, as well as community-building through interaction with the brand (Laroche et al. 2012). However, technology-enabled performance and individual appearance is the key focus, and posts are aspirational, targeted at a very specific luxury customer.

Lululemon

Although a global brand, Lululemon’s UK Instagram feed had fewer posts but lots of followers. Lululemon also make menswear, so only posts that included females were reviewed; most posts had a mix of males and females, with very few female-only. There is diversity in terms of ethnicity, size, age, and gender, with one post featuring a transgender model (24 September). Compared to the other brands, Lululemon’s posts feature fewer single person shots, favoring groups. The posts are a mix of community events, real people, brand ambassadors in action, and carefully posed model shots, again demonstrating inclusivity.

Lululemon’s Instagram posts could be categorized into the community, confidence, eudaimonic well-being and hedonic well-being categories, with community by far the most prominent. The posts show real commitment to the development of community; the word community is explicitly mentioned in many posts. Run communities are a feature, either set up by Lululemon or featuring other established run communities, evidencing collaboration. Collaboration is also featured in brand collaboration posts. Positive images of people smiling, high-fiving, and hugging suggest the feel-good factor, or hedonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014) of community (figure 10).

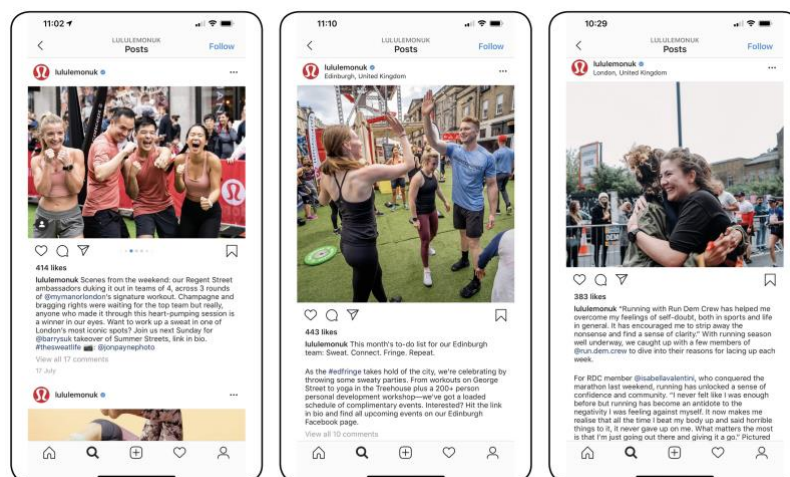


Figure 10: The hedonic well-being of community

A video post about “one of London’s most inspiring run communities” (4 May) received over 14,000 views, suggesting impact. Yoga communities are also a feature, as are communities of Lululemon staff and brand ambassadors. Posts about brand festivals feature

events from various parts of the UK and refer to ‘our community’ (20 July) and ‘our local UK community’ (17 Sept). This evokes a sense of togetherness, which Bauman (2012), Laroche et al. (2012) and Casalo et al. (2018) all link with the concept of community. In addition to discipline-specific and wider communities, family and friends are a recurring theme within Lululemon’s posts.

Only one explicit mention of confidence was evident, from a runner stating “running has unlocked a sense of confidence and community” (2 May). Only a few posts fall into the hedonic well-being category (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014). These use phrases such as “looks good on you” (2 April) and “if it feels good, you are doing it right” (29 August). Aligning with the other brands reviewed, there is an element of self-care to some posts, evidenced by phrases such as “take time for yourself today” (22 April) and “take a break from your work week and just move” (29 August). Endorphins are mentioned, widely referred to as happy hormones that trigger positive feelings. In terms of eudaimonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014), words and phrases such as “conquered,” “crush your goals,” and “major kudos” (19 May) all suggesting a sense of achievement. Affirmation of achievement is evident in a sign prepared for a cheer squad at a running event that states ‘Warning: awesome sense of accomplishment ahead’ (30 Sept). Lululemon also posts about involvement in personal development workshops to engender a positive mind-set; “uncover what’s possible and how you can create your ideal future” (20 August). Personal connections are further engendered by call-to-action posts, such as “Your run. Your reason. What’s yours? Tell us below” (10 April), where the brand elicits interaction as a community-building activity.

In summary, analysis of the Lululemon UK Instagram feed suggests that Lululemon can be classed as a Womenswear Well-being Warrior brand. Posts evidence aspects of well-being identified in the literature, including eudaimonic well-being (Masuch and Hefferon, 2014) gained from a sense of accomplishment and a very strong sense of community (Casalo et al., 2018; Bauman, 2012; Laroche et al., 2012), based on friendship, collaboration and inclusion.

Conclusion

The data collected and analyzed demonstrates the contribution of women’s activewear brands to several categories of well-being, summarized in figure 11 and providing an answer to the research question: How do female-targeted activewear brands use Instagram to encourage well-being in their consumers?

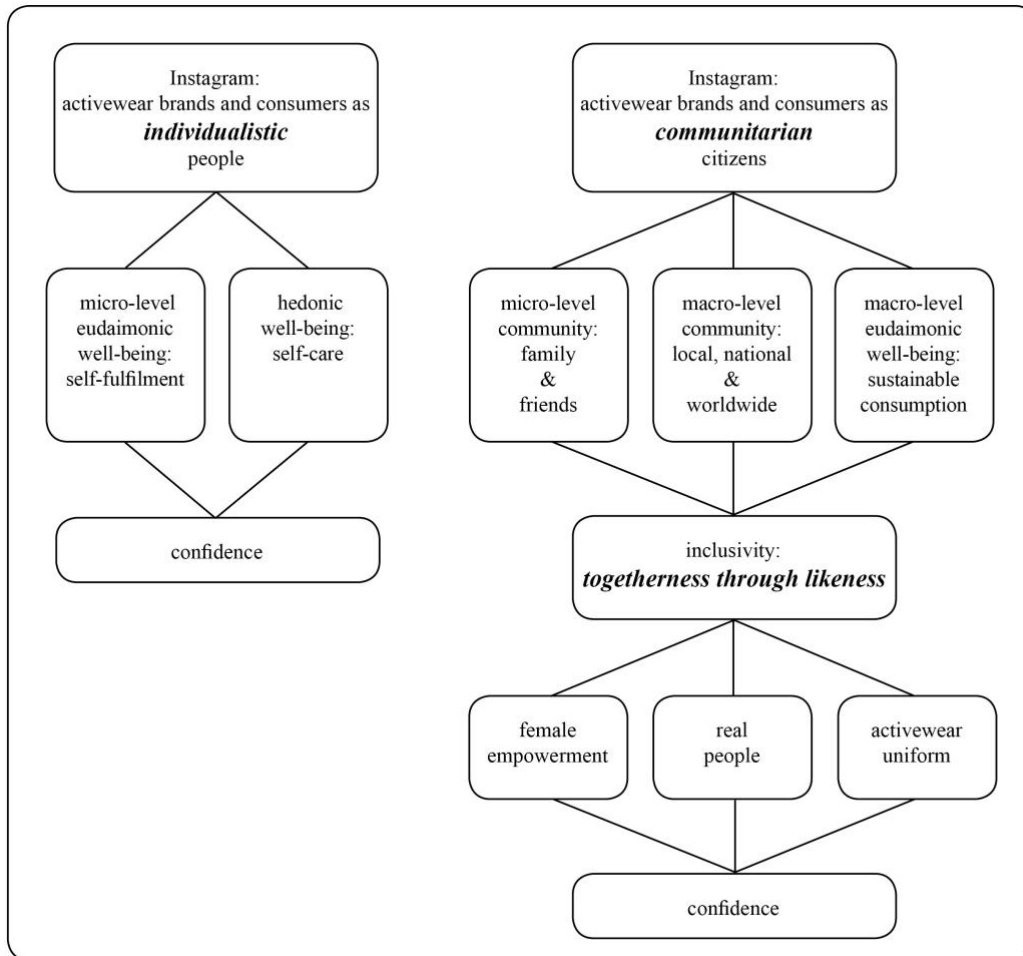


Figure 11. Well-being engendered by female-targeted activewear brands on Instagram

Of the four brands reviewed, Lululemon and Sweaty Betty were the most inclusive, showing content that included a range of sizes, lifestyles, ages and ethnicities. Both real people and models were featured. These brands were also strongest in terms of community. Bauman (2012) describes community as having a sense of togetherness engendered by likeness or being of the same mind, and this is seen in Lululemon's communities, which are both local and worldwide, supportive, collaborative, and focused on friendship and family. User-generated content in the form of follower comments showed strong support for inclusive, real-people posts. Sweaty Betty's campaign to recruit real people for an advertising campaign engendered a lot of positive feedback, demonstrating the influence of two-way communication on Instagram (Guidry et al., 2015) and the community-building power of seeing likeness, aligning with Bauman's assertions. Body confidence emerged as a contentious issue, with some followers making negative comments about the use of very slim and toned models. This is especially noted in Lucas Hugh, the least inclusive of the brands reviewed in terms of firm-generated image.

Sweaty Betty and Lorna Jane have a strong focus on female community and empowerment, with an undercurrent of activism and social justice that suggests females need to stick together, support one another, and be fearless. There is a sense that an all-female environment is a safe space, which aligns with Evans et al.'s (2015) assertions that safety is important to well-being. Lululemon was the only brand to explicitly mention activism in relation to pride and gender fluidity, evidencing expression of social justice themes. Lorna Jane's focus on compassion and Sweaty Betty's focus on kindness suggest the importance of

individual contributions to collective well-being. This suggests a *citizen* ethos, identified by Bauman (2012) as someone committed to the common interests of society, rather than Bauman's individualistic *person*. This in turn links with Lululemon's and Sweaty Betty's emphasis on friendship, aligning with Bauman's assertion that the solution to "life problems of the contemporary world is friendship" (2011, p. 85).

Hedonic well-being was a feature across all four brands. The focus was on feeling good through self-care for Sweaty Betty, Lorna Jane and Lululemon, with Lucas Hugh instead prioritizing feeling good through looking good and being body confident, which could be described as appearance management (Baron, 2013). Eudaimonic well-being at micro level was evident in both Lorna Jane's and Lululemon's posts, focused on self-fulfillment and individual accomplishment. A sense of fulfillment was also evident in Sweaty Betty's posts, but with a macro environment focus encouraging sustainable and ethical clothing consumption to benefit the planet. Thus, Bauman's (2012) sociological construct of *Liquid Modernity* and its focus on individual responsibility is evident, albeit with these women's activewear brands acting in a solidifying manner, providing direction and encouragement to the individual and harking back to the orthodox sociological construct of conformity. As Bauman asserts, community, also an orthodox narrative of the human condition, is "the last relic of the old-time utopias of the good society" (2012, p. 92). In fragmented, liquid modern times, it seems that the women's activewear brands in this study use Instagram to bring people together, physically (at events) and virtually (online). There is an element of spectacle (Bauman, 2012), bringing normally disparate individuals (customers, ambassadors, staff) together in a more communitarian perspective, perhaps recognizing the anxiety of the individual. Taking part in events and interacting on Instagram enables individuals to temporarily conform, using activewear sartorial dress codes or brand uniforms specific to the fitness occasion. Thus, these spectacles allow the individual to ease the anxiety of solitary choice, gaining a sense of psychosocial well-being.

In summary, the sampled female-targeted activewear brands use Instagram to encourage well-being in their consumers mainly through Bauman's *communitarian* ethos, with community at micro and macro levels combining to engender inclusivity and a sense of *togetherness through likeness*, using themes of female empowerment, real people, and an activewear clothing uniform to inspire confidence, a key aspect of well-being. To a lesser extent, Bauman's *individualistic* person is also evident, gaining confidence and well-being from self-fulfillment and self-care.

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