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The concept of self-love and self-care profiles on Instagram

Pojęcie profilów self-love i self-care na Instagramie

ABSTRACT

The Communication Strategy of Instagram Self-Love and Self-Care Accounts The paper aims at analyzing the communication strategies used by the creators of self-love and self-care accounts on Instagram. The number of such accounts increased recently, the reasons for which include Instagram's rising popularity and deterioration of mental health throughout society. The paper consists of theoretical and analytical sections - it includes a historical overview of the concepts studied as well as a qualitative analysis of the content of several self-love and self-care Instagram accounts. The results offer an insight into the communication strategies of the creators of selected Instagram accounts concerning self-love and self-care as well as show how receivers react to such content.

KEYWORDS: INSTAGRAM, SELFLOVE, SELFCARE, SOCIAL MEDIA, MENTAL HEALTH

STRESZCZENIE

Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest analizie sposobów komunikowania się profili typu selflove i selfcare w serwisie Instagram. Wzrost popularności platformy Instagram oraz pogarszający się stan zdrowia psychicznego w społeczeństwie przyniosły skutek w postaci stałego wzrostu liczby tego rodzaju kont. Autorzy niniejszego artykułu wykorzystali metody jakościowe do analizy zawartości profili selflove i selfcare oraz do określenia próby badawczej. Artykuł składa się z części teoretycznej i analitycznej. Zawiera rys historyczny badanych koncepcji. Badanie wskazanych zagadnień pozwoliło na uzyskanie perspektywy na sposoby komunikacji autorów wybranych profili selflove i selfcare w serwisie Instagram. Ponadto badania pokazują, w jaki sposób odbiorcy reagowali na dane treści.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: INSTAGRAM, SELFLOVE, SELFCARE, SOCIAL MEDIA, ZDROWIE PSYCHICZNE

INTRODUCTION

The advancement in technology has been accompanied by a gamut of developing new technologies. As a result, social networking techniques have begun to both emerge and transform human communication. The main change is the transformation of direct to indirect communication through electronic devices and multimedia channels. Humans, as beings adapted to life in society, have developed new ways of establishing interpersonal relations using virtual reality. Through this activity, among others, social media were created. The Instagram service, whose integral part is visual content, fits into the meaning framework of the term social media. The creators of Instagram accounts manage them in such a way as to unambiguously present to the viewer the subject matter of the content posted in the profile, which allows the user to be aware of the type of content they are going to observe. Each account is watched by a group of people who form a type of community. The user can get involved in this community by following, receiving and commenting on content and interacting with other profile followers. Using this kind of communication channel has its consequences. One example is the impact on users' attitudes and ways of life. The described consequences can be seen in the recipients of *self-love* and *self-care* accounts. The creators of the profiles publish content that shows real situations and real people who do not use filters. Self-love and self-care profiles' content often reflects attitudes, of which society disapproves. Accounts of these profiles bring together people who support the desire to change the way they perceive physical appearance, emotions or natural human behaviour. The described phenomenon of creating communities increases its popularity, especially in recent years and is a very current topic. The main reason is the problem of worsening mental health in society (Brown, 2020), thus increasing the number of people interested in the topics of self-love and self-care.

This article is based on the analysis of the ways creators of *self-love* and *self-care* profiles communicate. The text shows in which characteristic the contents are published and defines their functions. Due to the possibility of bringing together people suffering from emotional problems, the authors aim to determine whether there are any support functions in the profiles. Another aim is an attempt to identify the creators' idiosyncratic ways of communication and to determine the potential impact of the analyzed profile on the audience. The subject is innovative and has not received sufficient attention from either Polish nor international research. Consequently, a great deal of the data used in this paper comes from Internet sources.

The current study used qualitative methods to analyze the content of self-love and self-care profiles and to determine the research sample (Creswell, 2013). This is because in the most of the cases, the analysis conducted involved visual elements (Emmel, 2013). Being able to adapt the appropriate method to the subject under study is essential in order to gain the most objective perspective (Wimmer, Dominic, 2008). Therefore, the qualitative part of the analysis involved observation, the content saturation method, and visual semiology. The prime characteristic enabling profiles to be selected for analysis was the country-specific origin of the profile, which when composed in that country's national language indicates which nationality group is the target. The study omitted national language profiles but included only those accounts that could be understood in a global perspective, which means that they are conducted in English. English is the universal language and international code of media communication (Latos, 2013).

Profiles were selected by using Instagram's hashtag search option and involved the 'most popular' and 'recent' tabs. In each of them, the study's authors searched for posts using hashtags. The hashtag searches produced relevant „recent" posts and relevant „most popular" posts. As the latter are a subset of the 'recent' tab, the study conducted the analysis on the „most popular" tab. The study chose accounts that reflected the hashtags categories – #selflove and #selfcare as well as #mentalhealth. The number of profiles from each category was restricted to the three most popular. This was necessary to reduce the influence of the problematic nature of the profile creators' content.

The study determined there were six accounts[1] that contained enough material for analysis (see footnotes 1–6). The profiles were then sorted into specific categories. The accounts *kellyu25*[2] and *sahgrieves26*[3] were put into the „photo" category because the posts are overwhelmingly in the form of photos. The accounts of *recipesforselflove*[4] and *realdepressionproject*[5] were included in the „graphic collages" category because the posts are mostly graphic formats. The last category includes the accounts for *lightworkerslounge*[6] and *riskhappy*[7], which were placed in the „multimedia" category because the content includes a mix of photos, graphics, podcasts, and videos, without

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[1] The research conducted by this study complies with the research ethics of the University of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University.

[2] www.instagram.com/_kellyu, accessed on 01.12.2019.

[3] www.instagram.com/sahgrieves, accessed on 01.12.2019.

[4] www.instagram.com/recipesforself-love, accessed on 01.12.2019.

[5] www.instagram.com/realdepressionproject, accessed on 01.12.2019

[6] www.instagram.com/lightworkerslounge, accessed on 01.12.2019.

[7] www.instagram.com/riskhappy, accessed on 01.12.2019.

the dominance of any one format. Next, an analytical time frame of October 1st to November 1st 2019 (henceforth: 'the study's period of analysis') was applied to the posts of each profile selected by the study. The analytical period contains an adequate amount of material to provide the study with a sufficiently large sample. Additionally, the 10th of October is recognized as World Mental Health Day, which may influence profile creators to be more involved in creating content that supports their audience.

THE CONCEPT OF *SELF-LOVE* AND *SELF-CARE*

In order to create profiles of the *self-love* and *self-care* type, a concept invoking the notions of self, health and well-being was needed that defined to some extent the criteria that had to be met for a particular profile to be considered promoting self-love. Although the types of promotion varied, e.g., still photos, graphics and videos, the basic idea remained the same, which was to provide alternative patterns to those present in culture and media. The types largely depended on the medium that was used to promote the concept. One of the reasons for the need to promote the ideas of self-acceptance and mental health were socio-cultural changes and the increasing freedom of expression of Generation Z.

The terms that represent the concept are *self-love* and *self-care*. The reason this study used them interchangeably is because their meanings do differ but only slightly – the former is based on emotions, and the latter on actions[8]. For the subject matter under analysis, the difference in meaning is so slight that the terms have been found to be very similar in the social sphere. The difference between the meanings does not affect the purpose of the concept and running it on an Instagram profile. The study adopted a dictionary definition of the phrase self-love: "Self-love is the belief that you are a valuable and worthy person"[9].

It is important to note that it is a misconception that *self-love* can be confused with narcissism and selfishness. *Self-care* does not mean putting oneself above others or thinking that one is the smartest and most beautiful individual (Brandt, 20219. It is also not a practice of immediate self-gratification, for example by buying new clothes or a phone. Hedonistic action brings a temporary effect and if used for a long time can be harmful. *Self-love* and

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8   https://www.blurtitout.org/2020/09/24/self-care-vs-self-love-whats-difference/
9   Dictionary definition of self-love, www.yourdictionary.com/self-love, accessed on 27.02.2020.

self-care, on the other hand, strive for a balance between the needs of the body, mind and soul. Khoshaba (2012 points to common ways of achieving this balance including setting one's own boundaries, forgiving one's self, focusing on actual needs rather than momentary cravings, and practicing mindfulness, which are criteria for self-love. Baratta (2018) suggests healthy eating and experiencing specialized therapies will provide the necessary balance.

Film provided one of the earliest opportunities to promote the concept of *self-love*. Cinematography was closely linked to television, particularly as interest in it declined, and television became more popular (Racięski, 2016). One of the first films that was explicitly and completely created under the aegis of self-love was the 1999 film – *Girl, Interrupted*, which tells the story of an American teenager living in the 1960s. That decade was a time of contentment, sexual revolution and changes in customs. Humanity is not always able to adapt to the rapid pace of change, and one of the consequences of this inability is getting lost in a given reality, which may lead to emotional and even psychological problems.

Other attempts to promote the concept of *self-love* can be seen in the form of personal websites and blogs, both of which are associated only with the Internet. One of the earliest blogs, which is clearly guided by the idea of *self-love*, is Christina Arylo's *Sacred sparks – from the feminine heart*. Arylo started the blog in 2008 and is still actively publishing content on it. The topics contained on the blog are directed at women, and the entire blog is conducted in a feminist narrative. Christina Arylo describes her blog as an inspiration for women seeking spiritual wisdom and inspiration to love themselves. The blog focuses on topics such as women's empowerment in society, femininity, self-love, and women's career issues[10].

INSTAGRAM AS A FORM OF COMMUNICATION IN THE CONTEXT OF *SELF-LOVE* AND *SELF-CARE* ISSUES

Instagram is a social networking site that allows users to share photos and short videos. Like other social media, Instagram has a mobile app, which is the most popular format for users. Dating back to 2010, the essence of the service is and was the publication and editing of photos in a specific format, resembling a square. Over the years, the service has been developed by adding new tools and methods of communication (Babecki, 2018).

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[10]   https://christinearylo.com/blog/, accessed on 27.02.2020.

Instagram as a new medium that enables new opportunities, has been gaining popularity. In September 2012, the number of active users was 100 million), while in September 2017 Instagram had 800 million[11] monthly active users. In 2020, this social networking site recorded more than 1 billion monthly active users (Ahlgren, 2021). Both the application and the website underwent changes and updates that sought to better adapt the service for users. Such actions of Instagram developers have led to the formation of a group of features identified only with the described service. However, it should be remembered that some of the given features are shared by other social media, depending on the purpose of the service.

Through long-term attempts to adapt the medium to users' expectations, its current form is different from the initial one. Instagram allows free setting up own account with a personalized name, profile picture and a description of your activities on your profile. An additional option is to switch the account to business mode, but this aspect is not related to the topic of my work. Another option is to set the privacy of the profile to be either public, meaning any user can see the content of the account, or private, which allows only approved recipients to access the content. In the context of this paper, the authors only consider profiles with a public status. The main feature of Instagram accounts is publishing photos, graphics and short videos, in the main part of the profile. In order to gain greater reach and make it easier for users to find content on a given topic, hashtags are used under the posts in the description or comments (Żyliński, 2018). Directly below the published photo or video, the number of likes or views of the post is displayed. Starting in 2019, the creators of Instagram have decided to gradually hide the number of likes for those who follow a specific profile[12].

Account creators use Instagram own tools to edit posts, such as filters that manipulate the photo in a certain way, adding captions and decorative elements, which is the most common and noticeable form of photo editing. It is obvious that the user also has external tools and applications to change the content of the photo. Due to the popularization of its photo editing features, Instagram began to be associated with being a place where many photos are published that do not show reality. The phenomenon began to be problematic, because not every user understands the mechanics of the service and cannot distinguish reality from an nInstagram creation. One

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[11] www.wirtualnemedia.pl/artykul/instagram-z-miliardem-uzytkownikow, accessed on 27.02.2020.

[12] www.wirtualnemedia.pl/artykul/instagram-ukrywa-liczbe-polubien-pod-postem, accessed on 27.02.2020.

outcome is the possibility of creating one's own unreal image, which deforms the vision of a person's real appearance and life. In the absence of verifiability, viewers of these accounts are unable to verify the veracity of the content, and by exposing themselves to such treatment for a long time and with increasing frequency, the user is more likely to admit the veracity of the content. This paper is aware of both this problem, and those accounts that make communities aware of the falsity of content and image manipulation, i.e., *self-love* and *self-care* profiles, appear in opposition.

Publishing photos, graphics and videos, editing posts, the ability to describe content and the use of hashtags are common activities that can be seen on other popular platforms like Facebook, YouTube or Pinterest. It is obvious that these tools are also available on less popular sites, because they have become an element identified with social networks. All these social media platforms can be mainly associated with entertainment or communication. Sets of shared tools allow the creation of various thematic groups and communities. Despite the prevalence of entertainment content, users create environments that can be assigned greater values. For example, charity groups raise funds for a good cause, groups of users share similar health issues, learning communities and communities of interest share and exchange knowledge. Profiles such as *self-love* and *self-care* also fit into the described groups, due to their purpose, i.e., the promotion of health and emotions, and the de-stigmatization of the human image.

The emergence of communities within Instagram was made possible because of the communication features the platform provides. A community is a social group based on emotional ties and an informal structure (Tönnies, 1988). The features of the platform are easy to use and sufficiently intuitive to foster the creation of communities. Any user who wants to moderate a profile managed on a community basis must manage the profile in such a way as to gain an audience and at the same time clearly present the account's goals.

Instagram enables the creation of a community not only with the ability to target content to an audience, but also enables communication between the audience, the account creator (henceforth 'the creator) and other content consumers. Communication between the creator and the audience is not only enabled by the content of the posts published, but also by private messages and stories. The story function makes it possible to publish more and more up-to-date content in a short period of time than with posts. Due to its specificity, the creator using the feature can get closer to the audience by being in continuous and present contact. The consequence of such activity

is gaining more trust among recipients and diversification of communication channels, which may make the profile seem more attractive.

Content analysis of selected Instagram profiles about *self-love* and *self-care*

The material for analysis was divided according to the predominant format of content on pre-selected profiles and classified into appropriate categories. Such a procedure was necessary in order to clearly present the patterns of communication in profiles with similar content. By means of juxtaposing and analyzing similar content, the study was able to determine the techniques and elements used by creators of self-love and self-care accounts.

In the first category called „photo", the profiles of *kellyu* and *sahgrieves* were analyzed. The creator of the *kellyu* profile published nine posts during the study's period of analysis. The posts are not published at uniform intervals. The frequency of publishing is irregular, which may mean that the creator is less involved in the profile, resulting in less contact with the account's followers. Five of the nine posts depict the creator of the profile in various swimsuits, showing the showing her natural physique. The photos are taken in different settings and using different frames that do not change her physical appearance. There are also two posts referring to collaboration with the Dove brand. The first is a juxtaposition of two photos by the creator, which shows how easy it is to edit a photo so that it has an attractive appearance. In the editing process, the creator has made the most common changes in bodily image manipulation by flattening her stomach, lessening her waist, and slimming her legs, while enlarging and rounding her buttocks. The next three posts show the creator in different life situations, but they are still pictures revealing the woman's natural physique. The last post analyzed contains three photos and seven short videos. This is a series of posts called *Therapy Thursday* by the creator, in which she addresses a specific topic on mental health and shares ways to address it.

Post descriptions are the second most important part of content besides the photo or picture itself. Communication through a photo that is supported by words can have a greater impact on the audience. Eight of the nine posts on the *kellyu* profile contained multi-sentence descriptions that related to the topic of mental health. The author details the issues from her own perspective. In the first of the eight analysed posts, the profile addresses the topic of accepting her past. She describes the emotions and obstacles associated with a lack of acceptance towards oneself and the consequent effects. She then presents ways to resolve the situation. When formatting the descriptions, the creator adopted her own style, which does not use capital letters at the beginning of sentences.

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Another profile in the 'photo' category is *sahgrieves*, which was selected using the hashtag *self-care*. The creator made two posts during the study's period of analysis. The posts are not published at uniform intervals. The frequency of publishing is irregular and very low, which means that the creator has little engagement with the profile, resulting in less contact with the account's followers. Both posts contain a photo of the profile author in different scenery and using different frames. The first photo shows the account creator smiling. The second photo shows a woman walking in a forest. The compactness of the photos clearly does not indicate whether the author creates content to promote either or both the concepts of *self-love* and *self-care*. It is true that the theme of self-love and self-care includes promoting positive feelings, which can be indicated by the photo with a happy woman suggesting taking care of one's mental and physical state, which the second photo may allude to, but there is insufficient research material to unequivocally state the occurrence of the *self-love* concept. Only when the description is read can the viewer understand the context of the content and recognize that it is content created with the concepts of both *self-love* and *self-care*. The description of the first post refers to the realm of human emotions. The creator touches on a personal story relating to trying to feel positive emotions about oneself. She goes on to describe the damaging effects of perfectionism and makes the audience aware that the state they are in is sufficient and they do not need to change anything by force. The content of the next description refers to the healing effects of nature on humans. The creator encourages the audience to go outside every day as she believes it has a significant impact on mental health. Analyzing the way the content was presented, the individual style of the creator did not stand out.

The profiles in the 'graphic collage' category are *recipesforselflove* and *realdepressionproject*. The account of *recipesforselflove* was selected using the hashtag #selflove. Due to the impossibility of identifying the creator or creators of the account, the study used the form without referring to gender when describing the content. The creator published 18 posts during the study's period of analysis. The posts are published at equal intervals. The frequency of publishing is regular at least one post every two days, indicating that the creator is more engaged with the profile and aims to interact more with the account followers. Of the 18 posts, 16 are in the form of graphic collages as drawings with positive overtones. The content is created with the same aesthetic scheme in bright, soft colours. A one-colour background with graphics of plants and humans is used. The compactness differs in colours. The appearance of the character each time presents a new person of another

nationality, gender, style of dress and weight in various life situations. Additionally, in each post there is a quote referring to the graphic. Each text is written in the same font, but in different colours.

Both the characters and quotes presented relate to the concepts of *self-love* and *self-care* and are tailored to the awareness that the profile's audience may be people with mental health issues. The account creator spreads awareness about insights of the human body. She highlights weight, skin colour and condition, clothing, religious diversity, and people who do not identify with standard genders. By doing so, the account creator communicates that regardless of physique, every person is equal and can customize their appearance. In addition, the quotes contained in the graphics address a specific theme from the emotional sphere, such as supporting people with mental problems, acceptance of other cultures and religions, awareness of the need to control own emotions. The others posts show a calendar with the profile name. In this way the creator promotes their own calendar. The compactness of the posts is adjusted to the awareness that the recipients may be people seeking help in the emotional sphere. The creator communicates in a way that supports and motivates the audience. The content creation method can have a real impact on swapping the behaviour and mindset of the audience.

Each post contains a verbal description consisting of up to several dozen sentences. While analyzing this section, the study did not distinguish the creator's individual style of content creation. In several posts, the creator used an emoticon in the form of a heart, which reinforces the positive emotional charge of the content. All descriptions of the analyzed posts relate to self-love, feminism, and human sexuality. The topics discussed in the descriptions relate to the situation and the quote presented in the graphic. A common way the creator communicates through description is by detailing a particular mental health phenomenon or problem and the ways to address it. The creator uses vocabulary that supports and motivates the audience and is thus able to influence users' attitudes and ways of thinking. Hashtags are included under descriptions and vary in vocabulary depending on the content of the post. This action can influence the users' ability to better understand the content. However, each time the words correspond to the issues of *self-love* and *self-care* and using the hastags: *#support, #love, #life, #loveyourself, #selflove*. The creator has used dozens of hashtags in each case.

The next account analyzed in this category is *realdepressionproject*, which was matched using the hashtag *#mentalhealth*. The creator published 59 posts during the period of analysis. The posts are published daily. The frequency of publishing is regular, ranging from one to three posts per day, indicating

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that the creator is more engaged with the profile and aims to interact more with the account's followers. The entire content of the period of analysis is presented in the format of graphic collages in the form of drawings with an educational function. There is no uniform pattern of content creation. Each post contains a large amount of text and an image referring to the subject of the post. The colour scheme varies, but white and blue predominate. The text, depending on the background colour, is written in a black or white font with the most important words highlighted in green or red. The font style is also not the same for all the posts, which adds variety to the content on the profile and, consequently, may increase the interest of the audience.

Every post's content relates to mental health. The creator details issues from the emotional realm and ways to address them. Some posts contain step-by-step instructions referring to getting rid of problems such as insomnia or anxiety. Some content comes from the medical sphere and describes treatments for specific ailments for example neurosis and depression. Another part of each post outlines the characteristics of people with a particular mental disorder and informs them not to confuse these with notions like laziness, or intentional tardiness, or intentional disobedience. The creator also tries to destigmatize certain phenomena in the society with this way of communication. Generally, creators of accounts communicate in a way that supports and motivates the audience. The method of content creation can have a real impact on changing the behaviour and thought processes of the audience. Additionally, creators disseminate medical knowledge about mental illnesses and ways to support people in need.

During the next stage of content analysis, the study found the creator mostly omits any descriptions. This may be due to the large amount of text included in the graphics, making it unnecessary for the creator to explain the thread in detail. Only in a few cases were descriptions of a few sentences used that related to the topic of the post. Hashtags are included every time in the description of the 57 posts and consist of dozens of the same or similar words from the mental health topic, such as: *#mentalillness, #mentalhealth, #anxiety, #depressionhelp*. Doing this helps the audience looking for a specific topic.

Analyzing the comments section, the study observed mutual support by an audience more willing to share their stories, problems and experienced emotions. Additionally, a frequent way of commenting is an emoticon in the form of a heart, which indicates a positive reception of the content by users.

In the last category called 'multimedia' there are two profiles named *lightworkerslounge* and *riskhappy*. The account of *lightworkerslounge* was selected using the hashtag *#mentalhealth*. The creator posted 76 posts during

the study's period of analysis. The posts are published daily. The frequency of publishing is regular, ranging from one to three posts per day, indicating that the creator is much more engaged with the profile and aims to interact more with the account followers. The format of the posts varies, making it possible to designate several subcategories such as quotes, videos and podcasts. The content of the quotes category is created with the same convention, which is black text on a white background. The only difference is the font style. The content of the quotes in each case relates to mental health, addressing a specific theme. The graphics on this account are not the same. They differ in the colour and image of the background, as well as the colour and type of fonts. Again, the content creator communicates topics related only to the topics of *self-love* and *self-care*.

Posts from the 'podcast' subcategory are also created in the same pattern. At the top of the content, the profile title and information about the form of the content – 'podcast' – are included. Next, a drawing or photo relating to the conversation and the title of the podcast were included. Mental health therapists and people who deal with emotional problems were invited to record their experiences. Additionally, through its longer form, the audio recording allows for a detailed presentation of the issues and ways to individually address the problems.

The creator, due to the adopted pattern of communication and the number of posts published, may have an impact on changing the attitudes of the audience of *self-love* and *self-care* issues. The content is created with the awareness that the audience may be people with emotional problems. By frequently covering the broad topic of mental health, the creator makes the audience aware of the true appearance of people and life situations. Moreover, the creator communicates support and motivation for change with the content.

The creator of the account has adopted a uniform pattern of hashtag usage, which may result in better content reaching the audience. He has placed them in the comment section of each post and the vocabulary is the same or slightly different. Hashtags consist of dozens of words that relate to the profile's activities and self-love issues. Examples include *#enlightment, #awakening, #mentalilllness, #anxiety*, and *#selfcare*.

The *riskhappy* account was matched using the hashtag *#mentalhealth*. The creator published 153 posts during the study's period of analysis. The frequency of posting is regular, ranging from four to seven posts per day, indicating that the creator is much more engaged with the profile and aims to interact more with the account's followers. The post formats are varied and can be divided into subcategories of 'graphics', 'screenshots', 'memes'

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and 'videos'. The content from the 'graphics' subcategory is varied and is not created in a schematic way.

Both images and coloured backgrounds with and without patterns were used to create the graphic content. Each graphic contains text that differs in font from other posts. The volume of text ranges from one to several sentences per post. All content is related to mental health topics, such as emotions, important rules of life, or how to solve a given problem. The content in the 'screenshot' category comes from Twitter. The content contains one to several sentences of text and is presented in a white font on a dark background. The texts relate to Twitter users' thoughts on life, emotions, and emotional problems.

Part of the post description section is created in a schematic way with the use of quotes of famous people, relating to the life and emotions of a person. A common way for the creator is to detail the situation included in the main part of the post, i.e., one of the four previously mentioned categories. This way of communicating enables the creator to have a greater impact on the attitudes and thinking of the audience through a better understanding of the phenomenon described. Each description contains one to several dozen sentences. The study, when analyzing the way descriptions were created, did not find any idiosyncratic style. The creator does not use emoticons. The description section each time contains one hashtag referring to the profile name, i.e., *#riskhappy*. The rest of the hashtags are included in the comments section, but not in every post, which can make it difficult for the audience to find the content.

SUMMARY

The article is devoted to the analysis of the content and functions of Instagram on accounts promoting the well-being of physical, mental and spiritual of the self.. The research problem arose from observing the development of communities around profiles whose content promote mental health care that used hashtags #self-love and #self-care. Interest in self-love and self-care profiles has been gradually increasing due to mainly to deteriorating mental health in society and its growing stigmatization. The creators of such accounts communicate in a way that one of their aims is to support and motivate people in the emotional sphere.

By specifically highlighting and analyzing each of the elements contained in the profiles, the study found this aim was met. The study assumed that due

to the themes of self-love and self-care, the target audience could be people with emotional issues. This assumption checked against the existence of supportive features in the profiles for the target audience, which was confirmed by analysing the largely verbal supportive content through content analysis.

The second aim of the study was to determine how each creator used their accounts to promote mental health. In this case, the features of the Instagram accounts used by each creator to promote mental health were presented. The study also determined what, if any, words, colours, characters, visuals were used by the account creators, and what thematic threads were included in the profile content. The third aim was to determine the potential impact of the profile on the audience and to analyze the comments to see how users reacted to the content. Through qualitative content analysis, it was also shown how the audience reacted to the given content.

The assumption of the presence of supportive functions was confirmed in each of the selected *self-love* and *self-care* profiles, through identifying the methods of communication, which motivated and supported the target audience.

The analysis of the content of the researched profiles also shows the importance of the function that *self-love* and *self-care* profiles have in twenty-first century. A frequent and noticeable way of communicating content is posting own or others' stories, describing the problems they experienced and how they coped. This allows the audience to see the problem from the ground up, enables them to experience similar emotions and shows how to solve a given situation. The target audience, knowing that other people went through, or are still going through similar problems, can analyze their experiences and find help. Personal stories also allow the target audience to deepen the bond between themselves and the creator of the content. The consequence of this can be an increase in the audience's trust in published content, allowing creators to have a greater impact on their audience.

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