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# How does influencer marketing impact brands in the sportswear industry?

Exploring the effects of brand coolness, brand attitude and purchase intentions.

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Dissertation written under the supervision of Daniela Langaro

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## Abstract

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**Title:** How does influencer marketing impact brands in the sportswear industry? Exploring the effects of brand coolness, brand attitude and purchase intentions.

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This study aims to investigate the impact of using influencers on Instagram as a communication tool for sportswear brands.

While exploring this research field, brand attitude and the newly developed construct of brand coolness were evaluated for their effects on purchase intentions. Moreover, the current study evaluates whether the number of influencers' followers influences the results.

For that matter, an experimental study was conducted with comparison between subjects among three groups. Those three groups were designed to test brand attitude, brand coolness and purchase intentions of participants being exposed to influencer's posts or brand's posts. Further, the influencer marketing conditions differed in the number of followers (high number of followers/ low number of followers) to investigate the effects.

Quantitative data of 310 participants was collected through an online survey and analysed. The results of this study found no significant difference for influencer's posts compared to brand's posts on the constructs brand attitude, brand coolness and purchase intentions, besides one exception: The dimension 'Rebellious' of brand coolness.

Furthermore, the impact of using influencers with a high number of followers for the brand coolness dimensions 'Desirability' and 'Positive Autonomy' was proven to be positive.

The study is the first one connecting brand coolness with the construct of purchase intentions and confirms a positive significant impact of all dimensions on purchase intentions. The results show that the brand coolness dimensions have a positive significant impact on brand attitude.

Finally, this study provides an outlook on future research and limitations are discussed.

**Keywords:** *Influencer Marketing, purchase intentions, brand attitude, brand coolness, sportswear industry, micro-influencer, macro-influencer*

## Sumário

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**Título** - Qual o impacto do Marketing de Influenciadores nas marcas da Indústria de Vestuário de Desporto? Explorando os efeitos da “coolness” da marca, da atitude da marca e de intenções de compra.

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Este estudo visa investigar o impacto de influenciadores como ferramenta de comunicação no Instagram para marcas de vestuário desportivo.

Nesta pesquisa, a atitude e a nova construção de frescura da marca foram avaliadas quanto aos seus efeitos nas intenções de compra. Também, se o número de seguidores dos influenciadores influencia os resultados.

Assim, foi implementado um desenho experimental comparando sujeitos de três grupos. Esses três grupos foram desenhados para testar a atitude da marca, o brand coolness e a intenção de compra dos participantes expostos aos posts de influenciadores ou da marca. Além disso, as condições de marketing dos influenciadores diferiram no número de seguidores (alto número de seguidores/ baixo número de seguidores) para investigar os efeitos.

Foram recolhidos e analisados dados quantitativos de 310 participantes. Os resultados deste estudo não encontraram diferença significativa para os posts de influência em relação aos posts da marca na construção da atitude da marca, frescura da marca e intenção de compra, além de uma exceção: A dimensão 'Rebelde' da frieza da marca.

Além disso, este estudo demonstrou dois impactos positivos: o uso de influenciadores com um alto número de seguidores em comparação com as dimensões "Desejável" e "Autonomia Positiva" da marca; dimensões de frescura sobre a atitude da marca.

Finalmente, o estudo é o primeiro a ligar a frescura da marca à construção da intenção de compra e confirma um impacto positivo de todas as dimensões na intenção de compra.

**Palavras Chave:** *Influenciador de Marketing, intenção de compra, atitude da marca, “coolness” da marca, indústria de vestuário de desporto, micro-influenciador, macro-influenciador.*

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# Table of Contents

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<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Sumário</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Table of Tables</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>Table of Figures</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>Table of Appendices</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background .....	1
1.2 Relevance and purpose of the study.....	2
1.3 Research Questions .....	3
1.4 Research Objectives.....	3
1.5 Scope of the study .....	4
1.6 Significance and contribution of the study .....	4
1.7 Thesis structure .....	4
<b>2. Literature Review</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 The Sportswear industry .....	5
2.2 Social media and eWOM .....	5
2.2.1 Social Media and the Sportswear Industry .....	6
2.3 Influencer Marketing .....	6
2.3.1 Sportswear brands and influencer marketing.....	7
2.4 Instagram as a social media platform.....	8
2.5 Purchase Intentions .....	9

2.6 Brand Perceptions .....	9
2.6.1 Brand attitudes .....	10
2.6.2 Brand Coolness .....	10
2.7 Number of followers on Instagram .....	12
<b>3. Research Methodology .....</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1 Research Objectives.....	14
3.2 Research Approach .....	14
3.3 Data Collection .....	15
3.3.1 Primary Data .....	15
3.3.2 Experimental design and stimuli.....	15
3.3.3 Questionnaire Design.....	16
3.3.4 Population .....	17
3.3.5 Sample Size.....	17
3.4 Data Analyses .....	18
<b>4. Data Analyses .....</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	19
4.2 Demographics .....	19
4.2.1 Age.....	19
4.2.2 Education .....	20
4.2.3 Occupation .....	20
4.2.4 Sportswear purchase behavior .....	21
4.3 Reliability Test.....	21
4.4 Validity .....	22
4.5 Mean Analysis and normality test.....	24
4.6 Pearson Correlation Test.....	24
4.7 Sample Validation.....	25

4.7.1 Independent Sample t-test: Age, Education Level, Current Occupation and sportswear purchase behavior .....	25
4.7.2 Independent Sample t-test: Consumer’s liking of the presented brand “Jiva Activewear” .....	26
4.8 Hypotheses Testing .....	27
4.8.1 Hypothesis 1.....	27
4.8.2 Hypothesis 2.....	28
4.8.3 Hypothesis 2a.....	28
4.8.4 Hypotheses 3 .....	29
4.8.5 Hypotheses 4.....	30
4.8.6 Hypotheses 5.....	31
4.8.7 Hypotheses 6.....	32
4.8.8 Hypotheses 7.....	33
4.9 Summary .....	33
<b>5. Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research .....</b>	<b>35</b>
5.1 Discussion.....	35
5.2 Recommendation and managerial implication.....	36
5.3 Limitations and future research .....	37
<b>6. References.....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>VIII</b>

## Table of Tables

---

Table 1: Experiment Conditions .....	19
Table 2: Age.....	20
Table 3: Level of Education.....	20
Table 4: Occupation.....	21
Table 5: Sportswear Purchase Behavior .....	21
Table 6: Cronbach's Alpha.....	22
Table 7: Principal Component Analyses.....	23
Table 8: Measure of Construct and Descriptive Statistics .....	24
Table 9: Pearson Correlation .....	25
Table 10: Independent Sample t-test – Demographic Variables influencer created post vs. brand created post (Age, Education Level, Current Occupation and Sportswear Purchase Behavior) .....	26
Table 11: Independent Sample t-test– Demographic Variables HNF vs. LNF condition (Age, Education Level, Current Occupation and Sportswear Purchase Behavior) .....	26
Table 12: Independent Sample t-test – Liking for the brand (influencer created post vs. brand created post) .....	27
Table 13: Independent Sample t-test – Liking for the brand for HNF and. LNF condition ....	27
Table 14: ANOVA H1 .....	28
Table 15: ANOVA H2 .....	28
Table 16: Regression Analysis H2a.....	29
Table 18: ANOVA H3 .....	30
Table 19: Regression Analyses H4 (a-g) .....	31
Table 20: Regression Analyses H5 (a-g) .....	32
Table 21: ANOVA H6 (a-g) .....	33
Table 22: ANOVA H7 (a-b) .....	33
Table 23: Summary Hypotheses Testing .....	34

**Table of Figures**

---

Figure 1: Age ..... 20  
Figure 2: Level of Education ..... 20  
Figure 3: Occupation..... 21  
Figure 4: Sportswear Purchase Behavior ..... 21

## Table of Appendices

---

Appendix 1: “Definitions for Component Characteristics of cool brands and Relevant Citations form Prior Research” by Warren et al. (2019).....	VIII
Appendix 2: Table of Items .....	IX
Appendix 3: Survey Flow .....	X
Appendix 4: Online Survey Questionnaire (English Version) .....	X
Appendix 5: Online Survey Questionnaire (German Version).....	XIX
Appendix 6: Krejcie and Morgan Table .....	XXIX

# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Background

Today more than ever, companies face the challenge of finding ways to address their target groups fairly and adequately. Due to technological developments like social networks and the new media landscape, the communication conditions for companies have changed fundamentally in recent decades. A large number of saturated industries, an increasing number of brands and increasingly substitutable products force a harsh competition. One of those industries is the sportswear industry.

By the time one has finished reading this sentence, Nike has sold 25 pairs of sneakers (Pearson, 2016). This example shows the immense purchase power in the sportswear industry where an annual compound rate of more than 10% is expected until 2025 (*Global Sportswear Market Size & Share | Industry Trends Report, 2025*, 2019). Big players like Nike and Adidas have to deal with many competitors and new incumbent sportswear brands to fight their market share. Like all firms in a highly competitive environment, companies in the sportswear market increase their marketing measures. As a result, consumers are exposed to a large number of advertising messages and often feel overwhelmed by this mass of information. This feeling leads to a dilemma for marketers: traditional advertising, such as advertising on television, is no longer perceived as an efficient communication instrument due to consumers' numbness towards traditional advertising. Nowadays, consumers rely more and more on peer-to-peer communication (Hughes et al., 2019).

Social media networks like Instagram offer companies a way to gain customers' attention and increase their visibility. On social media, customers are enabled to communicate their individual experience with a brand or a product to hundreds and thousands of other people with only one click (Pearson, 2016). In that manner, social media made a change towards communication as we knew it and became the alternative marketers have been looking for.

A survey conducted by Bughin et al. (2010) found word of mouth (WOM) to produce more than twice the sales of paid advertising – hence recommendations have an impact on the point of purchase. Mastering this new, digital form of communication contributes significantly to the success of a brand and is thereby crucial for the competitive sportswear industry.

One of the most discussed and used tools of advertisement on social media is influencer marketing (IM). IM empowers brands to leverage WOM through social media personalities

(Liu et al., 2015; Talavera, 2015). Further, brands can use IM to connect to consumers naturally and let them spread WOM on social media (Rogers, 2016). Thus, IM has become vital for companies' digital marketing strategies and is one of the most discussed topics in digital marketing these days (Talavera, 2015). Influential personas, e.g. singers and models, are used by brands to increase awareness and desirability. However, also actual influencers, whom are exclusively known for their social media accounts, are more and more utilized by brands. Previous research found IM to have positive effects on brand performance, namely purchase intentions (PI) (Lim et al., 2017). Those have been associated with the effects, which influencers have on brand attitude (BA) (Lim et al., 2017). Brand attitude qualifies as a measure of brand perception. Besides BA, the recently introduced concept of brand coolness (BC) is another construct to retrieve brand perceptions (Warren et al., 2019).

Coolness is not only an adjective used by children to express their liking for certain things, it also reflects consumers' desirability and a company's performance. This can be treated as a symbolic currency adding value and driving trends (Warren and Campbell, 2014).

Especially for sportswear brands, coolness is a decisive factor (Hofer, 2017). Sports, as well as the coolness, are about building a favorable identity (Campbell and Warren, 2015). One does sports or engage in fitness and a healthy lifestyle to become 'a better version of themselves'.

Recently, a newly developed construct on how to measure BC was introduced by Warren et al. (2019). In their research, they found various positive effects of brands being perceived as cool. The novelty of this construct makes it highly interesting and worth investigating. By proposing to test the new construct of BC for its effects on BA and PI in the context of the sportswear industry, this study evolves. Further, this study aims to investigate how IM impacts brands for this industry by analyzing consumer's BA, perceived BC, and PI by comparing influencer's posts with a brand's posts on Instagram. The central theme of this dissertation evolves as "How does influencer marketing impact brands in the sportswear industry".

## **1.2 Relevance and purpose of the study**

With the rise of the digital world and social media platforms, a shift in marketing as we knew it occurred. Understanding the world of social media and its networks, like Instagram, is essential to maintain these days in order to interact with consumers. Here, the sportswear industry is no exception. Given the importance of forming consumers' brand perceptions, managers can benefit from this study by gaining new insights on whether IM can strengthen positive brand perceptions, namely BA and BC, for the sportswear industry. Managers can benefit from the findings by understanding the impact of IM in that context and plan their digital

marketing efforts accordingly. Also, the impact on PI is going to be tested to give further guidance to managers.

Finally, by investigating the effects of the influencer's number of followers on the constructs of BA, BC, and PI, managers are provided with insight on whether to use macro-influencer (followers > 1 Mio.) or micro-influencers (followers < 100.000) for their marketing activities.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Previous research revealed that a positive BA leads to enhanced PI. In the context of IM, such a favorable BA appears when compelling influencers are used in advertising (Lim et al., 2017). This research aims to gain knowledge if the same holds for BC. Thereof, the first research question evolves as:

**RQ1: What is the effect of influencer marketing on purchase intentions in the context of the sportswear industry, and how do brand perceptions, namely, brand coolness and brand attitude, influence these?**

Additionally, previous research has suggested that people rather follow influencers on Instagram with a high number of followers partly because they are perceived as more popular (Veirman et al., 2017). At the same time, the source stated that their popularity can weaken a brand's perceived uniqueness, which might affect customers' BA. This study aims to further investigate the topic by researching the impact of the number of followers (high number of followers = 5.3 Mio (HNF); a low number of followers = 55k (LNF)) an influencer has on the constructs of BA, BC, and PI. Thereof, the second research question derives as:

**RQ2: How does the influencer's number of followers affect brand perceptions, namely, brand attitude and brand coolness, and purchase intentions for the sportswear industry?**

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The main objectives of this study are to determine the impact of whether people are exposed to an influencer created post or brand's created post on Instagram and scrutinize the difference between those two groups in terms of BA, BC and PI. Additionally, the effects the constructs mentioned above have on each other are tested. Finally, this research aims to determine if there is an effect of the number of followers (HNF vs. LNF) an influencer has on BA, BC, and PI.

### **1.5 Scope of the study**

This study is referring exclusively to the sportswear industry. Regarding the choice of a social media platform, this study focusses on Instagram since it is the most powerful and widely used platform nowadays. Furthermore, this study focusses on the female gender due to women playing a key role in athletic wear these days (Salpini, 2019) and them dominating the IM world (Karwowski, 2019).

### **1.6 Significance and contribution of the study**

Due to the high competition in their branch, sportswear brands need effective ways to get to their target groups. Since IM is on the rise, this study aims to investigate how IM affects BA, BC, and PI for the industry. Also, the number of followers an influencer has will be taken into consideration in this study since the number of followers often is a criterion for choosing an influencer to collaborate with for marketing activities.

This study has two contributions: a practical and theoretical contribution. For the practical contribution, this study focuses on the sportswear industry, considering IM on Instagram.

As a theoretical contribution, this study evolves by combining the constructs of BC, PI, and BA. Additionally, it investigates the effects of IM on those constructs.

### **1.7 Thesis structure**

This thesis is divided into five separate chapters. The next chapters will review previous studies and highlight the underlying theories that support the relationships between BA, BC, and PI. Furthermore, literature regarding background information on social media and WOM will be reviewed, and finally, IM will be discussed. By considering these theories and concepts in the context of the sports industry, this study evolves from previous research.

In the third chapter, the methodology for this study, like sample size, population, sampling method, will be explained.

Afterwards, the gathered data will be analyzed and formulated hypotheses will be tested in chapter four.

Finally, chapter five includes the summary and conclusions of this research as well as implications for further research.

## 2. Literature Review

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In this chapter, all relevant theories, previous work, and insights are provided and will be discussed in the context of the sportswear industry.

### 2.1 The Sportswear industry

The global sportswear market is growing. A healthy lifestyle is becoming increasingly important to a broad audience due to the obvious health benefits and gains awareness constantly. Trends like yoga, running, and other fitness activities are driving the sportswear market, and sports events, such as the Olympic Games, foster the its growth (*Global Sportswear Market Size & Share | Industry Trends Report, 2025, 2019*). The numbers speak for themselves: The global sportswear market was estimated at USD 239.78 billion in 2018 and is expected to have a compound annual growth rate of 10,4% from 2019 to 2025 (*Global Sportswear Market Size & Share | Industry Trends Report, 2025, 2019*). Regarding the segments of the sportswear industry, the clothing segment is predicted to have the most robust compound annual growth rate of 10,7% for that timeframe (*Global Sportswear Market Size & Share | Industry Trends Report, 2025, 2019*)

With market growth, competition in the sportswear market is fierce. Innovative brands that disrupt the sportswear market through social media give even well-established brands a hard time to be noticed and to stay relevant. Strategies to connect to customers are much-needed. Especially via social media, brands can gain awareness, shape their brand perceptions, and stand apart from the crowd.

### 2.2 Social media and eWOM

With Web 2.0, social media, and the ubiquitous internet, mass communication transformed from one-way to two-way communication (Wang and Rodgers, 2011). The internet allowed “the democratization of knowledge giving companies, public or private; brands small or big; and people local or celebrity, an equal footing to share information” (*Booth and Matic, 2011*).

With the evolution and advent of **social media (SM)**, the particular form of communication ‘**electronic word of mouth**’ (**eWOM**) emerged (Cicvaric Kostic et al., 2018). SM can be defined as web-based applications “(...) that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). On SM, consumers create and share brand-related information

and claim their brand preference to others within seconds. Therefore, SM represents an ideal tool for eWOM (Knoll, 2016; Veirman et al., 2017).

eWOM is closely related to consumer-generated content and became popular with the rise of SM (Wang and Rodgers, 2011). Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), defined it as “(...) any product or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or a company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet”. Previous research has shown that eWOM and information gained through interpersonal communication influences consumers’ decision-making more than traditional advertising (Goldsmith and Clark, 2008). If a fellow consumer is communicating a similar message, it is found more authentic and credible compared to being transmitted by an advertiser (Veirman et al., 2017). That makes eWOM one of the most widely discussed and exciting topics for marketers. With the rise of SM and eWOM, advertising has changed fundamentally. Higher proportions of media budgets shifted towards SM as a response to its growth and importance (Saxena and Khanna, 2013). Further, digital marketing strategies towards SM and eWOM were developed. Especially for brands reaching out to generations Y and Z, the integration of SM in one’s marketing strategy is critical (Obradović et al., 2017). Brands discovered that potential and tried to reach out to and connect their customers in that way. Also, sportswear brands have to be established on SM to not lose their relevance.

### *2.2.1 Social Media and the Sportswear Industry*

Various websites report on SM trends for the sportswear industry (Connor, 2019; Suntinger, 2018; Unmetric, 2018). The primary and most engaging topic in the sportswear industry on SM is “new collection” (Unmetric, 2018). That shows the central role of SM for the industry as a platform to promote their products, especially new collections, to generate awareness for the brand and their products, and ultimately increase sales.

## **2.3 Influencer Marketing**

With the rise of SM digital influencers evolved. “A social media influencer is first and foremost a content generator: one who has a status of expertise in a specific area, who has cultivated a sizable number of captive followers– who are marketing value to brands– by regularly producing valuable content via social media.”, defined Lou and Yuan, (2019).

The marketing strategy of using the influence of those opinion leaders to drive consumers’ BA and PI is called **influencer marketing (IM)** (Lou and Yuan, 2019). By using influencers as intermediaries when communicating with consumers, brands can leverage the relationship of

influencers to their audience and the emotional connection between them (Uzunoglu and Misci Kip, 2014). Influencers obtain the halo-effect, due to their perceived credibility and followers feel obligated to keep up to their activities. They are observing, engaging and talking about influencers (Hoos, 2019).

”94% of marketers who have used influencer marketing campaigns found them effective” (Lou and Yuan, 2019) as a recent report stated. Additionally, the SM report claims that IM yielded eleven times the return on investment (ROI) compared to traditional advertising (Ahmad, 2018). Also, only 33% of consumers still trust traditional advertising, whereas 90% do trust peer recommendation (Ahmad, 2018). Those numbers support sources claiming IM “becoming one of the hottest trends in social media”(e.g. Cievaric Kostic et al., 2018). “The Rise of Digital Influence”, (2012) stated, “businesses will spark beneficial word of mouth, create brand lift, and ultimately influence the actions of other consumers much more authentically than does traditional marketing” when an efficient influencer strategy is used. There seems to be no doubt that IM is a significant field of digital marketing these days. That emphasizes why it should be further be explored to provide managers with well-researched findings to support their decision making.

### *2.3.1 Sportswear brands and influencer marketing*

With strong leading brands, such as Nike, Adidas and Under Armour, and incumbents who established themselves through SM during the last years, like Shark sportswear and Aim'n Apparel, the competition in the sportswear market is fierce. Implications on how to get on top of consumers' minds and win their hearts are desired. One common way to generate awareness and appear more desirable is to use brand ambassadors who are hyped on SM, says Mr. Björn Gulden, boss of Puma (Hofer, 2017). Puma has gathered celebrities like singer Rihanna and musician The Weekend around them to promote their brand. However, Puma is not the only brand doing so. Adidas is another example of a sportswear brand collaborating with high profile celebrities. They teamed up with rapper Kanye West and singer Rita Ora to shape their brand image. Adidas is earning every third Euro from lifestyle products, therefore their engagement shifted (Hofer, 2017). Sportswear brands, like Adidas, are engaging more in building their brands around the lifestyle than around their core business sports. That is where influential personas such as celebrities help. Especially when they have a massive audience on their SM, they spread awareness.

All of the named celebrity endorsers, have one thing in common: a considerable follower base on Instagram (> 1 Mio.). That makes them an ideal third part communicator as their functioning

as so-called influencers. Besides prominent influencers also actual influencers are frequently used by sportswear labels to endorse their brand. Nike did a 60-second creative workout challenge in cooperation with influencers, e.g., Jenna Alvarez, where the influencer encouraged their followers to do the workout and repost it on their channel (Ong, 2018). By choosing actual influencers, brands are offered a broader and more complex range of influencers. They might be specialized in the field of sports, known for being a role model in terms of lifestyle or have an especially strong emotional bond with their followers which makes them a valuable partner in communication.

Big established brands like Adidas, Puma, or Nike can effort to further shape their brand with the support of megastars or influencers with massive follower bases. Smaller brands, however, cannot. The case of Lululemon, a by now very well established sportswear brand, known for being one of the best yoga wear brands, has never spent big budgets on celebrities (Sugrue, 2018). They focus on micro-influencers, such as yoga instructors, to maintain incredible authenticity and build a loyal community (Sugrue, 2018). With their strategy, they aim to use that micro-influencers connection to their audience to reach out to their follower base, which turned out to be successful (Sugrue, 2018). These conflicting cases show that there is an urgent need to clarify whether sports brands benefit from influencers with high follower numbers.

## **2.4 Instagram as a social media platform**

**Instagram** was founded in 2010, and since has become one of the most widely used SM platforms. The platform allows users free access and offers them the possibility to share pictures and videos through their mobile devices. With 1 billion active users worldwide and more than 500 million daily users, Instagram is one of the most relevant SM platforms nowadays (Aslam, 2019). Phua et al. (2016) conducted a study on consumers' usage of SM platforms where they found Instagram to be the most used platform to follow brands (Veirman et al., 2017). Further, Instagram is the fastest growing social network globally and has become an empowering medium in the world of social networking among young consumers (Lee et al., 2015). With the help of Instagram, companies can use visual content instead of plain presenting of textual information to connect to consumers and, if doing it right, are rewarded with engagement of consumers (Virtanen et al., 2017).

Given Instagram's relevance for dominating engagement with sportswear brands (Prestipino, 2017), this study focuses on researching that specific platform.

## **2.5 Purchase Intentions**

Consumers aim to gather information on the products or services they intend to buy to decrease the risk of making the wrong decision (Thirumalai and Sinha, 2011). This is based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB) which states that this intention is the antecedent of all behavior (Ajzen, 1991). That means that all behavior results from something and is a cause of behavior-relevant information (Ajzen, 1991). Based on the assumption that humans are rational beings and make their decisions according to the information available, the concept of PI is closely linked to consumer behavior and their perceptions.

During the decision-making-process, different attributes and factors are considered and evaluated before finally purchasing a product. Individual customer's criteria and standards for their evaluation might differ. Based on the perceived value of a product, consumer's PI derives (Lee and Lee, (2009), Spears and Singh, 2004). PI can be defined as “an individual’s conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand” (Spears and Singh, 2004).

According to Hearn and Smith, consumers decide based on Instagram profiles, posts, and comment on whether or not to buy a product (Hearn, 2019; Smith, 2019). “72% of Instagram users report to make purchase decisions based on something that they saw while browsing the app...” Smith, (2019) stated in a recent blog post. That makes Instagram a critical tool to foster consumers’ PI. Previous literature found advertisements that include a celebrity to generate higher PI (Daneshvary and Schwer, 2000; Friedman et al., 1976; Pradhan et al., 2014). Lim et al. (2017) found the same effect for influencers. Online sources point out that influencers have even higher rates of engagement compared to celebrities (Smith, 2019). Instagram's power to enhance consumer's PI is closer investigated in this study. Therefore, the first hypothesis was developed for this study:

*H1: Respondents exposed to influencers created posts recommending a sportswear brand will have significantly higher scores on PI for a sportswear brand, compared to respondents, exposed to brand created posts.*

## **2.6 Brand Perceptions**

Due to the TPB, the attitude towards a behavior is highly essential and influences intentions (Ajzen, 2012). The same holds for the attitude towards a brand, as previous research showed (Faircloth et al., 2001). Therefore, the BA will be researched as one of the main concepts for measuring brand perception.

Due to the novelty of the construct and relevance of coolness for the sportswear industry, the construct of BC will be researched as well.

### *2.6.1 Brand attitudes*

**Brand attitudes** (BA) are ‘consumers’ overall evaluation of a brand’ (Keller, 1993). Their evaluations are important when it comes to decisions between different alternatives and have an impact on the final purchase (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). Attitudes do guide the thoughts of consumers, have an impact on their feelings, whether they are favorable or unfavorable, and consequently affect consumers’ behaviors. Consequently, positive BA leads to an increase in market share and thus make brands more successful and profitable (Faircloth et al., 2001). BA, like all forms of brand perceptions, contribute to brand equity (BE). BE is based on consumers’ favorable evaluation and attitudes towards a brand and differentiates brands from unbranded products (Faircloth et al., 2001). Further, BE represents the value of a brand since a positive BE was proven to have a positive linear relationship with PI (Uthayakumar and Senthilnathan, 2011).

Recent studies have focused on how consumers’ favorable attitudes towards advertised brands lead to PI (e.g., Keller, 1993; Singh and Banerjee, 2018). Furthermore, Lim et al. (2017) conducted research on SM influencers’ effectiveness and found the use of compelling influencers to have a positive impact on consumers’ BA. This study is going to research whether the same effect holds for the sportswear industry to give guidance to managers of sportswear brands in that matter. In this sense, the following hypotheses are formulated:

*H2: Respondents exposed to influencers created posts recommending a sportswear brand will have a significantly more favorable attitude towards a sportswear brand, compared to respondents exposed to brand created posts.*

*H2a: A favorable brand attitude has a positive effect on purchase intentions for sportswear brands.*

### *2.6.2 Brand Coolness*

As previously discussed, due to fierce competition in a growing market, sportswear brands need to stand out. Coolness for sports brands is a decisive factor that is not to be underestimated. Literature offers a qualitative and broad understanding of what cool is (Belk et al., 2010; Nancarrow et al., 2002). It has been said to be a social construct (Warren and Campbell, 2014), subjective (Warren and Campbell, 2014), dynamic (Belk et al., 2010) and is “more than merely another way of saying something is good or desirable – it comes with a baggage” (Pountain &

Robbins, 2000, p. 32). The cool factor adds symbolic currency and drives trends (Warren and Campbell, 2014), which is what makes marketers thrilled when thinking about brands like Nike or Apple.

Coolness is not only a phrase used in the backyards of schools; it is much more than that as the case of Levi's proves. Levi's, the world's largest denim brand, struggled in the 2000s and had to deal with a loss in market share. The occurrence of their struggles was closely linked to Levi's losing its 'cool factor' (Bain, 2018).

Various positive outcomes of brands being perceived as cool have been suggested (Warren et al., 2019). According to Warren et al. (2019), consumers have more favorable BA towards cool brands, they are more familiar with the brands, more WOM is generated, and they can command a price benefit, to name a few. This study is the first that aims to connect the fields of research on IM with the new construct of BC. Further, the goal of this research is to find out whether BC affects BA and PI.

An article published in 2018 it stated "the Kardashian-Jenner family's embrace of Levi's is one indication that the brand is back on the radar of young shoppers" (Bain, 2018). Also, the statement by Mr. Heinrich from the consultancy firm Fjord "With megastars you buy increased sales, prominence and coolness for a short time. But you don't become cool just by buying coolness." awakens the impression that coolness is linked to influential personas (Hofer, 2017). Further, he is convinced brands need to give people the chance to tell their stories and influencers with a rather small follower base as well can tell good, compelling stories. Additionally, they are more closely connected to their target audience as a celebrity (Hofer, 2017). That raises the question if influencers have an impact on perceived BC. Based on these findings, the following hypotheses are formulated:

*H3: Respondents exposed to influencer created posts recommending a sportswear brand will have significantly higher effects on dimensions of brand coolness for a sportswear brand, compared to respondents, exposed to a brand created posts. This impact is reflected on: H3a) Desirability; H3b) Positive autonomy; H3c) Rebellious; H3d) High status; H3e) Popular; H3f) Subcultural; H3g) Iconic.*

*H4: The dimensions of Brand coolness have a direct and significant impact on brand attitude for sportswear brands with effects from H4a) Desirability; H4b) Positive autonomy; H4c) Rebellious; H4d) High status; H4e) Popular; H4f) Subcultural; H4g) Iconic.*

*H5: Brand coolness has a direct and significant impact on purchase intentions for sportswear brands with the effects of H5a) Desirability; H5b) Positive autonomy; H5c) Rebellious; H5d) High status; H5e) Popular; H5f) Subcultural; H5g) Iconic.*

The characteristics to measure BC by Warren et al. (2019) are used in this study to investigate the hypotheses. Due to the authors “Cool brands are perceived to be extraordinary, aesthetically appealing, energetic, high status, rebellious, original, authentic, subcultural, iconic, and popular.” It is to be noted that the three characteristics ‘extraordinary’, ‘aesthetically appealing’ and ‘energetic’ load to the higher-order factor ‘*desirability*’ (Warren et al., 2019). The other higher-order factor is ‘*positive autonomy*’ which includes the characteristics ‘original’ and ‘authentic’. Those two higher order factors plus the five first-order factors ‘*high status, rebellious, original, authentic, subcultural, iconic, and popular*’ will be measured in the scope of this study. Further, (Warren et al., 2019) found that desirability and positive autonomy are most strongly associated with BC whereas ‘iconic’ and ‘rebellious’ were the factors with the relatively lowest ratings. That has to be taken in mind regarding the analysis of the outcomes. Definitions of the component characteristics of coolness can be found in appendix 1.

## **2.7 Number of followers on Instagram**

To assess an Instagram account or a brand, people rely on peripheral cues such as the number of followers. **Micro-influencers** are i.e., industry experts, bloggers, or experts with a follower-base of 1000 to 999.999 followers, whereas **macro-influencers** have more than 1 million followers, such as Chiara Ferragni or Kylie Jenner (Barker, 2019; Fitzpatrick, 2017). Regarding perceived trust, higher engagement, overall impact, and costs micro-influencers seem to be the smarter solution for brands due to Fitzpatrick, (2017). On the other hand, there is no doubt, using macro-influencers will reward a brand with a broad reach. Virtanen et al., (2017) state the importance of many followers, comments and likes for brands to become successful on Instagram because people will instead follow those brands than brands with fewer likes. That is connected to people perceiving an influencer with many followers as more popular (Veirman et al., 2017).

As discussed in chapter 2.3.1, sportswear brands that are well established and have the necessary financial resources to use celebrities or influencers with a huge follower base which are able to create a massive buzz on SM to boost desirability and popularity. As the case of Lululemon suggests, the authenticity by using micro-influencers can also be beneficial.

This study aims to further investigate in that field by taking the findings of Veirman et al., (2017) into account and research the impact of influencers' number of followers on brand perceptions, namely BA and BC. The results shall give guidance to sportswear brands whether to use micro- or macro-influencers. Thereof, the following hypotheses are formulated:

*H6: Using influencers with high numbers of followers (>1 Mio.) will lead to significantly higher effects on the dimensions of brand coolness, compared to an influencer with a low number of followers (< 100k). This impact is reflected on: H6a) Desirability; H6b) Positive autonomy; H6c) Rebellious; H6d) High status; H6e) Popular; H6f) Subcultural; H6g) Iconic.*

*H7: Using influencers with high numbers of followers (> 1 Mio.), compared to an influencer with a low number of followers (< 100k), will lead to significantly higher effects on H7a) brand attitude and H7b) purchase intentions.*

### **3. Research Methodology**

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This chapter will present the methodology of this research. It will be described how the data was collected, measured, and analyzed. Also, the conduction of the online survey to test the hypotheses are explained.

#### **3.1 Research Objectives**

The impact of whether people are exposed to an influencer's posts or a brand's post on Instagram on a set of dependent variables (BA, BC, and PI) is going to be tested. Further, the impact these dependent variables have on each other is going to be researched. Finally, the impact of the number of followers of an influencer (5.3 Mio. vs. 55k) on the dependent variables will be scrutinized. All will be researched in the context of the sportswear industry.

#### **3.2 Research Approach**

This research was developed in different phases. Firstly, exploratory research to gain the main understandings of the topic of this research was applied by gathering information from various academic papers and sources. The goal of this step was to get a keen understanding of the central theme of this academic paper. Through descriptive research, the main subject was explained in-depth and previous research in combination with existing thoughts on the topic were combined to develop a full understanding of this research's topic. A quantitative approach for this research was chosen due to the various advantages of this method, such as being more scientific, control-sensitive, and less biased. Amaratunga et al. (2002) state the importance of quantitative research for generating statistical proof or relations between constructs which is one of the aims of this research and further validates the choice of this method. Further, quantitative research makes the findings generalizable, which is essential when applying this research to real-life scenarios. This type of research is often used to predict popular patterns of human actions which suits this research topic well (Djamba and Neuman, 2002).

To provide strong reliability and validity of the result when investigating several hypotheses, the quantitative approach was utilized to verify this research.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

On purpose of this study an online survey was conducted to retrieve quantitative primary data. This way consumers were interviewed directly and previously formulated hypotheses were tested.

#### *3.3.1 Primary Data*

Primary data gives insight on direct respondents' thoughts, ideas, and feelings (Shaughnessy and Zechmeister, 1997) and provides information on their beliefs, attitudes, and motives (Amaratunga et al., 2002). By designing a survey, additional information relevant to the sample can be assessed, and further conclusions of generalizations can be made regarding the sample and population (Creswell, 1999). Especially the time efficiency, costs, and the easiness of obtaining a large sample were reasons for deciding to use an online survey.

Finally, conducting an online survey is a widely accepted and used method of conducting research in digital marketing especially (Grover and Vriens, 2006; Leeflang et al., 2014).

The online survey was created via the online platform Qualtrics. By distributing the survey on SM (Instagram and Facebook) and via a messenger (WhatsApp), as well as through personal e-mails, it was possible to target a broad audience in a short timeframe of seven days and get answers quickly. To make the survey convenient for the participants, it was available in two languages, English and German. This was decided because a lot of German native speakers were expected to participate in the survey due to the distribution, but also international participants should be able to participate (see appendix 4 and 5).

#### *3.3.2 Experimental design and stimuli*

The study is based on a between-subject experiment. In the between-subjects experiment, different participants are randomly assigned to one of the three conditions and are tested based on their exposure to certain stimuli (Charness et al., 2012). The decision to design a between-subject experiment rather than a within-subject experiment was made to prevent the study from confounds.

The three conditions of the experiment of this study are the following: In the first condition participants are exposed to influencer created posts which are advertising a sportswear brand, where the influencer has a high number of followers (5.3 Mio.). The second condition is exposing the participants to the same influencer created posts, this time the influencer has a low number of followers (55.000). In the third condition, the participants are exposed to the same posts but this time they are created by the sportswear brand itself. Later, all groups are tested for the same catalog of questions. This way we have a high number of followers (HNF)

influencer condition; a low number of followers (LNF) influencer condition and a brand condition.

For the experiment a fictional influencer and a brand had to be created to set the right stimuli for the experiment. Choosing an actual influencer might have biased the participants and the previous study by Veirman et al. (2017) used the same for their research. Therefore, pictures of a real-life influencer were used and based on various actual influencers' Instagram profiles, the fictional influencer's profile was created. It was designed as a stereotypical female Instagram influencer specialized in lifestyle and fitness (see appendix 4). Accordingly, her caption was designed (Ellee June | 25 y/o | Follow my journey | Health | Fitness | Positive Mindset). For IM it is essential to ensure a good brand fit of the influencer to make it efficient for a brand. Therefore, a pre-study was conducted where ten participants had to evaluate the fictional influencer's profile according to its fit for a yoga sportswear brand. This way, it was assured that a poor brand fit could not manipulate the results of the study.

Furthermore, a fictional brand was created. Again, this was done to not bias participants with their preoccupied opinions on known brands. The brand was introduced as “Jiva Activewear”. The brand name was chosen with the intent to be a reference to the yoga scene. Jiva means “individual soul” in Hinduism (Collins Dictionary, 2019) and is known in the yoga scene. The pictures featured in the brand's account were the same as for the influencer, to not set different stimuli. Further, the number of followers was 55.000 (55K).

Regarding the number of followers of an influencer, the fictional influencer had 55.000 (55k) followers in the low number of follower (LNF) condition since the literature refers to influencers with followers up to 100k as micro-influencers.

For the high number of followers (HNF) condition, 5.3 Mio. followers were chosen, since macro followers are considered to have more than 1 Mio. followers.

In total, three different groups were created to be able to compare the influencer and brand condition but also the influencer with the LNF condition and the influencer with the HNF condition. An overview of the profiles and posts can be found in appendix 4.

### *3.3.3 Questionnaire Design*

The questionnaire was created to ensure the credibility and validity of the results. Further, the purpose of the between-groups experiment had to be fulfilled.

In the first part of the survey, the right audience was selected. Therefore, it was asked for gender, use of Instagram, and their sportswear purchase behavior. People who did not match the target audience – male participants, non-Instagram users, or people who do not purchase sportswear

were eliminated from the study as they are irrelevant for the study and might adulterate the results.

Next, each participant was randomly assigned to one of the three conditions in this experimental study and the study unfolded in three blocks: One condition exposed participants to the posts of a fictional influencer “Ellee June” who was sharing posts of the fictional brand “Jiva Activewear”. In the HNF condition, the influencer had 5.3 Mio. followers.

The LNF condition was designed identically besides the influencer had fewer followers (55k) in that scenario. Participants of the third condition were exposed to the brand Jiva Activewear’s profile and posts. In all three conditions, pictures, the number of likes, and the number of people following the account were held constant to not bias the participants and make the groups comparable.

After exposing the participants to the stimuli, they were asked to answer the same catalog of questions. Those questions were adapted from previous research and are the basis for answering the hypotheses later (see appendix 2). All questions were answered on a 7-point-Likert scale, being (1) Completely Disagree, (4) Nether agree nor disagree (7) Completely agree, to make the evaluation of the data as easy as possible.

Finally, the demographics of the participants, like age, nationality, and education level, were inquired. The whole questionnaire can be viewed in appendix 4 and the table of items can be found in appendix 2.

### *3.3.4 Population*

Since women are dominating the IM world these days (Karwowski, 2019) and sources claim woman are said to play a key role in athletic wear these days (Salpini, 2019), the researcher decided to introduce a female influencer for the scope of this study. As discussed before, Instagram, as the most important SM network, was chosen for the scope of the study, which means all participants of the study need to have experience with using Instagram. Also, participants had to be sportswear purchasers to be relevant, given the research being specifically for that industry.

### *3.3.5 Sample Size*

To determine the right sample size is of high importance to a study since if a too-small sample is chosen, the results would lack power, and a too-large sample would be a waste of resources (Bonett, 2002).

The Krejcie and Morgan table (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970) shows that even for large population sizes (1 million), the required sample size is going to be 384 participants (see appendix 6). Since

this research addresses a large sample size, that was used as a benchmark. Further, the sample size of a relevant study by Warren et al. (2019) was taken into consideration, which had 315 participants. Hence, the optimal sample size includes between 315 and 384 respondents.

### **3.4 Data Analyses**

The collected data was analyzed by using the program IBM statistics SPSS version 25. This way, the data could be quantified regarding the hypotheses.

Before beginning the analysis, the data set had to be cleaned. Non-complete answers were diminished and variables were computed to prepare the data set for the analyses.

The first step to get a better understanding of the sample was to analyze the demographics and the sportswear purchase behavior by using descriptive statistics. In the next stage, the Cronbach's Alpha was used to check the reliability of this study's constructs. Further, by applying Principal Component Analysis (PCA), the linear components of a set of variables were identified in order to extract the nine different factors from the 45 items of the questionnaire.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to check if the sample was following a normal distribution. This was not confirmed. However, according to the Central Limit Theorem, all variables can be considered normally distributed, due to the sample size being larger than 30 (Uttley, 2019). Hence, parametric tests were used.

Afterwards, the groups of the different conditions of the between-subject experiment had to be compared in terms of demographics, sportswear purchase behaviour, and likability for the brand to ensure that the groups are equal. Finally, by ANOVA test and regression analysis, the hypotheses were tested. For all those tests the confidence level used was 95%, thus when the p-value was inferior to 0.05 the hypotheses were rejected.

## 4. Data Analyses

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### 4.1 Introduction

According to the statistical methods chosen, the data analyses of this research are provided in this chapter. It is the goal of this chapter to reach conclusions for the previously introduced research questions and test the hypotheses.

### 4.2 Demographics

For this research, 310 fully completed answers were collected via Qualtrics; this makes the sample size  $N=310$ . The sample was split into three groups by the randomizer. One group was exposed to the LNF IM condition ( $N=108$ ), another group was showed the HNF IM condition ( $N=98$ ), and last group was presented the brand condition ( $N=104$ ); see Table 1: Experiment Conditions. Due to deleting incomplete answers and cleaning the data set, not all groups had the same sample size. Besides frequencies, the percentage is used in the following sections to describe the sample more accurately. Since the data set includes only fully completed answers, the values of valid percentage and cumulative percentage are not shown in the tables since they are equal to the percentage value.

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>1. HNF IM condition</b>	98	31,6
<b>2. LNF IM condition</b>	108	34,8
<b>3. Brand condition</b>	104	33,6
<b>Total</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>100,0</b>

*Table 1: Experiment Conditions*

Please note, that this study focusses on females only. Male participants had to leave the study after the first question.

#### 4.2.1 Age

As shown in Table 2, the majority of the sample (47,4%;  $N=147$ ) belongs to the age group 18-24. Additionally, participants of age 25-35 had a considerable share of the sample (36,5%;  $N=113$ ) 9,7% of the participants were under 18 ( $N=30$ ) and participants of the age 45 or older were in total four in total, which is 1.3% of the sample. That makes participants aged 18-34 the core group of the sample, as shown in Figure 1.

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Under 18</b>	30	9,7
<b>18 - 24</b>	147	47,4
<b>25 - 34</b>	113	36,5
<b>35 - 44</b>	16	5,2
<b>45 - 54</b>	3	1,0
<b>55 - 64</b>	0	0
<b>65 or older</b>	1	,3
<b>Total</b>	310	100,0

Table 2: Age

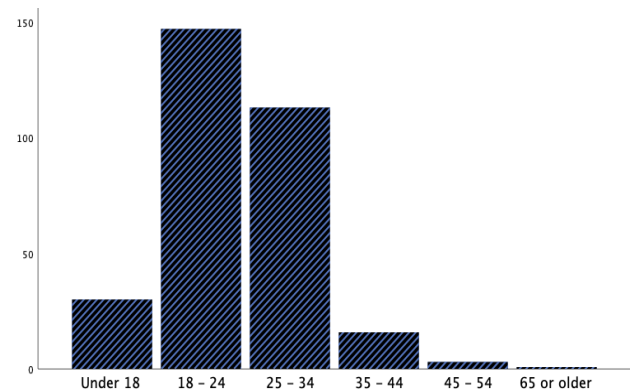


Figure 1: Age

#### 4.2.2 Education

The majority of the sample obtains a high school degree (39,4%; N= 122), see Table 3. The second-biggest share of the sample were participants (N= 102) who have a bachelor's degree (32,9%). 17,4% of the participants (N=54) have a master's degree. 'Less than high school' answered 30 people of the sample (=9,7%) and only two participants (=0,6%) obtain a doctoral degree. All results are displayed in Figure 2.

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Less than High School</b>	30	9,7
<b>High School</b>	122	39,4
<b>Bachelor Degree</b>	102	32,9
<b>Master Degree</b>	54	17,4
<b>Doctoral Degree</b>	2	,6
<b>Total</b>	310	100,0

Table 3: Level of Education

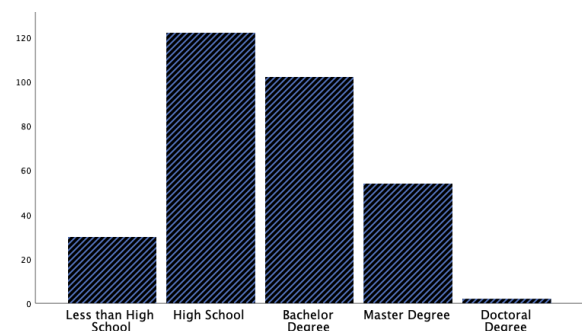


Figure 2: Level of Education

#### 4.2.3 Occupation

Regarding the occupation, more than half of the participants were students (53,2%; N= 165). The next biggest group was the once of employed participants (30,6%; N= 95). 14,2% of the sample were high school students (N=44). The minority of the sample was unemployed participants (1,3%; N=4) and retired (0,6%; N=2). All results are displayed in Figure 3.

	Frequency	Percent
High School Student	44	14,2
University Student	165	53,2
Employed	95	30,6
Unemployed	4	1,3
Retired	2	,6
<b>Total</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Table 4: Occupation

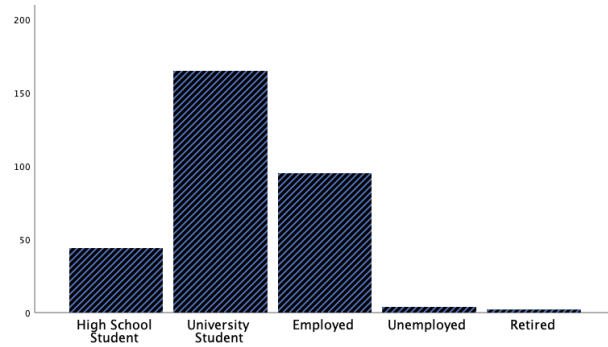


Figure 3: Occupation

#### 4.2.4 Sportswear purchase behavior

People who do not purchase sportswear were not allowed in this study. Most participants of this research purchase sportswear 1-2 times a year (48,4%; N= 150). Also, participants buying sportswear 3-4 times a year make a significant share of the sample (31,6%; N= 98). People buying sportswear less than once a year were represented by 11,9% (N=37) in this study. 7,1% (N= 22) said they purchase sportswear each month. Moreover, 3 participants (1%) claimed to get new sportswear more than once a month.

	Frequency	Percent
Less than once a year	37	11,9
1-2 times a year	150	48,4
3-4 times a year	98	31,6
Every month	22	7,1
More than once a month	3	1,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Table 5: Sportswear Purchase Behavior

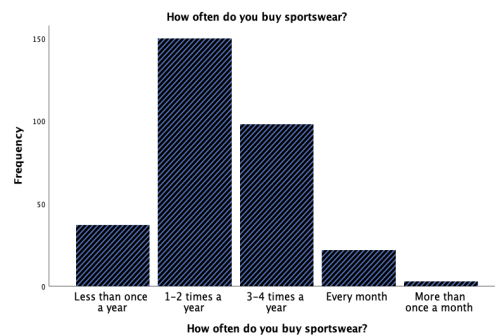


Figure 4: Sportswear Purchase Behavior

### 4.3 Reliability Test

It is necessary to carry out a test of reliability to provide information about the internal consistency of the study. Therefore, Cronbach's Alpha was used. Nunnally and Bernstein, (1978) suggested internal consistency according to Cronbach's Alpha. The values of this research are all above 0.8, which means they are right regarding internal consistency. For PI, subcultural, rebellious, desirability and BA the Cronbach's Alpha values are higher than 0.9. That makes them excellent values. One also has to look out for values too high (>.95) since that

would mean the variables would be redundant. None of the values are higher than 0.95, which makes them internally consistent. Therefore, the analyses can continue.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Brand Attitude	,923	5
Desirability	,938	12
Positive Autonomy	,898	7
Rebellious	,917	4
High Status	,865	4
Popular	,860	4
Subcultural	,940	4
Iconic	,872	2
Purchase Intention	,920	3

Table 6: Cronbach's Alpha

#### 4.4 Validity

Since items and questions from previous studies were adopted, it is necessary to do a principal component analysis (PCA) for all factors. This way, we can investigate the matter of unidimensionality for the factors is investigated and the validity can be evaluated. The validity assesses the degree to which the given data really measures what was intended with this study. For this study, three constructs are researched. Due to BC being split into seven factors, nine factors will be presented in the following. All factors were composed of several items (e.g., PI was composed of 3 items).

Besides the PCA for the BC variables analyzed in this study, two more principal component analyses were run separately. One of them was for the variable desirability. This factor is a so-called “higher-order” factor (Warren et al., 2019), which is why it has three different components: ‘Usefulness’, ‘energetic’, and ‘aesthetically appealing’.

Another “higher-order” factor is positive autonomy. This higher-order factor is composed of the factors ‘original’ and ‘authentic’.

The three subfactors of desirability and positive autonomy have different meanings. Therefore, they are extracted separately for the PCA since it makes sense that each of those subdimensions contributes to one factor.

According to Table 7, we find all factors explained individually. The result of the PCA shows a good KMO value of  $KMO = ,833$  (Hair et al. 2010). Also, the level of  $p\text{-value} = ,000 < 0,05$  is acceptable.

	Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	PI1	,607											
	PI2	,654											
	PI3	,677											
<b>Brand Attitude</b>	BA1		,792										
	BA2		,558										
	BA3		,534										
	BA4		,714										
	BA5		,680										
<b>Desirability</b>	Useful 1			,711									
	Useful 2			,640									
	Useful 3			,734									
	Useful 4			,559									
	Energ. 1				,670								
	Energ 2				,440								
	Energ 3				,770								
	Energ 4				,617								
	AesAp 1					,826							
	AesAp 2					,821							
	AesAp 3					,763							
	AesAp 4					,808							
<b>Positive Auto-nomy</b>	Orig1						,660						
	Orig 2						,658						
	Orig 3						,706						
	Auth 1							,648					
	Auth 2							,657					
	Auth 3							,671					
	Auth 4							,558					
<b>Rebelious</b>	Reb 1								,644				
	Reb 2								,660				
	Reb 3								,775				
	Reb 4								,784				
<b>High Status</b>	HighS 1									,519			
	HighS 2									,783			
	HighS3									,636			
	HighS 4									,760			
<b>Popular</b>	Popular 1										,558		
	Popular 2										,772		
	Popular 3										,830		
	Popular 4										,581		
<b>Subcultural</b>	Subc 1											,815	
	Subc 2											,823	
	Subc 3											,816	
	Subc 4											,840	
<b>Iconic</b>	Iconic 1												,581
	Iconic 2												,618

KMO =,833

Approx. Chi-Square = 3501,626

Df = 990

Sig. = ,000

Table 7: Principal Component Analyses

#### 4.5 Mean Analysis and normality test

For the descriptive statistics, four leading indicators are essential: standard deviation, mean, kurtosis, and skewness. Also, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk will be analyzed to check the normality of the data. The normality of the data ensures that the population of the research follows a normal distribution, which has to be confirmed to use a parametric test.

Table 8 implies an even distribution of the values for the variables with a negative Kurtosis, PI, and subcultural. On the other hand, variables like popular or desirability, which have a high positive value of Kurtosis, show that the values of their means are not widely distributed.

Taking a look at Skewness, the positive values indicate a shift to the left of the mean values. Negative values for Skewness indicate a shift to the right of the means. The tendencies for each factor can be seen in Table 8. Since all sample sizes are larger than 50, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test applies. All of the values except the one for “High Status“ had a p-value smaller than ,05. For high status, the value was .055 > .05, in other words, only high status was normally distributed due to that test. Nevertheless, according to the Central Limit Theorem, all variables can be considered normally distributed, due to the sample size being larger than 30 (Uttley, 2019).

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	p-value of Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>	p-value of Shapiro-Wilk
<b>Brand Attitude</b>	310	4,5258	1,14921	-,299	,113	,000	,010
<b>Desirability</b>	310	4,5962	1,02331	-,599	,903	,001	,000
<b>Positive Autonomy</b>	310	3,8438	1,09825	,288	,329	,000	,003
<b>Rebellious</b>	310	3,1758	1,27719	,490	,425	,000	,000
<b>HighS</b>	77	4,1721	1,24093	,205	,060	,055	,161
<b>Popular</b>	310	4,5452	1,04625	-,251	1,102	,000	,000
<b>Subcultural</b>	310	2,9540	1,42309	,665	-,224	,000	,000
<b>Iconic</b>	310	2,6823	1,45031	,826	,109	,000	,000
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	310	3,7237	1,66569	,056	-1,006	,000	,000

Table 8: Measure of Construct and Descriptive Statistics

#### 4.6 Pearson Correlation Test

The Table 9 shows that all p-values are <.05. Therefore, all variables have significant relationships with each other.

BA shows the highest correlation to desirability (.755) and the lowest correlation to iconic (.282). Of the BC variables, the strongest correlation is shown for desirability and positive autonomy (.722) and the lowest correlation between iconic and popular (.401). PI is strongly correlated to desirability (.718) and the least strongly correlated to iconic (.468).

		Brand Attitude	Desirability	Positive Autonomy	Rebellious	High Status	Popular	Sub-cultural	Iconic	Purchase Intention
<b>Brand Attitude</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	,755**	,605**	,372**	,543**	,546**	,392**	,282**	,655**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	310	310	310	310	77	310	310	310	310
<b>Desirability</b>	Pearson Correlation	,755**	1	,722**	,502**	,644**	,694**	,510**	,416**	,718**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	310	310	310	310	77	310	310	310	310
<b>Positive Autonomy</b>	Pearson Correlation	,605**	,722**	1	,688**	,665**	,573**	,685**	,525**	,670**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	310	310	310	310	77	310	310	310	310
<b>Rebellious</b>	Pearson Correlation	,372**	,502**	,688**	1	,607**	,426**	,635**	,543**	,504**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000		,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	310	310	310	310	77	310	310	310	310
<b>High Status</b>	Pearson Correlation	,543**	,644**	,665**	,607**	1	,454**	,508**	,557**	,603**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000		,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77	77
<b>Popular</b>	Pearson Correlation	,546**	,694**	,573**	,426**	,454**	1	,466**	,401**	,550**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000		,000	,000	,000
	N	310	310	310	310	77	310	310	310	310
<b>Subcultural</b>	Pearson Correlation	,392**	,510**	,685**	,635**	,508**	,466**	1	,599**	,571**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000		,000	,000
	N	310	310	310	310	77	310	310	310	310
<b>Iconic</b>	Pearson Correlation	,282**	,416**	,525**	,543**	,557**	,401**	,599**	1	,468**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000		,000
	N	310	310	310	310	77	310	310	310	310
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	Pearson Correlation	,655**	,718**	,670**	,504**	,603**	,550**	,571**	,468**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	
	N	310	310	310	310	77	310	310	310	310

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 9: Pearson Correlation

## 4.7 Sample Validation

### 4.7.1 Independent Sample t-test: Age, Education Level, Current Occupation and sportswear purchase behavior

Since two groups were compared in this study (participants exposed to influencer's posts and participants exposed to brand's posts) in terms of BA, BC, and PI, it had to be ensured they were comparable. Therefore, not only the demographics of both groups but also their liking of the brand had to be compared.

Here, the comparison check for age, education level, current occupation, and sportswear purchase behavior is asserted. All demographic variables were of qualitative nature, thus Independent Sample t-tests was performed, and Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was used to compare the groups in terms of homogeneity. Since the Levene's test was insignificant, equality of variances of the sample can be assumed, and the t-test can be evaluated.

The means of the compared groups were almost equal for educational level, current occupation, and sportswear purchase behavior. Therefore, the similarity of compared groups was given and the hypotheses could be tested. All results are presented in the following Table 10.

Null Hypotheses	p-value Levene's test	p-value t-test	Mean IM condition (group1 & 2)	Mean brand condition (group 3)	Decision
The groups are identical in terms of <b>Age</b> .	.968	.152	2.37	2.60	Retain the null hypothesis.
The groups are identical in terms of <b>Education Level</b> .	.388	.751	2.58	2.61	Retain the null hypothesis.
The groups are identical in terms of <b>Current Occupation</b> .	.983	.483	2.19	2.25	Retain the null hypothesis.
The groups are identical in terms of <b>Sportswear Purchase Behavior</b> .	.541	.856	2.37	2.36	Retain the null hypothesis.

*Table 10: Independent Sample t-test – Demographic Variables influencer created post vs. brand created post (Age, Education Level, Current Occupation and Sportswear Purchase Behavior)*

Further, the same comparison had to be made for the HNF condition vs. the LNF condition for the presented influencer to test hypotheses 6 and 7. Again, an independent t-test was run to test whether there were significant differences between the tested groups. The null hypotheses for age, education level, current occupation, and sportswear purchase behavior, had to be retained since all p-values were higher than .05. That means all demographic variables were the same for both samples of the HNF vs. LNF condition. The results and p-values are presented in the following table.

Null Hypotheses	p-value Levene's test	p-value	Mean HNF condition (group 1)	Mean LNF condition (group 2)	Decision
The groups are identical in terms of <b>Age</b> .	.028	.114 *done with non-parametric test	2.48	2.27	Retain the null hypothesis.
The groups are identical in terms of <b>Education Level</b> .	.712	.544	2.65	2.57	Retain the null hypothesis.
The groups are identical in terms of <b>Current Occupation</b> .	.073	.636	2.21	2.17	Retain the null hypothesis.
The groups are identical in terms of <b>Sportswear Purchase Behavior</b> .	.251	.350	2.32	2.43	Retain the null hypothesis.

*Table 11: Independent Sample t-test– Demographic Variables HNF vs. LNF condition (Age, Education Level, Current Occupation and Sportswear Purchase Behavior)*

#### 4.7.2 Independent Sample t-test: Consumer's liking of the presented brand "Jiva Activewear"

Furthermore, it was checked if consumers liking for the brand was same among the groups. By running an independent sample t-test and applying Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, no significant difference between both groups was found (p-value > .05). Therefore, the null

hypotheses for the groups exposed to influencer created posts vs. brand created posts; therefore, they failed to be rejected, as shown in the following. Hence, the groups were similar in terms of liking for the brand.

Null Hypotheses	p-value Levene's test	p-value	Mean IM condition (group1 & 2)	Mean brand condition (group 3)	Decision
The groups are identical in terms of <b>Liking for the brand.</b>	.230	.374	4,43	4,29	Retain the null hypothesis.

*Table 12: Independent Sample t-test – Liking for the brand (influencer created post vs. brand created post)*

The same procedure was done for the HNF and LNF condition. Again, the null were retained since no significant difference between the groups was found ( $p\text{-value} > .05$ ).

Null Hypotheses	p-value Levene's test	p-value	Mean HNF condition (group 1)	Mean LNF condition (group 2)	Decision
The groups are identical in terms of <b>Liking for the brand.</b>	.171	.742	4.46	4,40	Retain the null hypothesis.

*Table 13: Independent Sample t-test – Liking for the brand for HNF and LNF condition*

Those tests assured certainty that the groups are identical in demographic terms and in terms of liking for the presented brand which allowed the researchers to do the analysis of the hypotheses.

## 4.8 Hypotheses Testing

### 4.8.1 Hypothesis 1

**H1** – Hypotheses 1 was tested by using an analysis of variance (ANOVA). Therefore group 1 and 2 (HNF IM condition and LNF IM condition) were combined and tested against group 3 (brand condition). With the analysis of variance (ANOVA), we determine whether the means of the groups exposed to IM and not exposed to IM are equal when the significance level ( $p\text{-value}$ )  $< .05$  the hypotheses should be accepted.

As shown in the table, H1 was rejected since the results were not significant ( $p=.669 > .05$ ). Therefore, a significant impact on PI of whether people are exposed to an influencer presenting the brand or the brand itself, generating the post cannot be proven.

Impacts	Hypotheses	Homo- geneous	p-value	Mean exposed to IM	Mean not exposed to IM	Supported
Infl. vs. brand → PI	<i>H1: Respondents exposed to influencers created posts recommending a sportswear brand will have significantly higher scores on PI for a sportswear brand, compared to respondents, exposed to brand created posts.</i>	yes	,669	3,7524	3,6667	No

Table 14: ANOVA H1

#### 4.8.2 Hypothesis 2

**H2** – ANOVA was used to analyze the results for the second hypotheses as well. Again, group 1 and 2 (HNF IM condition and LNF IM condition) were combined and tested against group 3 (brand condition). For BA, the result was similar to the one of PI. The p-value was  $.343 > .05$  which means H2 was rejected. Hence, no significant impact of whether an influencer was presented or not on BA was found.

Impacts	Hypotheses	Homo- geneous	p-value	Mean exposed to IM	Mean not exposed to IM	Supported
Infl. vs. brand → BA	<i>H2: Respondents exposed to influencers created posts recommending a sportswear brand will have significantly more favorable attitude towards a sportswear brand, compared to respondents, exposed to brand created posts.</i>	yes	,343	4,5699	4,4358	No

Table 15: ANOVA H2

#### 4.8.3 Hypothesis 2a

**H2a** – Hypothesis 2a was analyzed by using Regression analysis due to testing the reliance on the impact of one variable on another.

The table shows that BA has a significant impact on PI (p-value  $< .05$ ). R square equals  $.429$ , which indicates that 42,9 percent of the variation of PI can be explained by favorable BA. The positive impact is due to the unstandardized coefficient equaling  $.949$ . In other words, that means for every unit increase in BA, and PI goes up by  $.949$  units. H2 was accepted for this study.

Impacts	Hypotheses	B coefficient	R-square	Std. Error	p-value	Supported	Equation
BA → PI	H2a: A favorable brand attitude has a positive effect on purchase intentions for sportswear brands.	.949.	.429	.062.	.000	Yes	PI = .949 (BA) + (-.572)

Table 16: Regression Analysis H2a

#### 4.8.4 Hypotheses 3

For hypothesis 3 again means were tested to interrogate a significant difference for the two scenarios, the influencer's posts (group 1 and 2) compared to the brand's posts (group 3). All results are in Table 17 and are described in the following.

**H3a** – Hypothesis 3a was rejected. After no homogeneity was given, a non-parametric test was performed. The p-value of .592 was higher than .05, which means whether people were exposed to the influencer's post or the brand's post, had no significant impact on the factor 'Desirability'.

**H3b** – The ANOVA also did not show a significant impact on 'Positive autonomy' when comparing the groups of the influencer's posts and brand's posts (P-value = .233 > .05). Because of that, H3b was rejected.

**H3c** – Nonetheless, the ANOVA did show a significant positive impact on the experiment for the factor rebellious. The p-value was .005 < .05, and therefore, H3c was accepted. Participants exposed to the influencer's posts did show significantly higher scores on the dimension 'Rebellious' of BC.

**H3d & H3e** – H3d (p-value = .267) and H3e (p-value = .326) were rejected (p-values > .05). Consequently, no significant positive impacts of participants that saw the influencer's posts were found for the dimensions of 'High status' and 'Popular' of BC.

**H3f** – Regarding H3f, a non-parametric test was performed since no homogeneity was given. Again, no significant impact of IM was shown (p-value = .511 > .05) on the dimension subcultural of BC. H3f was rejected.

**H3g** – Finally, the impact of whether people were exposed to the influencer's post or the brand's post was measured for the dimension of iconic. No significant positive impact was found (p-value = .360 > .05). H3g was rejected.

Impacts	Hypotheses	Homo- geneous	p-value	Mean exposed to IM	Mean not exposed to IM	Supported
<b>Infl. vs. brand → BC</b>	<i>H3: Respondents exposed to influencers created posts recommending a sportswear brand will have significantly higher scores on dimensions of brand coolness for a sportswear brand, compared to respondents, exposed to brand created posts. This impact is reflected on:</i>					
<b>Infl. vs. brand → Desirability</b>	<b>H3a) Desirability</b>	No	,592	4,5611	4,6659	No
<b>Infl. vs. brand → Positive Autonomy</b>	<b>H3b) Positive autonomy</b>	Yes	,233	3,8967	3,7390	No
<b>Infl. vs. brand → Rebellious</b>	<b>H3c) Rebellious</b>	Yes	,005	3,3216	2,8870	Yes
<b>Infl. vs. brand → High Status</b>	<b>H3d) High Status</b>	Yes	,267	4,2783	3,9375	No
<b>Infl. vs. brand → Popular</b>	<b>H3e) Popular</b>	Yes	,362	4,5837	4,4688	No
<b>Infl. vs. brand → Subcultural</b>	<b>H3f) Subcultural</b>	No	,511	2,9540	2,9519	No
<b>Infl. vs. brand → Iconic</b>	<b>H3g) Iconic</b>	Yes	,360	2,6286	2,78845	No

Table 17: ANOVA H3

#### 4.8.5 Hypotheses 4

**H4** – With regression analysis, hypotheses 4 (a-g) were analyzed since the impact of one variable on another was tested for different cases. It was decided to apply single regressions for each dimension. Respectively, better conclusions and managerial implications can be drawn from the results. They are presented in Table 18 and will be shortly described in the following. Each dimension of BC has a positive impact on BA for sportswear brands. The impact of all variables on BA is significant since all p-values are < .05. The highest explanatory power for variance has the variable ‘Desirability’. It has an r square of .571, that indicates that 57,1 percent of the variation of BA is explained by desirability. Additionally, this variable has the highest B coefficient value (= .848), which means for every unit increase in ‘Desirability’, BA goes up by .848 units. The lowest explanatory power for variance has ‘Iconic’ (r square = .079). It explains 7,9% of the variance of BA. Furthermore, with each unit increase in ‘Iconic’, BA goes up by .223. All variables of BC do have a significant positive impact on BA, therefore, the hypotheses of section 4 were accepted.

Impacts	Hypotheses	B coefficient	R Square	Std. Error	p-value	Supported	Equation
BC → BA	<i>H4: The dimensions of Brand coolness have a direct and significant impact on brand attitude for sportswear brands with effects from:</i>						
	<b>H4a) Desirability</b>	,848	,571	,042	,000	Yes	BA = ,848(Desirability) + (.627)
	<b>H4b) Positive autonomy</b>	,633	,366	,047	,000	Yes	BA = ,633(Positive Autonomy) + (2,092)
	<b>H4c) Rebellious</b>	,335	,138	,048	,000	Yes	BA = ,335 (Rebellious) + (3,463)
	<b>H4d) High Status</b>	,453	,295	,081	,000	Yes	BA = ,453 (High Status) + (3,031)
	<b>H4e) Popular</b>	,600	,298	,052	,000	Yes	BA = ,600(Popular) + (1,799)
	<b>H4f) Subcultural</b>	,317	,154	,042	,000	Yes	BA = ,317 (Subcultural) + (3,590)
	<b>H4g) Iconic</b>	,223	,079	,043	,000	Yes	BA = ,223 (Iconic) + (3,927)

Table 18: Regression Analyses H4 (a-g)

#### 4.8.6 Hypotheses 5

**H5** – To analyze the results for hypotheses 5, again, regression analyses were performed. In this case, the impact of the BC dimensions on PI was tested. Therefore, single regressions were run for each individual dimension and a multiple regression analysis was run to test the overall impact of BC on PI.

All BC variables have a significant positive impact on the PI for sportswear brands since all p-values are < .05. The BC characteristics have a high exploratory power for PI and explain (24,3-53,7%) of the variance. Iconic is the factor with the highest explanatory power (53,7%, followed by desirability (51,5%). If one unit of desirability is increased, PI increases by 1,168. ‘Rebellious’ has the lowest impact on variance; it explains the variance by 24,3%. The dimension ‘Iconic’ causes the smallest impact on the increase in PI. When increasing iconic by one unit, PI goes up by .219 units. Since all BC variables do have a significant positive impact on PI and therefore, all hypotheses 5 are accepted.

Impacts	Hypotheses	B coefficient	R-square	Std. Error	p-value	Supported	Equation
BC → PI	<i>H5: Brand coolness does have a direct and significant impact on purchase intention for sportwear brands with the effects from:</i>						
	<b>H5a) Desirability</b>	1,168	,515	,065	,000	Yes	PI = 1,168(Desirability) + (-1,646)
	<b>H5b) Positive autonomy</b>	1,017	,449	,064	,000	Yes	PI= 1,017(Pos.Autp.) + (-,185)
	<b>H5c) Rebellious</b>	,658	,243	,064	,000	Yes	PI = ,658(Rebellious) + (1,635)
	<b>H5d) High Status</b>	,810	,364	,124	,000	Yes	PI = ,810(HighStatus) + (,774)
	<b>H5e) Popular</b>	,876	,303	,076	,000	Yes	PI = ,876(Popular) + (-,258)
	<b>H5f) Subcultural</b>	,668	,326	,055	,000	Yes	PI = ,668(Subcultural) + (1,749)
	<b>H5g) Iconic</b>	,219	,537	,058	,000	Yes	PI = ,219(Iconic) + (2,283)

Table 19: Regression Analyses H5 (a-g)

#### 4.8.7 Hypotheses 6

**H6** – Hypothesis 6 was tested by ANOVA since the means of two groups were compared. Here, group 1 (HNF condition; 5.3 Mio.) and group 2 (LNF condition, 55k) were compared.

Whether participants were exposed to LNF or HNF condition did not have a significant impact on five of the seven BC dimensions as all p-values were higher than .1. Therefore, no positive significant impact was found for the dimensions of ‘Rebellious’, ‘High Status’, ‘Popular’, ‘Subcultural’ and ‘Iconic’. Due to Cramer and Howitt (2004) one can vary the historically established significance level of .05 if it is reasonable. In this case the researcher decided to accept the hypotheses H6a and H6b because the p-values were < .1. 0.1 is a good reference for studies in social science and since this is one of the first researches addressing this matter the acceptance of the hypotheses shall encourage to further investigate in the topic, which is why the researcher decided to use a significance level of 0.1 to accept the hypotheses. (see Table 20).

Impacts	Hypotheses	Homo- geneous	p-value	Mean HNF condition (group 1)	Mean LNF condition (group 2)	Supported
<b>HNF compared to LNF → BC</b>	H6: Using influencers with high numbers of followers (>1 Mio.) will lead to significantly higher effects on the dimensions of brand coolness, compared to an influencer with a low number of followers (< 100k). This impact is reflected on					
<b>HNF compared to LNF → Desirability</b>	H6a) Desirability	Yes	,0680*	4,7083	4,4275	Yes
<b>HNF compared to LNF → Positive autonomy</b>	H6b) Positive autonomy	No	,096*	4,0743	3,7354	Yes
<b>HNF compared to LNF → Rebellious</b>	H6c) Rebellious	Yes	,326	3,4133	3,2384	No
<b>HNF compared to LNF → High Status</b>	H6d) High Status	Yes	,419	4,4200	4,1518	No
<b>HNF compared to LNF → Popular</b>	H6e) Popular	No	,321	4,6888	4,4884	No
<b>HNF compared to LNF → Subcultural</b>	H6f) Subcultural	Yes	,135	3,1199	2,8056	No
<b>HNF compared to LNF → Iconic</b>	H6g) Iconic	Yes	,399	2,7194	2,5463	No

Table 20: ANOVA H6 (a-g)

#### 4.8.8 Hypotheses 7

**H7** – To test hypotheses 7 a and b, ANOVA was performed to scrutinize the impact of participants exposed to LNF compared to HNF condition. As shown in Table 21, both hypotheses were rejected since p-values > .05.

Impacts	Hypotheses	Homo- geneous	p-value	Mean IMhigh	Mean IMlow	Supported
	Using influencers with high numbers of followers (> 1 Mio.), compared to an influencer with a low number of followers, will lead to significantly higher effects on					
<b>LNF vs. HNF → BA</b>	H7a) Brand Attitude	Yes	,248	4,6796	4,4704	No
<b>LNF vs. HNF → PI</b>	H7b) Purchase Intentions	No	,634	3,7007	3,7994	No

Table 21: ANOVA H7 (a-b)

## 4.9 Summary

The study failed to prove a positive significant impact of using influencers for enhancing PI and BA for sportswear brand, H1 and H2 were rejected. Regarding BC, only a significant positive impact of using IM was found for ‘Rebellious’, but not the other BC dimensions. H3c was accepted and the other hypotheses of H3 were rejected. Further, BA was had a positive significant impact on PI; H2a was accepted. The BC dimensions showed a positive significant impact on BA and PI, H4 (a-g) and H5 (a-g) were accepted. The influencer’s number of followers had a positive significant impact for the dimensions ‘Desirability’ and ‘Positive Autonomy’ of BC, but not for the other BC dimensions. Accordingly, H6 a and b were accepted,

and H c-g were rejected. No significant impact of HNF compared to LNF IM condition for the constructs of BA and PI were proved. Hence, H7 a and b were not supported.

Impacts	Hypotheses	Supported
Infl. vs. brand → PI	<i>H1: Respondents exposed to influencers created posts recommending a sportswear brand will have significantly higher scores on PI for a sportswear brand, compared to respondents, exposed to brand created posts.</i>	No
Infl. vs. brand → BA	<i>H2: Respondents exposed to influencers created posts recommending a sportswear brand will have significantly more favorable attitude towards a sportswear brand, compared to respondents, exposed to brand created posts.</i>	No
BA → PI	<i>H2a: A favorable brand attitude has a positive effect on purchase intentions for sportswear brands.</i>	Yes
Infl. vs. brand → BC	<i>H3: Respondents exposed to influencers created posts recommending a sportswear brand will have significantly higher scores on dimensions of brand coolness for a sportswear brand, compared to respondents, exposed to brand created posts. This impact is reflected on:</i>	
Infl. vs. brand → Desirability	H3a) Desirability	No
Infl. vs. brand → Positive autonomy	H3b) Positive autonomy	No
Infl. vs. brand → Rebellious	H3c) Rebellious	Yes
Infl. vs. brand → High Status	H3d) High Status	No
Infl. vs. brand → Popular	H3e) Popular	No
Infl. vs. brand → Subcultural	H3f) Subcultural	No
Infl. vs. brand → Iconic	H3g) Iconic	No
BC → BA	<i>H4: The dimensions of Brand coolness have a direct and significant impact on brand attitude for sportswear brands with effects from:</i>	
Desirability → BA	H4a) Desirability	Yes
Positive Autonomy → BA	H4b) Positive autonomy	Yes
Rebellious → BA	H4c) Rebellious	Yes
High Status → BA	H4d) High Status	Yes
Popular → BA	H4e) Popular	Yes
Subcultural → BA	H4f) Subcultural	Yes
Iconic → BA	H4g) Iconic	Yes
BC → PI	<i>H5: Brand coolness does have a direct and significant impact on purchase intention for sportswear brands with the effects from:</i>	
Desirability → PI	H5a) Desirability	Yes
Positive Autonomy → PI	H5b) Positive autonomy	Yes
Rebellious → PI	H5c) Rebellious	Yes
High Status → PI	H5d) High Status	Yes
Popular → PI	H5e) Popular	Yes
Subcultural → PI	H5f) Subcultural	Yes
Iconic → PI	H5g) Iconic	Yes
LNF vs. HNF → BC	<i>H6: Using influencers with high numbers of followers (&gt;1 Mio.) will lead to significantly higher effects on the dimensions of brand coolness, compared to an influencer with a low number of followers (&lt;100k). This impact is reflected on</i>	
LNF vs. HNF → Desirability	H6a) Desirability	Yes
LNF vs. HNF → Positive autonomy	H6b) Positive autonomy	Yes
LNF vs. HNF → Rebellious	H6c) Rebellious	No
LNF vs. HNF → High Status	H6d) High Status	No
LNF vs. HNF → Popular	H6e) Popular	No
LNF vs. HNF → Subcultural	H6f) Subcultural	No
LNF vs. HNF → Iconic	H6g) Iconic	No
LNF vs. HNF → BA	<i>H7: Using influencers with high numbers of followers (&gt; 1 Mio.), compared to an influencer with a low number of followers, will lead to significantly higher effects on</i>	
LNF vs. HNF → BA	H7a) Brand Attitude	No
LNF vs. HNF → PI	H7b) Purchase Intentions	No

Table 22: Summary Hypotheses Testing

## 5. Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

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The purpose of this study was to enhance the understanding of how IM affects BA, BC, and PI for the sportswear industry. This chapter aims to present the conclusions on the topic. Moreover, limitations are presented, and suggestions for future research are being made.

### 5.1 Discussion

This study focused on the impact of IM on BA, BC, and PI for the sportswear industry. With the experiment, participants of the study were exposed to one of three possible conditions to compare the groups. Further, this study evoked by investigating the impact of number of followers of an influencer.

The main aim of this study, to prove IM has a significant positive impact on BA, BC and PI failed to be proven. There are several possible reasons for this result. First, the participants of this research were not exposed to an influencer they follow. Hence, they were not seeking for the information provided themselves which would happen in real life, but were exposed to the offer by the researchers. Additionally, influencer's credibility is important regarding consumer's trust and evaluation (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Singh and Banerjee, 2018). Again, the perceived credibility might have suffered from the experimental design, where a fictional influencer was used. The halo effect which influencer's do carry over for brands might not have applied, since participants were not exposed to an influencer they which they have chosen themselves (Smith, 2016). Consequently, due to the participants not being emotionally attached (Uzunoğlu and Misci Kip, 2014) to the influencer BA, BC and PI were not affected by IM.

However, one dimension of BC did show a significant difference through the use of IM: 'Rebellious'. According to the definition of 'Rebellious' by Brun et al. (2016), it is associated with combating conventions and social norms. The results indicate influencer do contribute to being unconventional and different from the norm no matter if an emotional connection to the presented follower is established or not.

Furthermore, the results showed a significant positive impact of BA on PI. These findings for the sportswear industry are consistent with previous research by Spears and Singh (2004) and are hereby proven to apply for the sportswear industry as well. Again, this is important due to positive BA leads to an increase in market share and thus makes a brand more successful and profitable (Faircloth et al., 2001).

The key findings of this study are the prove of a significant positive impact of each BC dimension on BA and PI. The findings for BA are consent to the recent study by Warren et al., (2019). Based on the results this can be generally assumed for the sportswear industry. Hereby, the request of Warren et al to further investigate the relationship between the individual dimensions of brand coolness and brand attitude was followed (Warren et al., 2019) .

According to the authors knowledge, this study is the first to connect BC and PI, which makes the finding each dimension of BC has a positive significant impact on PI an important recognition. Furthermore, those results prove the cool factor does not only add symbolic currency and drives trends as states by Warren et al. (2019), but further is linked to brand equity as brand equity has a linear relationship with PI (Uthayakumar and Senhilmathan, 2011). Those findings emphasize the importance for sportswear brands to know their BC.

According to Virtanen et al. (2017) many followers are important for brands success on Instagram. This study only confirms high number of followers to have a significant positive impact on the BC dimensions ‘Desirability’ and ‘Positive Autonomy’. Regarding the other BC dimensions, for BA and PI there was no significant difference found.

## **5.2 Recommendation and managerial implication**

The study failed to prove the significant positive impact of influencer on BA, PI and BC, which was most likely due to the lack of emotional connection to the audience. That suggests a limitations of influencers to their audience. Still, various sources state the benefits of using influencer as third party communicators to reach out to potential customers and leverage their network to access potential customers. Since the research implied similar results when comparing influencer created posts and brand created posts, it is suggested to diversify the brand content by including influencers in sportswear brands’ digital marketing strategies.

For the dimension ‘Rebellious’ of BC significant positive impact of using IM was found. Hence, if a brand is keen to improve their BC in terms of being perceived as ‘Rebellious’, managers should use influencers to promote their products on Instagram in the sportswear industry. With improving the dimension a brand enhances their image as being oppose and not the social norm (Warren et al., 2019). Further, it can increase its perceived uniqueness.

Even though it was not the main aim of this study to examine the effects of the constructs of the research on each other, important findings were revealed. The fact that BA do enhance PI shall motivate sportswear brand management to constantly assure positive BA and further try to improve them. By demonstrating the same significant positive effect of the BC dimensions

on PI those managers are further invited to explore their brand's coolness on behalf of the construct introduced by Warren et al.

'Desirability' has the most substantial impact on PI, the other dimensions which strongly impact PI are 'Positive autonomy' and 'Popularity'. This implies, when aiming to enhance PI, especially those characteristics sportswear brands need to upscale those dimensions especially. Sportswear brand should incorporate influencers on Instagram in their communication strategy in order to boost 'Desirability' and 'Positive autonomy' which further leads to an increase in PI as this study showed. Managers can benefit from this study's findings which indicated that influencers with a high number of follower positively impact the dimensions 'Desirability' and 'Positive autonomy'. Consequently, macro-influencers would be suitable to increase these dimensions which further leads to enhanced PI.

Similar impacts for BC on BA were observed. Again, 'Desirability,' 'Positive autonomy', and 'Popularity' were the most impactful dimensions, and 'Iconic' is the least impactful one.

The items of 'Desirability' are 'Usefulness', 'Energetic', and 'Aesthetically appealing'. This knowledge can be transferred to the advertisement of sportswear brands. The persons in authority should try to create desirable content by showing dynamic content and useful products that are aesthetically appealing to boost BA, and PI.

For 'Positive autonomy', the items were 'Original' and 'Authentic'. Therefore, it can be suggested to create authenticity in all scopes of a sportswear brand. That means not shifting the core values of a brand but to stay true to its roots and create a consistent picture of a brand.

Once again, when looking at the results all together this study suggests that one way to increase 'Desirability' and 'Positive autonomy' for a sportswear brand is to use an influencer with a large follower base.

For enhancing 'Popularity', a brand has to be liked by most people and to be perceived as trendy and fashionable (Warren et al., 2019). Having popular personas represent a sportswear brand could help to improve popularity. Also, when people are confronted with a brand frequently, consciously or unconsciously, the more popular they will perceive it. Therefore, it can be suggested to advertise a brand more and make popular personas wear or use a sportswear brand to benefit from the halo effect.

### **5.3 Limitations and future research**

The following limitations regarding the research should be taken into consideration.

First of all, the sample can be seen as a limitation. Due to the author's network, most of the participants were German and Austrian, which is not a global representation. Thereby the

research applies to that demographic group of the sample only. Additionally, not all groups of the experiments were of equal size because the data set had to be cleaned to eliminate incomplete responses.

Further, this study focusses on female participants. Hence, it would be necessary to validate the results by implementing research likewise for male participants.

Previous research named the critical strength of IM to have the power to leverage the relationship of influencers to their target audience and the emotional connection (Uzunoğlu and Misci Kip, 2014). Since the influencer of this study was fictional, there was no emotional connection between influencer and follower. Further, in this experimental setting the participants did not reach out for the influencer nor the brand's content which is unnatural behavior on Instagram. If the participants had a positive emotional connection to the presented influencer and follow them by choice, the result might have differed due to participants trust and credibility for the influencer. For this study, researchers chose not to use a real-life influencer since that would bias the results, a previous study suggested to use a fictional influencer and the results would not have been generalizable. Future research should research with real-life influencers and their followers and contribute to the findings of this study.

Furthermore, the influencer as well as the brand being fictionally designed by the researcher, the creation of their profiles and posts can be considered limitations. Regardless of attempting to ensure credibility while creating the brand and the influencer by the best means of the researcher, still, it was artificially created. Descriptions of the content, hashtags, and the number of likes in that context had to be distinguished and even though this was done based on extensive research, complete neutrality cannot be guaranteed.

This research was a first attempt to investigate in the broad field of IM, combine it with the new concept of BC and put it in context with the well-researched constructs of BA and PI in the context of the sportswear industry. Despite the limitations which were displayed above, future research should aim to overcome those issues, enrich the topic of this research and contribute to further investigate in the field of IM and the researched concepts, especially the new concept of BC. Coolness can be a decisive factor for sportswear brands and can add value to it. Research would benefit from further studies addressing that field and contributing to knowledge on this newly developed construct.

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## Appendices

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### Appendix 1: “Definitions for Component Characteristics of cool brands and Relevant Citations form Prior Research” by Warren et al. (2019)

Characteristic	Definition	Supporting Citations
Extraordinary/ useful	A positive quality that sets a brand apart from its competitors/offering superior functional value	Belk et al. (2010), Dar-Nimrod et al. (2012), Im, Bhat, and Lee (2015), Mohiuddin et al. (2016), Runyan, Noh, and Mosier (2013), Sundar, Tamul, and Wu (2014)
High status	Associated with social class, prestige, sophistication, and esteem	Belk et al. (2010), Connor (1995), Heath and Potter (2004), Milner (2013), Nancarrow, Nancarrow, and Page (2003), Warren (2010)
Aesthetically appealing	Having an attractive and visually pleasing appearance	Bruun et al. (2016), Dar-Nimrod et al. (2012), Runyan, Noh, and Mosier (2013), Sundar, Tamul, and Wu (2014)
Rebellious	A tendency to oppose, fight, subvert, or combat conventions and social norms	Bruun et al. (2016), Frank (1997), Milner (2013); Nancarrow, Nancarrow, and Page (2003), Pountian and Robins (2000), Read et al. (2011), Warren and Campbell (2014)
Original	A tendency to be different, creative, and to do things that have not been done before	Bruun et al. (2016), Mohiuddin et al. (2016), Read et al. (2011), Runyan, Noh, and Mosier (2013), Sundar, Tamul, and Wu (2014), Warren and Campbell (2014)
Authentic	Behaving in a way that is consistent with or true to its perceived essence or roots	Nancarrow, Nancarrow, and Page (2003), Read et al. (2011), Sriramachandramurthy and Hodis (2010)
Subcultural	Associated with an autonomous group of people who are perceived to operate independent from and outside of mainstream society	Belk et al. (2010), Runyan, Noh, and Mosier (2013), Sundar, Tamul, and Wu (2014), Thornton (1995)
Popular	Fashionable, trendy, and liked by most people	Dar-Nimrod et al. (2012), Heath and Potter (2004), Rodkin et al. (2006)
Iconic	Widely recognized as a cultural symbol	Holt (2004), Warren and Campbell (2014)
Energetic	Possessing strong enthusiasm, energy, and vigor	Aaker (1997), Sriramachandramurthy and Hodis (2010)

## Appendix 2: Table of Items

	References
<b>Brand Attitude</b>	
<i>Brand Attitude Items</i>	Spears & Singh (2004)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The brand “JIVA Activewear” is appealing.</li><li>2. The brand “JIVA Activewear” is good.</li><li>3. The brand “JIVA Activewear” is pleasant..</li><li>4. I am favorable of the brand “JIVA activewear”.</li><li>5. I like the brand “JIVA activewear”.</li></ol>	
<b>Brand Coolness</b>	Warren et al. (2019)
<i>Desirability Items</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The brand “JIVA activewear” is useful.</li><li>2. The brand “JIVA activewear” helps people.</li><li>3. The brand “JIVA activewear” is valuable.</li><li>4. The brand “JIVA activewear” is extraordinary.</li><li>5. The brand “JIVA activewear” is energetic.</li><li>6. The brand “JIVA activewear” is outgoing.</li><li>7. The brand “JIVA activewear” is lively.</li><li>8. The brand “JIVA activewear” is vigorous.</li><li>9. The brand “JIVA activewear” looks good.</li><li>10. The brand “JIVA activewear” is aesthetically appealing.</li><li>11. The brand “JIVA activewear” is attractive.</li><li>12. The brand “JIVA activewear” has a really nice appearance.</li></ol>	
<i>Positive Autonomy Items</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The brand “JIVA activewear” is innovative.</li><li>2. The brand “JIVA activewear” is original.</li><li>3. The brand “JIVA activewear” does its own thing.</li><li>4. The brand “JIVA activewear” is authentic.</li><li>5. The brand “JIVA activewear” is true to its roots.</li><li>6. The brand “JIVA activewear” doesn’t seem artificial.</li><li>7. The brand “JIVA activewear” doesn’t try to be something it’s not.</li></ol>	
<i>Rebellious Items</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The brand “JIVA activewear” is rebellious.</li><li>2. The brand “JIVA activewear” is defiant.</li><li>3. The brand “JIVA activewear” is not afraid to break the rules.</li><li>4. The brand “JIVA activewear” is nonconformist.</li></ol>	
<i>High Status Items</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The brand “JIVA activewear” is chic.</li><li>2. The brand “JIVA activewear” is glamorous.</li><li>3. The brand “JIVA activewear” is sophisticated.</li><li>4. The brand “JIVA activewear” is ritzy.</li></ol>	
<i>Popular Items</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The brand “JIVA activewear” is liked by most people.</li><li>2. The brand “JIVA activewear” is in style.</li><li>3. The brand “JIVA activewear” is popular.</li><li>4. The brand “JIVA activewear” is widely accepted.</li></ol>	
<i>Subcultural Items</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The brand “JIVA activewear” makes people who use it different from other people.</li><li>2. If I were to use the brand “JIVA activewear”, it would make me stand apart from others.</li><li>3. The brand “JIVA activewear” helps people who use it stand apart from the crowd.</li><li>4. People who use brand “JIVA activewear” are unique.</li></ol>	
<i>Iconic Items</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The brand “JIVA activewear” is a cultural symbol.</li><li>2. The brand “JIVA activewear” is Iconic.</li></ol>	
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	
<i>Purchase intention items</i>	<u>Singh and Banerjee, (2018)</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. I am likely to purchase from the brand “JIVA activewear”.</li><li>2. I would like to have more information on the brand "JIVA activewear".</li><li>3. I am interested in the brand "JIVA activewear".</li></ol>	

### Appendix 3: Survey Flow

**Block: Default Question Block (5 Questions)**

**BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements**

**Block: IM condition micro (13 Questions)**

**Block: Brand condition (13 Questions)**

**Block: IM condition macro (13 Questions)**

**Standard: Demographics (3 Questions)**

**Standard: Country (1 Question)**

**Standard: End of Survey (2 Questions)**

### Appendix 4: Online Survey Questionnaire (English Version)

**Q1** Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for spending your time on my survey! Your support is truly valuable as this questionnaire is key for accomplishing the final stage of my master's degree, my masters dissertation. It will take approximately 7-8 minutes to complete the survey. Participating in this survey, gives you the chance to win a 20€ Amazon voucher. Please note that this study is for female participants only.

I kindly ask you to carefully read through the questions and answer them honestly. No right or wrong answers are possible. Of course, your answers will remain anonymous and confidential. Further, the data will be only used for my study.

In case you have any questions or doubts, please feel free to contact me via [lena.jaekel@gmx.net](mailto:lena.jaekel@gmx.net).

Again, thank you so much for your support! I appreciate it.

Best wishes, Lena

**Q2 Please, select your gender.**

- Female (1)
- Male (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Please, select your gender. = Male*

**Q3 Do you use Instagram?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Do you use Instagram? = No*

**Q4 Do you occasionally purchase sportswear?**

- Yes (1)
- Maybe (2)
- No (3)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Do you occasionally purchase sportswear? = No*

**Q5 How often do you buy sportswear?**

- Less than once a year (1)
- 1-2 times a year (2)
- 3-4 times a year (3)
- Every month (4)
- More than once a month (5)

**BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements**

*\*Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the three conditions and presented the given content.*

<b>1. HNF IM condition</b>	<b>2. LNF IM condition</b>	<b>3. Brand condition</b>
1. Ellee June is an influencer who talks about health, fitness, fashion and lifestyle. She is considered very cool among her 5.3 mio. followers. Recently, she has been recommending a new sportswear brand called "Jiva activewear". Please read attentively the post she has recently published.	2. Ellee June is an influencer who talks about health, fitness, fashion and lifestyle. She is considered very cool among her 5.3 Mio. followers. Recently, she has been recommending a new sportswear brand called "Jiva activewear". Please read attentively the post she has recently published.	3. JIVA Activewear is a brand focusing on fashionable, yoga-inspired athletic apparel. Please read attentively the post "JIVA activewear" has recently published.

### 1. HNF IM condition

Ellee June  
25 y/o  
Health | Fitness | Positive Mindset  
Follow my journey

737 Posts 5,3 M Followers 755 Following

Follow Message Contact

### 2. LNF IM condition

Ellee June  
25 y/o  
Health | Fitness | Positive Mindset  
Follow my journey

737 Posts 55 k Followers 755 Following

Follow Message Contact

### 3. Brand condition

JIVA  
Activewear Apparel!  
Shop online @ [www.jiva-activewear.com](http://www.jiva-activewear.com)

737 Posts 55 k Followers 755 Following

Follow Message Contact

\_leejunee

6.023 likes

\_leejunee Strong & positive vibes only 🍷 in my all time fav set by @jiva\_active  
#jivaactive #positivevibes #ad

jiva\_active

6.023 likes

jiva\_active Strong & positive vibes only 🍷  
One of our all time fav sets „ELLEEE“! #jivaactive #positivevibes

**1. HNF IM condition**

**2. LNF IM condition**

**3. Brand condition**



6.023 likes  
 \_leejune Take a moment for yourself ☀️ outfit by @jiva\_active #jivaactive #positivevibes #ad



6.023 likes  
 \_leejune All black in my @jiva\_active set "Josy" #jivaactive #positivevibes #ad



6.023 likes  
 jiva\_active Take a moment for yourself ☀️ #jivaactive #positivevibes



6.023 likes  
 jiva\_active Our all black set "Josy" now available online #jivaactive #positivevibes

**Q6 Now, there are some questions ahead regarding the recently presented brand. They might sound similar but each of them has a purpose for this study. To give you an overview in your process the questions are separated into 9 blocks. This is block 1/9: Please rate the following statements according to the scale.**

	Completely disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Completely agree (7)
The brand "JIVA activewear" is appealing. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The brand "JIVA activewear" is good. (2)

The brand "JIVA activewear" is pleasant. (3)

I am favorable of the brand "JIVA activewear". (4)

I like the brand "JIVA activewear". (5)

**Q7 Block 2/9: Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.**

	Completely disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Completely agree (7)
The brand "JIVA activewear" is useful. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" helps people. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is valuable. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is extraordinary. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is energetic. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is outgoing. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is lively. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is vigorous. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" looks good. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

aesthetically appealing. (10)

The brand "JIVA activewear" is attractive. (11)

The brand "JIVA activewear" has a really nice appearance. (12)

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q8 Block 3/9: Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.**

	Completely disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Completely agree (7)
The brand "JIVA activewear" is innovative. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is original. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" does its own thing. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is authentic. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is true to its roots. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" doesn't seem artificial. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" doesn't try to be something it's not. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q9 Block 4/9: Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.**

	Completely disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Completely agree (7)
The brand "JIVA activewear" is rebellious. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The brand "JIVA activewear" is defiant. (2)

The brand "JIVA activewear" is not afraid to break the rules. (3)

The brand "JIVA activewear" is nonconformist. (4)

**Q10 Keep on going! You are more than half way through (5/9) Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.**

	Completely disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Completely agree (7)
The brand "JIVA activewear" is chic. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is glamorous. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is sophisticated. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is ritzy. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q11 Block 6/9: Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.**

	Completely disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Completely agree (7)
The brand "JIVA activewear" is liked by most people. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is in style. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is popular. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The brand "JIVA activewear" is widely accepted. (4)

**Q12 Block 7/9: Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.**

	Completely disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Completely agree (7)
The brand "JIVA activewear" makes people who use it different from other people. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I were to use the brand "JIVA activewear", it would make me stand apart from others. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" helps people who use it to stand apart from the crowd. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" makes people who use it unique. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q13 We are almost there, please keep on going (8/9)! Again, please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.**

	Completely disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Completely agree (7)
The brand "JIVA activewear" is a cultural symbol. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The brand "JIVA activewear" is iconic. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q14 And the final evaluation (9/9): Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.**

	Completely disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Completely agree (7)
I am likely to purchase from the brand "JIVA activewear". (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to have more information on the brand "JIVA activewear". (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am interested in the brand "JIVA activewear". (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q15 What's your age?**

- Under 18 (1)
- 18 - 24 (2)
- 25 - 34 (3)
- 35 - 44 (4)
- 45 - 54 (5)
- 55 - 64 (6)
- 65 or older (7)

**Q16 What's your occupation?**

- High School Student (1)
- University Student (2)
- Employed (3)
- Unemployed (4)
- Retired (5)

**Q17 What's the highest level of education you have completed?**

- Less than High School (1)
- High School (2)
- Bachelor Degree (3)
- Master Degree (4)
- Doctoral Degree (5)
- Professional Degree (6)

**Q18 This is the last question before entering you have the chance to win the 20€ Amazon voucher or to end the survey. Which country do you come from?**

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (1357)

**Q19 If you would like to be added to the list of potential 20€ Amazon voucher winners, please enter your email address below. In case you do not want to participate leave the space empty and click the button down right to complete the survey.**

---

**Q20 Again, thank so much you for participating in my survey. Your help is truly appreciated. Please, do not discuss the nature of this content with others, since this might bias the results. Please click the button to complete the survey.**

#### **Appendix 5: Online Survey Questionnaire (German Version)**

**Q1** Lieber Teilnehmer,

Vielen Dank, dass Du dir die Zeit für meine Umfrage nimmst. Deine Unterstützung ist wirklich wichtig, denn diese Umfrage ist essenziell für meine Masterarbeit und somit meinen Master Abschluss. Das Ausfüllen der Umfrage dauert ca. 7-8 Minuten.

Mit der Teilnahme bei der Umfrage hast Du die Möglichkeit einen 20€ Amazon-Gutschein zu gewinnen.

Bitte beachte, dass diese Studie nur für weibliche Teilnehmer gedacht ist.

Ich bitte Dich, die Fragen sorgfältig durchzulesen und ehrlich zu beantworten. Es gibt keine richtigen oder falschen Antworten. Selbstverständlich bleiben Deine Antworten anonym und vertraulich. Außerdem werden die Daten nur für meine Studie verwendet.

Wenn du Fragen oder Zweifel hast, kannst du mich gerne per Mail kontaktieren:

lena.jaekel@gmx.net.

Nochmals vielen Dank für

**Q2 Bitte wähle Dein Geschlecht aus.**

- Weiblich (1)
- Männlich (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Please, select your gender. = Männlich*

### **Q3 Benutzt Du Instagram?**

- Ja (1)
- Nein (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Do you use Instagram? = No*

### **Q4 Kaufst Du manchmal Sportbekleidung?**

- Ja (1)
- Vielleicht (2)
- Nein (3)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Do you occasionally purchase sportswear? = Nein*

### **Q5 Wie oft kaufst Du Sportbekleidung?**

- Weniger als 1 mal im Jahr (1)
- 1-2 mal im Jahr (2)
- 3-4 mal im Jahr (3)
- einmal Monat (4)
- mehr als einmal im Monat (5)

### **BlockRandomizer: 1 – Präsentiert gleichmäßig die folgenden Gruppen**

*\*Jeder Teilnehmer wurde zufällig eine der drei Szenarien präsentiert.*

<b>1. HNF IM condition</b>	<b>2. LNF IM condition</b>	<b>3. Brand condition</b>
1. Ellee June ist eine Influencerin, die Inhalt über Gesundheit, Fitness, Fashion und Lifestyle teilt. Sie wird unter ihren 5.3 Mio. Followern als cool wahrgenommen. Vor kurzem hat sie die Sportbekleidungsmarke "JIVA activewear" empfohlen. Bitte lese in Ruhe die letzten Posts die sie veröffentlicht hat.	2. Ellee June ist eine Influencerin, die Inhalt über Gesundheit, Fitness, Fashion und Lifestyle teilt. Sie wird unter ihren 55.000. Followern als cool wahrgenommen. Vor kurzem hat sie die Sportbekleidungsmarke "JIVA activewear" empfohlen. Bitte lese in Ruhe die letzten Posts die sie veröffentlicht hat.	JIVA ACTIVE ist eine Marke, die sich auf modische, von Yoga inspirierte Sportbekleidung konzentriert. Bitte lies aufmerksam die Beiträge, die sie kürzlich veröffentlicht hat.

### 1. HNF IM condition

Ellee June  
25 y/o  
Health | Fitness | Positive Mindset  
Follow my journey

737 Posts 5,3 M Followers 755 Following

Follow Message Contact

### 2. LNF IM condition

Ellee June  
25 y/o  
Health | Fitness | Positive Mindset  
Follow my journey

737 Posts 55 k Followers 755 Following

Follow Message Contact

### 3. Brand condition

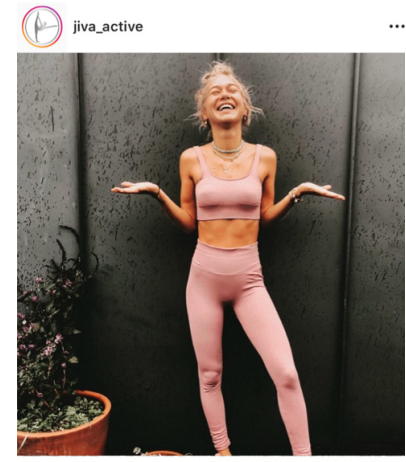
JIVA  
Activewear Apparel  
Shop online @ [www.jiva-activewear.com](http://www.jiva-activewear.com)

737 Posts 55 k Followers 755 Following

Follow Message Contact



6.023 likes  
\_leejunee Strong & positive vibes only 🍌 in my all time fav set by @jiva\_active  
#jivaactive #positivevibes #ad



6.023 likes  
jiva\_active Strong & positive vibes only 🍌  
One of our all time fav sets „ELLEEE“! #jivaactive #positivevibes

1. HNF IM condition

2. LNF IM condition

3. Brand condition



6.023 likes  
\_leejune Take a moment for yourself ☀️ outfit by @jiva\_active #jivaactive #positivevibes #ad



6.023 likes  
\_leejune All black in my @jiva\_active set "Josy" #jivaactive #positivevibes #ad



6.023 likes  
jiva\_active Take a moment for yourself ☀️ #jivaactive #positivevibes



6.023 likes  
jiva\_active Our all black set "Josy" now available online #jivaactive #positivevibes

**Q6** Nun kommt eine Reihe an Fragen zu der vorgestellten Marke. Die Aussagen mögen gleich klingen, aber jede einzelne hat Bedeutung für die Forschung. Damit Du einen Überblick über deinen Fortschritt hast sind die Aussagen in 9 Blocks unterteilt. Das ist Block 1/9: Bitte bewerte die folgenden Aussagen anhand der Skala.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Weder noch (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist ansprechend. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

activewear" ist gut. (2)

Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist angenehm. (3)

Ich bin positiv der Marke "JIVA activewear" gegenüber eingestellt. (4)

Ich mag die gezeigte Marke "JIVA activewear". (5)

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q7 Block 2/9: Bitte gib an, inwieweit du den folgenden Aussagen zustimmst.**

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Weder noch (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist nützlich. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" hilft Leuten. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist wertvoll. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich mag die vorgestellte Marke "JIVA activewear". (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist energiegeladen. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist offen. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist lebendig. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist kraftvoll. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Die Marke "JIVA activewear" sieht gut aus. (9)

Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist ästhetisch ansprechend. (10)

Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist attraktiv. (11)

Die Marke "JIVA activewear" hat eine schöne Erscheinung. (12)

**Q8 Block 3/9: Bitte gib an, inwieweit du den folgenden Aussagen zustimmst.**

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Weder noch (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist innovativ. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist originell. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" macht ihr eigenes Ding. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist authentisch. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist ihren Wurzeln treu. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist nicht künstlich. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" versucht nicht, etwas zu sein, was sie nicht ist. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q9 Block 4/9: Bitte gib an, inwieweit du den folgenden Aussagen zustimmst.**

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Weder noch (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist rebellisch. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist trotzig. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" hat keine Angst davor die Regeln zu brechen. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist nonkonformistisch. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q10 Mach bitte weiter, Du hast mehr als die Hälfte geschafft (5/9): Bitte gib an, inwieweit Du den folgenden Aussagen zustimmst.**

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Weder noch (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme voll und ganz zu (7)
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist chic. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist glamourös. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist anspruchsvoll. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist nobel. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q11 Block 6/9: Bitte gib an, inwieweit du den folgenden Aussagen zustimmst.**

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Weder noch (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" wird von den meisten	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Leuten gemocht.  
(1)

Die Marke "JIVA  
activewear" liegt  
im Trend. (2)

Die Marke "JIVA  
activewear" ist  
beliebt. (3)

Die Marke "JIVA  
activewear" findet  
eine breite  
Akzeptanz. (4)

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q12 Block 7/9: Bitte gib an, inwieweit du den folgenden Aussagen zustimmst.**

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Weder noch (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" macht Menschen, die sie benutzen, anders als andere. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Würde ich die Marke "JIVA activewear" tragen würde mich das von anderen abzuheben. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" hilft Menschen, sich mit ihr von der Masse abzuheben. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" macht Menschen, die sie nutzen, einzigartig. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q13 Du hast es fast geschafft, bitte mach weiter (8/9)! Gib noch einmal an, wie sehr du den folgenden Aussagen zustimmst.**

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Weder noch (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Die Marke "JIVA activewear" ist ein	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

kulturelles Symbol.  
(1)

Die Marke "JIVA  
activewear" ist eine  
Ikone. (2)

**Q14 Und als abschließende Bewertung (9/9), gib bitte an wie sehr du den Aussagen zustimmst.**

	Stimme überhau pt nicht zu (1)	Stimme nicht zu (2)	Stimme eher nicht zu (3)	Weder noch (4)	Stimme eher zu (5)	Stimme zu (6)	Stimme völlig zu (7)
Ich werde wahrscheinlich von der Marke "JIVA activewear" kaufen. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich hätte gerne mehr Informationen über die Marke "JIVA activewear". (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ich interessiere mich für die Marke "JIVA activewear". (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q15 Wie alt bist Du?**

- Unter 18 (1)
- 18 - 24 (2)
- 25 - 34 (3)
- 35 - 44 (4)
- 45 - 54 (5)
- 55 - 64 (6)
- 65 oder älter (7)

**Q16 Was ist dein Beruf?**

- Schüler (1)
- Student (2)
- Angestellt (3)
- Arbeitslos (4)
- Im Ruhestand (5)

**Q17 Was ist das höchste Bildungsniveau, das Du erreicht hast?**

- Weniger als Abitur (1)
- Abitur (2)
- Bachelor Abschluss (3)
- Master Abschluss (4)
- Doktorgrad (5)
- Professur (6)

**Q18 Dies ist die letzte Frage bevor Du die Chance hast den 20€ Amazon Gutschein zu gewinnen oder die Umfrage zu beenden. Aus welchem Land kommst du?**

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (1357)

**Q19 Wenn Du in die Liste der potenziellen Gewinner des 20€ Amazon-Gutscheins aufgenommen werden möchtest, gib bitte unten Deine E-Mail-Adresse ein. Andernfalls, klicke bitte den Pfeil, unten rechts, um die Umfrage abzuschließen.**

---

**Q20 Vielen, herzlichen Dank für die Teilnahme an meiner Umfrage! Du warst eine große Hilfe. Bitte besprich den Inhalt der Umfrage nicht mit anderen, da dies die Ergebnisse verfälschen könnte. Durch Anklicken des unterstehenden Buttons beendest Du die Umfrage.**

## Appendix 6: Krejcie and Morgan Table

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970