



Nüfuzumu Kullanırken Ben: Türkiye’deki Moda Instabloggerlarının Ürün Yerleştirme Uygulamaları Üzerine bir İçerik Analizi

Me While Using My Influence: A Content Analysis on the Product Placement Practices of the Fashion Instabloggers in Turkey

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Başvuru Tarihi: 06.05.2018

Kabul Tarihi: 28.05.2019

Öz

Farkındalık ve ürünlere yönelik talep yaratma konusunda giderek artan nüfuzları, bloggerları markalar için vazgeçilmez birer pazarlama oyuncusuna dönüştürmüştür. Zaman içinde oluşturdukları takipçi tabanlarına yönelik sürekli içerik paylaşımında bulunan bu dijital elitler, Nüfuz Pazarlaması'nın yeni otoriteleri haline gelmiştir. Markalar ise ticari değeri olan bu içeriğin parçası olmanın yolu olarak genellikle ürün yerleştirme çalışmalarını seçmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye’deki moda Instabloggerları'nın yaptıkları Instagram paylaşımlarına içerik analizi yöntemi uygulayarak ürün yerleştirme pratiklerinin belirleyici unsurlarını ortaya koymaktır. Yapılan analiz sonucunda, hesabın büyüklüğü (Mega, Orta Güç, Mikro) ve türünün (Sokak Modası/Yüksek Moda) yapılan ürün yerleştirmelerin belirginlik, interaktivite, anlatsal uyum ve etkileşim düzeyinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklar yarattığı bulgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nüfuz Pazarlaması, Ürün Yerleştirme, Instagram, Moda Instabloggerı, İçerik Analizi

Abstract

The growing influence of bloggers in terms of creating awareness and demand for products had put them on the spotlight for brands. These digital elites who post, snap, tweet to their connected network are seen as the new authorities of influencer marketing. Brands often try to become part of this commercially valuable content through product placements. The objective of this study is to examine the product placement practices of the fashion Instabloggers in Turkey through the content analysis of their Instagram posts. The results show that account size (Mega, Power Middle and Micro) and category (Street Fashion vs. High Fashion) creates a significant difference in terms of the defining features of product placements such as prominence, interactivity, narrative congruity and engagement indicators.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Product Placement, Instagram, Fashion Instablogger, Content Analysis

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Introduction

The last decade had witnessed the exponential growth of social media where a new breed of influencers called bloggers or vloggers had risen to the occasion of talking in the name of the brands they use and like. These once regular consumers with product involvement and experience used their Instagram, Twitter or Youtube accounts to create their individual networks of interpersonal influence and became the modern curators of brand content (Sun et al., 2006). Compared to traditional influencers like celebrities they are perceived as more humanized, approachable and accessible (Land, 2016). Globally, one of the reasons that set the stage for the emergence of bloggers as a market player is the waning trust in institutions and businesses and the increasing credibility of peers (Edelman, 2017). A recent survey by Nielsen (2015) provided that Gen Z and Millennials trust recommendations from the people they know or consumer opinions posted online more than the ads on any traditional and digital media channels. Within this perspective, marketers started to tailor bigger roles for bloggers because of their increasing prominence among consumers due to their informal tone-of-voice, a more authentic connection, the blogger-follower interactivity (Lindquist, 2015) and more importantly their perceived credibility (Hansson, 2015).

Rosen (2000, p.6) points out that "...purchasing is part of a social process. It involves not only one-to-one interaction between the company and the customer but also many exchanges of information and influence among the people who surround the customer". Similarly, Brown and Hayes (2008, p.7) consider such intermediary individuals who mediate the relationship between the consumer and the brand and who have the referral power on consumers as the main constituents of "the decision-maker ecosystem". Relatedly, influencer marketing can be thought as a way of turning these key individuals (i.e. bloggers) into a marketing force. Pophal (2016, p.19) thinks of it as "...no different than word-of-mouth marketing ...taking place in a digital space". Similarly, Waller (2015) explains it as an evolved form of eWOM which is "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via Internet" (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p.39). Whether influencer marketing is eWOM with a new twist (i.e. liking, sharing or commenting upon a product) or not; one thing that remains is the fact that brands are relying more and more to online influencers to expand the reach and brand awareness, improve brand advocacy and increase share of voice (Armstrong, 2017). Reports show that 66% of marketers have already introduced an influencer marketing strategy (Chute, 2016) and 39% of marketers plan to increase their influencer marketing budget in 2018 (Linqia, 2017) which matches with yearly 38% influencer marketing ad spending growth predictions until 2020 (Gallagher, 2018).

Influencer marketing is perceived as a way of "influencing the decision-making process so that traditional sales barriers are minimized and the path to closing sales is smoothed" (Brown and Hayes, 2008, p.32). Brands leverage social media influencers like bloggers whom consumers already trust with the anticipation that their message passes easily the barriers of ad skepticism, avoidance and blockage. Correspondingly, businesses count influencer marketing as their

fastest-growing online customer-acquisition method (22%), beating organic search (17%), paid search (14%) and e-mail marketing (15%) (Tomoson, 2015).

Today, consumers expect brands to have organic conversations with them rather than selling them. From this new consumer behavior perspective, social media influencers are a force to be reckoned with. In that sense, fashion industry was among the first influencer marketing adopters. A report by Launchmetrics shows that 65% of fashion executives claim to have worked with influencers to launch their products (Levy, 2017a). As fashion is primarily driven by design and visual communication, the channels to distribute the content are also as important as the influencers who co-create it. 92% of marketers cite Instagram as the most important social network for influencer marketing in 2018, followed by Facebook (77%) and blogs (71%) (Linqia, 2017). Fashion marketers emphasize that to start a fashion blog starts with Instagram that is believed to be the fastest way to build a fashion brand (Blalock, 2016). Instagram as the key visual platform for organic engagement (e.g. driving likes, shares and comments) (L2 Intelligence Report: Social Platforms 2017) proves to be a good outlet for fashion brands to tell their stories via Instabloggers who are considered as the modern storytellers (Lacy, 2017).

For the most part, product placement is the marketing tactic that designers and fashion brands use when they are teaming up with the Instabloggers. According to Zhu and Tan (2007), the brand-Instablogger cooperation is based upon the idea that the advertisement message is serviced under the disguise of Instabloggers' recommendations which follows their positive personal experience with the product. Although some posts are created without any marketing agenda, many posts are sponsored by a third party. Lu et al. (2014, p.259) describe such posts as "sponsored recommendation posts". Sponsored posts or paid posts contain elements (e.g. hyperlink, mention, hashtag) leading to a brand's web or social media account for which the blogger receives compensation in the form of money, products, services or in other ways" (Mutum, 2011). Recently, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in the United States warned social media influencers and brands about their legal responsibility to clearly disclose relationships to brands when promoting or endorsing the products through social media (FTC 2017). In Turkey; doing covert advertising in any medium is prohibited by law (Çamdereli and Şener, 2016), but the legal framework for sponsored recommendation posts on social media have not been clearly set yet Therefore, it is not easy to specify whether the product placements by Instabloggers are commercial in nature or not unless the Instablogger chooses to reveal the sponsored recommendation posts. For this reason, this study categorizes all the product placements by the Instabloggers as sponsored recommendation posts whether it was revealed (i.e. #sponsored, #ad) or not.

Within this context, the aim of the current study is to examine the constituent elements and characteristics of product placements on Instagram with regard to fashion Instabloggers in Turkey. It focuses on fashion Instabloggers with different account size and categories with a special emphasis on prominence, interactivity, narrative congruity and engagement indicators (i.e. likes and comments). It tries to find answers for the following research questions:

RQ₁: What are the key characteristics of the product placements by the fashion Instabloggers?

RQ₂: Does account size and account category create a difference in the implementation of product placements?

RQ₃: Is there a relationship between the constituent elements of product placements by the fashion Instabloggers? If so, what is the direction and strength of this relationship?

Fashion Instabloggers as Online Influencers

Bloggers are accepted as online opinion leaders because of their knowledge, expertise and influential power (Uzunoğlu and Kip, 2014). They “informally influence the attitudes or behavior of other people by means of product related conversation” (Lyons and Henderson, 2005, p.319). Feick and Price (1987) refer to them as “market maven” who is a source of information about various products and brands as well as the marketplace in general. Marketers simply name them influencers, a term that “refers to an online persona with a large, engaged and active following, ...most often has found success through social channels and/or blogging and...has the undivided attention of their audience” (Land, 2016, para.3). By their vast eWOM networks, domain-specific knowledge and expertise; fashion bloggers are the new taste-makers in the fashion landscape and have “the megaphone effect” (McQuarrie et al., 2013). In that sense, fashion blogging can even be considered as a new form of agenda setting (Farrell and Drezner, 2007).

According to Sedeke and Arora (2012), important aspects of effective fashion blogging are simplicity and personalization, everyday use of fashion, visualization of opinion, authenticity, interactivity, and social media presence. Bloggers who successfully implement such features into their blogging do not only increase their popularity and reach but also their commercial value. The emergence of social media and visually driven networking platforms like Instagram presented fashion bloggers with a new possibility: Instant communication with their followers. Integrating their blog content with their Instagram account gave them more reach while enriching their conversation with their network and ultimately increased their attractiveness for the business.

In today’s marketplace there is a variety of fashion bloggers on Instagram. Within the scope of this study, personal and street style bloggers are examined and they are described as Instabloggers. Personal style Instabloggers regularly post picture of themselves to exhibit their outfit and most of them mix it up with shopping posts (Rossi, 2016). “They display their new acquisitions, their rediscovery of an old piece of clothing, or their new way of mixing things together on their body” (Rocamora, 2011, p.410). Most often, personal style Instabloggers endorse high end fashion products in highly aestheticized settings in terms of lighting, camera angles, filtering and the exhibition of the products (Yankovich, 2015). For that reason, this paper categorizes them as High-Fashion. On the other hand, street style Instabloggers post themselves wearing looks they recommend while they are photographed on the streets (Rossi, 2016).

Fashion Instabloggers are not just called by their blogging style but also by the size of their social networks. The amount of followers is a criterion for Instabloggers to be qualified as an influencer and is an indicator of their potential for targeting the right audience (Utz, 2010). Instabloggers with less than 100K followers are accepted as “Micro Influencers” (Chen, 2016). On Instagram, fashion bloggers with over 200K followers are considered as “Mega Influencers” (Ifb, 2013). This study determines the range between (100K-200K followers) as a reference for “Power Middle Influencers”. Account size is a defining factor for brands’ influencer marketing strategies.

Product Placement on Instagram

With the advent of social media; product placement had found itself new arrays such as user-sponsored blogs, content sharing website videos (i.e. Youtube) and Instagram posts. In its conventional sense, product placement is defined as “the practice of placing branded products in the content of mass media programming” (Russell, 2002, p. 306) or “into an entertainment vehicle” (Russell and Belch, 2005, p. 74). Also, it is called as the integration of a brand into outlets not necessarily considered as advertising territory including editorial content (Van Reijmersdal et al., 2007; Wei et al., 2008).

Product placement in social media is usually implemented through a user-generated content (e.g. Instagram post) with a marketing message (e.g. a product embedded in a picture). Also referred as amplified eWOM (Kulmala et al., 2013), product placement on Instagram is basically about a marketer encouraging Instagram bloggers or Instabloggers to start a conversation among their followers about its product or service. Due to its 800 million active users and 1 million active advertisers (Levy, 2017b; Aslam, 2018) Instagram is considered as one of the main social platforms where product placement is implemented, yet little research had focused on the evaluation of the defining features of product placements on Instagram or Instaplacements. Current study attempts to fill this gap in the literature. Its objective is to provide answers regarding the similarities and differences between the digital and traditional version of the practice.

In order to understand the nature of Instaplacements; a special emphasis was put on prominence, narrative congruity, interactivity and engagement indicators as features. When implementing a product placement, one can use branded content (visual or text) prominently or subtly. Within the context of traditional media, Gupta and Lord (1998) define prominence as visibility. Prominent placements are those in which the brand is made visible by size, position on the screen and its centrality to the scene. Prominence is considered as one of the effectiveness variables for the placement in the traditional (Ephron, 2003) and the social media (Liu et al., 2015). Following the past literature; prominence on Instagram was operationalized as the size of the placement (foreground/background), its centrality to the post, its visibility, Instablogger’s interaction with the branded product and the existing visual clutter (Gupta and Lord, 1998; Ferraro and Avery, 2000; Russell, 2002; LaFerle and Edwards, 2006). An additional “information source” category was included into the coding scheme based on whether the

content of the post was generated by the brand (i.e. commercial message) or by the blogger (i.e. commercial message mimicking the organic post).

Narrative integration is another constituent element of traditional product placements. Russell (2002) provided that when branded products are successfully incorporated into the narrative, the placement becomes more persuasive. Similar to television and cinema, Instagram is also a narrative-based vehicle where users not only share photos and videos but through each photo and video they also tell their stories. Liu et al. (2015) stressed that for an effective product placement on social media to integrate the brand into the context and the vehicle is essential. Correspondingly, within the confines of this study narrative congruity is considered as one of the constituent elements of Instaplacements and assessed as a function of plot connection and account-product match. Plot connection is the degree to which the brand is connected with the main plot of the story (Russell, 2002). Since “congruity may best be thought of in terms of the extent to which the product category of the embedded brand is related to the content” (Lee and Faber, 2007, p.79), brand-account match is also considered as a component of narrative congruity.

According to Lynn et al. (2014) “technologies enable high degrees of interactivity and the placement can be interactive” (p.347). Interactivity often defined as the degree to which users can transform the form and content of the mediated environment (Steuer, 1992) is what differentiates social from traditional media (Liu et al., 2015). Also, due to its interactive features placements can function as a direct selling tool rather than a simple promotional tool (Karrh, 1998). Although past research had emphasized placements’ executional qualities such as prominence, plot connection or modality; empirical evidence on interactivity component is scarce. This study examines interactivity in terms of the incorporation of Instagram features such as tags, mentions, locations, hashtags, hyperlinks and texts into a placement.

Engagement takes place when brands are highly relevant to consumers and there is an emotional connection between consumers and brands (Rappaport, 2007). Kim et al. (2016) defines engagement as “a participant's emotionally motivating experience of interaction with a brand and with its advertising” (p.305). Over the last decade; thanks to online technologies engagement gained a “social” character. Online consumer engagement refers to an active relationship between the brand and cognitively and affectively committed consumers through a computer-mediated environment that embodies brand values (Mollen and Wilson, 2010). Engagement can be manifested in word-of-mouth activities, recommendations, blogging or online reviews (Van Doorn et al., 2010). Schivinski et al. (2016) suggests that people engage with social media in three ways: “By consuming brand related media, by commenting on a post or “liking” a piece of content or by creating brand-related content” (p.65). In the same way, Coelho et al. (2016) provided that comments and likes are primary engagement metrics for Instagram. Within this framework, Instaplacement’s engagement level is assessed as the function of the number of comments per post and the number of likes per post.

Methodology

Instablogger Selection

Three fashion Instabloggers for each account size (Mega, Power Middle, Micro) were purposefully selected based on their follower numbers. The follower base of an account owner is accepted as “a quantitative indicator of popularity or social influence” (Jin and Phua, 2014). The second criterion for the selection was whether the Instablogger was doing product placement or not.

Sample

Within the confines of this study, every case where a brand was embedded into the content of the Instagram post is accepted as a product placement. For the analysis, the posts of 9 selected Fashion Instabloggers were examined for a one-month period (from October 8th until November 8th 2016). In total, 1265 unique product placements have been identified and included in the content analysis.

Code Sheet and Procedure

The coding process followed a three-step procedure. First, a scheme of 21 categories was developed based on previous studies focused on the traditional and digital product placement literature (Gupta and Lord, 1998; LaFerle and Edwards, 2006; Ferraro and Avery, 2000; Russell, 2002; Lynn et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2015). Next, a pretest was conducted to refine the categories and their operational definitions. After a training session for 3 coders – academicians from the advertising department of a foundation university –, they independently co-coded 30 randomly chosen Instagram posts that contained product placements. This co-coding was a pilot test to evaluate whether the categories and operational definitions were clear to the coders. Krippendorff's Alpha was selected as the intercoder reliability coefficient and the result has shown an appropriate rate of agreement between the coders ($\alpha=0,981$) (Krippendorff, 2013). Inconsistencies were adjusted through discussion until a consensus was reached. The categories of the adjusted coding scheme were as follows: **1)** Instablogger's Name **2)** Instablogger's Account Size (Mega, Power Middle, Micro) **3)** Instablogger's Account Category (High Fashion, Street Fashion) **4)** Brand Type (Local, Foreign) **5)** Product Category **6)** Product Involvement (High, Low) **7)** Type of Instagram Post (Image, Video with Audio, Video without Audio, Text) **8)** Size (Foreground, Background) **9)** Visibility (Close-up, Not Close-up) **10)** Camera View (Center of Screen, Not Center of Screen) **11)** Type of Display (Product/Package, Advertisement, Logo, Text) **12)** Verbal Reference (Brand/Product, Category, Adjective, No Verbal Reference) **13)** Visual Clutter (The number of brands appearing in the same Instagram post along with the placed brand, No competing brand) **14)** Verbal Clutter (The number of brands verbally referenced in the same Instagram video along with the placed brand, No competing brand) **15)** Instablogger-Product Interaction (Instablogger, Other, No One) **16)** Account – Product Match (Match, No Match) **17)** Plot-Connection (High, Low, No Plot) **18)** Source of Information (Instablogger, Brand) **19)** Likes per Post **20)** Follower Comments per Post **21)** Instablogger's Comments per Post.

Finally, the coders coded the entire product placements in the sample. The results of the coding were entered into SPSS 23 and Chi-Square Test, T-test, ANOVA and correlation analyses were carried out. Coding categories that were out of the focus of the research were not included in the analysis. In accordance with the purpose of the study, several categories were selected, operationalized and transformed into measurable independent (i.e. placement volume, conversational presence) and dependent variables (i.e. prominence, interactivity, narrative congruity):

- Based on the total number of product placements by each Instablogger, a categorical *placement volume* variable was computed. Instabloggers having a total number of product placements less than the mean have been recoded as low, more than the mean as high.
- Based on the number of Instablogger's comments, a categorical *conversational presence* variable was computed and recoded as non, low and high.
- By accumulating scores assigned to several categories (Table 1) of the coding scheme a prominence index was constructed. An index is "a form of composite measure" and includes "more than one indicator of the variable under study" (Babbie et al., 2015, p.128). Based on the index score *prominence* was recoded as a categorical variable as prominent and subtle.

Table 1. Prominence Index Items

Variables	Index Value	Index Mean (0-5)
Size	Foreground	1
	Background	0
Visibility	Close-up	1
	Not Close-up	0
Camera View	Center of Screen	1
	Not Center of Screen	0
Visual Clutter	0	1
	1-3	0,5
	4-21	0
Instablogger-Product Interaction	Instablogger	1
	Other	0,5
	No One	0
Source of Information	Brand	1
	Instablogger	0

- Based on the number of the interactive elements (i.e. hashtag, tag, text, mention, link, location) that the Instaplacement contained, a categorical *interactivity* variable was computed and recoded as low and high.
- By accumulating scores assigned to plot connection and account-product match categories (Table 2) of the coding scheme a *narrative congruity* index was constructed and recoded as a categorical variable as low and high.

Table 2. Narrative Congruity Index Items

Variables	Index Value		Index Mean (0-2)
Plot Connection	High	1	1,26
	Low	0,5	
	No Plot	0	
Account-Product Match	Match	1	
	No-Match	0	

Analysis and Results

When analyzed by account size (Table 3), the majority of the sampled product placements belongs to Mega Instabloggers (39,6%) followed by Power Middle Instabloggers (34,7%). Micro Instabloggers is the category with the least product placements (25,7%). Also, a Chi-square test for independence indicates a significant association between account size and placement volume, $\chi^2 (2, n=1265) = 102,801, p < 0,001$. The size of the effect is medium (Cramer's $V = 0,285$) (Pallant, 2013). The results show that Mega Instabloggers (73%) and Power Middle Instabloggers (80%) have a high product placement usage whereas Micro Instabloggers seem to have a more balanced approach when implementing product placements (47% high placement volume) (Table 4).

Additional descriptive statistics (Table 3) demonstrate that the majority of the product placements is subtly executed (62,1%), has only one interactive element (73,4%) and exhibits low narrative congruity (55,9%).

Table 3. Descriptives: Account Size, Prominence, Interactivity, Narrative Congruity

	f	%
Account Size		
Mega	501	39,6
Power Middle	439	34,7
Micro	325	25,7
Total	1265	100
Prominence		
Subtle (0-2,00)	786	62,1
Prominent (2,10-5,00)	479	37,9
Total	1265	100
Interactivity		
Low (1 item)	929	73,4
High (2-4 items)	336	26,6
Total	1265	100
Narrative Congruity		
Low	707	55,9
High	558	44,1
Total	1265	100

Table 4. Placement Volume by Account Size

		Low (67-91)	High (153-367)	Total (n=1265)
Mega	Count	134	367	501
	Within Size of the Account (%)	26,7	73,3	100%
Power Middle	Count	87	352	439
	Within Size of the Account (%)	19,8	80,2	100%
Micro	Count	172	153	325
	Within Size of the Account (%)	52,9	47,1	100%

Chi-square=102,801, Cramer's V=0,285, df=2, p<0,05

Initially, independent *t*-tests were conducted to illustrate the relationship between Instplacement's prominence, interactivity and narrative congruity. The results reveal that there is a significant difference between interactivity mean scores of subtle ($M=1,35$, $SD=0,694$) and prominent ($M=1,48$, $SD=0,835$; $t(870,590) = -3,040$, $p < 0,05$, 2-tailed) product placements (Table 5). The magnitude of the difference in the means is very small (Eta squared=0,007) (Cohen, 1988).

Table 5. Difference in Interactivity by Prominence Level

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
Subtle (0-2,00)	786	1,35	0,694
Prominent (2,1-5,00)	479	1,48	0,835

t=-3,040, df=870,590, p<0,05(Single-Tailed)

Moreover, the difference between the narrative congruity mean scores of product placements with low ($M=1,20$, $SD=0,480$) and high interactivity ($M=1,44$, $SD=0,532$; $t(544,808) = 7,254$, $p < 0,01$, 2-tailed) had also proven to be significant (Table 6). The magnitude of the difference in the means is small (Eta squared=0,039).

Table 6. Difference in Narrative Congruity by Interactivity Level

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
Low (1 item)	929	1,20	0,480
High (2-4 item)	336	1,44	0,532

t=7,254, df=544,808, p<0,01 (2-Tailed)

Prominence, interactivity and narrative congruity as constituent elements of a product placement were further examined in relation to the account category of the Instabloggers. Independent *t*-test results (Table 7) show that;

- Prominence mean scores of High Fashion ($M=2,30$, $SD=0,1358$) and Street Fashion ($M=1,65$, $SD=1,311$; $t(1257,016) = 8,591$, $p < 0,01$, single-tailed) accounts are significantly different. The magnitude of the difference in the means is almost moderate (Eta squared=0,055).
- Interactivity mean scores of High Fashion ($M=1,28$, $SD=0,472$) and Street Fashion ($M=1,52$, $SD=0,867$; $t(1135,295) = 5,766$, $p < 0,01$, single-tailed) accounts are significantly different. The magnitude of the difference in the means is small (Eta squared=0,025).

- Narrative congruity mean scores of High Fashion ($M=1,20$, $SD=0,472$) and Street Fashion ($M=1,33$, $SD=0,528$; $t(1255,354) = 4,636$, $p < 0,01$, single-tailed) accounts are significantly different. The magnitude of the difference in the means is small (Eta squared=0,016).
- In addition, High and Street Fashion accounts vary also in terms of engagement indicators (i.e. the number of likes and comments). The results of the independent t -tests (Table 7) indicate that;
- Mean scores of the like numbers for High Fashion ($M=3894$, $SD=2013,881$) accounts significantly differ from Street Fashion ($M=6463$, $SD=9561,120$; $t(246,110) = -3,988$, $p < 0,01$, single-tailed) accounts. The magnitude of the difference in the means is small (Eta squared=0,031).
- Mean scores of the comment numbers for High Fashion ($M=19$, $SD=12,964$) accounts significantly differ from Street Fashion ($M=55$, $SD=75,285$; $t(240,105) = -7,174$, $p < 0,01$, single-tailed) accounts. The magnitude of the difference in the means is more than moderate (Eta squared=0,096).

Table 7. Difference in Prominence, Interactivity, Narrative Congruity, Number of Likes, Number of Comments by Account Category

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Prominence							
High Fashion	622	2,30	1,358	1257,016	6,237	8,591	0,000
Street Fashion	643	1,65	1,311				
Interactivity							
High Fashion	622	1,28	0,590	1135,295	18,709	-5,766	0,000
Street Fashion	643	1,52	0,867				
Narrative Congruity							
High Fashion	622	1,20	0,472	1255,354	108,408	4,636	0,000
Street Fashion	643	1,33	0,528				
Number of Likes							
High Fashion	256	3894	2013,881	246,110	143,810	-3,988	0,000
Street Fashion	229	6463	9561,120				
Number of Comments							
High Fashion	256	19	12,964	240,105	49,137	-7,174	0,000
Street Fashion	229	55	75,285				

Another engagement indicator that the study puts emphasis on is conversational presence of the Instabloggers. A Chi-square test for independence indicates a significant association between account category and conversational presence, $\chi^2(2, n=1265) = 107,188$, $p < 0,05$. The size of the effect is medium (Cramer's $V = 0,291$). The findings indicate that 56% of the posts with the product placement where Instabloggers do not show any conversational presence belong to the Instabloggers in High Fashion category. On the other hand, 98% of the product placements posts where Instabloggers' conversational presence is high are shared by Instabloggers in Street Fashion category (Table 8).

Table 8. Conversational Presence by Account Category

			High Fashion	Street Fashion	Total (n=1265)
Conversational Presence	None (No comment)	Count	479	377	856
		Within Conversational Presence (%)	56	44	100%
	Low (1-9 comments)	Count	141	167	308
		Within Conversational Presence (%)	45,8	54,2	100%
	High (10> comments)	Count	2	99	101
		Within Conversational Presence (%)	2	98	100%

Chi-square=107,188, Cramer's V=0,291, df=2, p<0,05

In accordance with the main objective of the study, a one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted to explore the impact of account size on prominence, interactivity and narrative congruity (Table 9). The results show that;

- There is a significant difference at the $p<0,05$ level in *prominence* scores for Mega, Power Middle and Micro Instabloggers ($F(2,1262)=26,371, p=0,001$). Cohen (1988) when classifying the size of the effect in mean differences indicated that 0,01 is a small; 0,06 is a medium and 0,14 is a large effect. Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores was small. The effect size, calculated using Eta squared, was 0,04. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tuckey HSD test indicated that the prominence mean score for Power Middle Instabloggers ($M=1,60, SD=1,233$) was significantly different from both Mega ($M=2,21, SD=1,372$) and Micro ($M=2,11, SD=1,447$) Instabloggers.
- There is a significant difference at the $p<0,05$ level in the *interactivity* scores for Mega, Power Middle and Micro Instabloggers ($F(2,1262)=22,551, p=0,001$). Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores was small. The effect size, calculated using Eta squared, was 0,03. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tuckey HSD test revealed that the interactivity mean scores for Mega ($M=1,24, SD=0,550$), Power Middle ($M=1,44, SD=0,728$) and Micro ($M=1,58, SD=0,976$) Instabloggers differed significantly from each other.
- There is a significant difference at the $p<0,05$ level in *narrative congruity* scores for Mega, Power Middle and Micro Instabloggers ($F(2,1262)=59,896, p=0,001$). The actual difference in mean scores was between medium and large. The effect size, calculated using Eta squared, was 0,09. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tuckey HSD test showed that the narrative congruity mean scores for Mega ($M=1,11, SD=0,458$), Power Middle ($M=1,45, SD=0,525$) and Micro ($M=1,25, SD=0,463$) Instabloggers differed significantly from each other.

Table 9. Difference in Prominence, Interactivity, Narrative Congruity, Likes and Comments by Account Size

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Eta Squared</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Prominence								
Mega ^a	501	2,21	0	5	1,372	0,04	26,371	0,000
Power Middle ^b	439	1,60	0	5	1,233			
Micro ^a	325	2,11	0	5	1,447			
Total	1265	1,97	0	5	1,372			
Interactivity								
Mega ^a	501	1,24	1	4	0,550	0,03	22,551	0,000
Power Middle ^b	439	1,44	1	4	0,728			
Micro ^c	325	1,58	1	4	0,976			
Total	1265	1,40	1	4	0,753			
Narrative Congruity								
Mega ^a	501	1,11	0	2	0,458	0,09	59,896	0,000
Power Middle ^b	439	1,45	0	2	0,525			
Micro ^c	325	1,25	0	2	0,463			
Total	1265	1,26	0	2	0,505			
Number of Likes								
Mega ^a	206	8140	591	36870	8811,666	0,16	46,829	0,000
Power Middle ^b	151	3964	503	47255	4394,854			
Micro ^a	128	1575	372	10444	1160,108			
Total	485	5107	372	47255	6844,571			
Number of Comments								
Mega ^{ab}	206	39	1	631	56,658	0,01	3,663	0,026
Power Middle ^a	151	26	1	141	28,018			
Micro ^b	128	43	2	800	73,975			
Total	485	36	1	800	55,543			

To explore whether account size creates a difference in terms of engagement indicators such as number of likes and comments another one-way between groups analysis of variance was conducted (Table 9). The results show that;

- There is a significant difference at the $p < 0,05$ level in like numbers of posts shared by Mega, Power Middle and Micro Instabloggers ($F(2,482) = 46,829, p = 0,001$). The actual difference in mean scores was high. The effect size, calculated using Eta squared, was 0,16. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tuckey HSD test showed that the like scores for Mega ($M = 8140, SD = 8811,6666$), Power Middle ($M = 3964, SD = 4394,854$) and Micro ($M = 1575, SD = 1160,108$) Instabloggers differed significantly from each other.
- There is a significant difference at the $p < 0,05$ level in comment numbers of posts shared by Mega, Power Middle and Micro Instabloggers ($F(2,482) = 3,663, p = 0,026$). The actual difference in mean scores was quite small. The effect size, calculated using Eta squared, was 0,01. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tuckey HSD test showed that the comment numbers of Power Middle ($M = 151, SD = 28,018$) and Micro ($M = 128, SD = 73,975$) Instabloggers differed significantly from each other. Instabloggers with Mega ($M = 206, SD = 56,658$) did not differ significantly from either Power Middle or Micro Instabloggers.

Table 10. Conversational Presence by Account Size

			Mega	Power Middle	Micro	Total (n=1265)
Conversational Presence	None (No comment)	Count	350	319	187	856
		Within Conversational Presence (%)	40,9	37,3	21,8	100%
	Low (1-9 comments)	Count	150	103	55	308
		Within Conversational Presence (%)	48,7	33,4	17,9	100%
	High (10> comments)	Count	1	17	83	101
		Within Conversational Presence (%)	0	16,8	82,2	100%

Chi-square=193,595, Cramer's V=0,277, df=4, p<,05

An additional chi-square test for independence was executed to understand the relationship between account size and conversational presence as an engagement indicator (Table 10). The results point to a significant association between account size and conversational presence of Instabloggers, $\chi^2(4, n=1265) = 193,595, p < 0,05$. The size of the effect is medium (Cramer's V=0,277). The findings indicate that posts that exhibit no conversational presence by the Instabloggers belong mainly to Mega and Power Middle Instabloggers (78,2%). Again the majority of the posts where low conversational presence by the Instablogger was observed belongs to Mega Instabloggers (%48,7). On the other hand, Instabloggers with micro accounts have the major share (82,2%) in high conversational presence situations and Mega Instabloggers did not show high conversational presence in any product placement posts they shared.

Table 11. Correlation: Prominence, Interactivity, Narrative Congruity, Likes and Comments

	Prominence	Interactivity	Narrative Congruity	Number of Likes	Number of Comments
Prominence	1				
Interactivity	0,14**	1			
Narrative Congruity	0,09**	0,22**	1		
Number of Likes	-0,02	-0,12**	-0,03	1	
Number of Comments	0,05	0,04	0,06	0,31**	1

**p<0,01(2-tailed)

Finally, to understand the direction and the strength of the linear relationship between the major dependent variables of the study (i.e. prominence, interactivity, narrative congruity, like and comment numbers) a bivariate correlation analysis was conducted using Pearson correlation coefficient (Table 11). Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. While assessing the strength of the correlation Cohen's (1988) suggested guidelines were used. Accordingly, $r=0,10-0,29$ was accepted as small correlation, $r=0,30-0,49$ as medium and $r=0,50-1,0$ as large. The results indicate that;

- There is a small positive correlation between prominence and interactivity, $r=0,14, n=1265, p < 0,001$, with lower levels of prominence associated with lower levels of interactivity.

- There is a small positive correlation between prominence and narrative congruity, $r=0,09$, $n=1265$, $p<0,001$; and a small positive correlation between interactivity and narrative congruity, $r=0,22$, $n=1265$, $p<0,001$. Lower levels of prominence and interactivity are associated with lower levels of narrative congruity.
- There is a small negative correlation between interactivity and number of likes, $r=-0,12$, $n=485$, $p<0,001$. Lower levels of interactivity are associated with higher levels of liking.
- There is a medium positive correlation between number of comments and likes, $r=-0,31$, $n=485$, $p<0,001$. Lesser the likes lesser the comments.

Discussion, Managerial Implications and Limitations

Growing number of advertisers benefit from seemingly independent and noncommercial blogs to promote their products where the blogger is used as the concealer that masks the marketing (Werde, 2003). This being the case, the boundaries of the influencer marketing are increasingly marked by a blurred line that separates the marketer-generated content from the blogger-generated one. Congruently, Kulmala et al. (2013) found out that in current fashion blogging sponsored eWOM postings are intentionally created to mimic organic eWOM. Within this perspective, present study tried to bring a deeper understanding of influencer marketing through the examination of the fashion Instabloggers' product placement practices.

According to Kretz and de Valck (2010) fashion blogs can be regarded as a form of branded storytelling where visual and textual elements are organized in such a way that brands are incorporated in the plot as characters. In accordance with this view, current study adapted product placement features such as prominence and narrative congruity that have been traditionally examined within the context of televised and cinematic storytelling into the Instablogging setting. Moreover, digital features like interactive elements and engagement indicators that have been scarcely examined were also included in the research. Size (i.e. Mega, Power Middle, Micro) and the category of the account (i.e. Street Fashion vs. High Fashion) were evaluated as the differentiating factors.

Firstly, in contrast to product placement practices in the traditional media where visibility is the main objective, the analysis shows that fashion Instabloggers prefer subtle placements (62,1%) over prominent ones (37,9%). Trust and credibility are accepted as the source of a blogger's power as an influencer (Cheung et al., 2009) and this finding may be attributed to their concern to preserve such power. In addition, some sees it as an outcome of the effort of balancing readers' expectations (authenticity and trustworthiness) and marketers' demands (brand amplification) (Kretz and de Valck, 2010). Secondly, descriptive analysis provided that the Instabloggers do not use interactive elements to their full potential. Only 26,6% of the sampled placements have high interactivity. Moreover, subtle placements have fewer interactive elements compared to prominent ones. Interactive placements involve the activation of clickable anchors on branded products within a specific medium (i.e. Instagram) and allow individuals to navigate across available brand information (Lynn et al., 2014). Therefore, by definition interactivity hinders the subtleness of the placement. This can be one of the reasons why the Instabloggers prefer less interactivity with the subtle placements. However, further

research is needed to better understand the relationship between interactivity and prominence as defining features of product placements on social media.

Narrative congruity is about the efficacy of the story that Instabloggers create around the embedded brand. The results point to a positive relationship between interactivity and narrative congruity. Product placements that are low in interactivity have also lower narrative congruity scores compared to product placements high in interactivity. Contrary to our expectation that there will be a negative relationship between prominence and narrative congruity, the findings prove a positive relationship: Higher the narrative congruity, higher the prominence. While sharing their “consuming passions” (Granitz and Ward, 1996) Instabloggers may be using the narrative to amplify product visibility.

Moreover, the analysis had shown that the category of the account creates a difference in the implementation of product placements. The Street Fashion Instabloggers’ placements are low in prominence and high in interactivity compared to the High Fashion Instabloggers. Their narrative congruity scores are higher than the High Fashion Instabloggers. Therefore, the Street Fashion Instabloggers use the tools of the communication vehicle (i.e. Instagram) more efficient than the High Fashion Instabloggers. Their placement practice is characterized by the immersion of the product into the narrative they create as content. Kretz and de Valck (2010) attribute such implicit arrangements of visual and textual elements when creating branded content to fashion bloggers’ need to keep a balance between finding financial and material resources (e.g. endorsement fees, free products, gifts, invitation to bloggers’ events) for their content while preserving the initial authenticity of their [Insta]blog. Similarly, earlier studies indicate that the fit between the general atmosphere of the blog and the marketed fashion items (i.e. brands, designers, retailers) is a prerequisite for effective and credible blog marketing (Kulmala et al., 2013). Within this perspective, the placements by the Street Fashion Instabloggers reflect better the workings of compelling blog marketing.

Also, current research focused on the account size as a differentiating factor in terms of the implementation of product placements. The analysis provided that Mega Instabloggers’ placements have the highest prominence score and the lowest interactivity and narrative congruity scores. This finding highlights that the Instabloggers with higher follower network focus on mere visibility when doing placement. Generally, bloggers tend to focus on the salience of narrative structure and interactivity (Lim and Yang, 2009). Since they are heavy product placers with %73 of Mega Instabloggers doing placements with high volume, this can be the reason why they miss on other dimensions like interactivity and narrative congruity.

When it comes to engagement indicators, almost all of the placements where the Instabloggers have shown high conversational presence belong to the Street Fashion Instabloggers (98%). On the other hand, Instabloggers with mega accounts show no presence if not low conversational presence when placing products in their content. Such finding replicates one of the realities of the current influencer marketing: As an influencer’s follower number rises, the rate of engagement (likes and comments) with followers decreases (Markerly, 2016). In other words,

in the Instablogosphere more reach often brings less engagement. On the contrary, Micro Instabloggers show high conversational presence (82,2%) when implementing placements. Joseph (2017) explains that marketers increasingly turning to micro influencers because of the higher accessibility and better engagement that such presence brings.

This study can have several implications for the companies that engage in fashion blog marketing on Instagram. First, placing a product on Instagram is more complex than doing it in the traditional vehicles. Marketers should consider a variety of placement dimensions at once and interactive elements and engagement indicators more than the others. Secondly, despite their higher follower base Mega and Power Middle influencers seem to miss on interactivity as the most differentiating feature of the social media in general and Instagram in specific. Only Micro Instabloggers happen to realize its potential when creating branded content. Therefore, marketers should pay attention whether Instabloggers integrate interactive elements adequately into their content or not when selecting an influencer. Placement strategies should avoid mere visibility and aim to create richer relationships with consumers by increasing interactivity. Finally, when it comes to conversational presence Mega Instabloggers were not joining the dialog. They seem to embrace the traditional one-to-many communication model instead of multidirectional communication. Therefore, high like numbers that Mega Instabloggers regularly possess should not be the only indicator of high engagement. Marketers should include other engagement indicators like conversational presence into their influencer selection criteria.

Current study has several limitations. The sample includes only the Fashion Instabloggers therefore the generalizability of the findings is limited. In addition, to examine engagement demands more than looking at number of likes and comments. Variables like impression, click numbers, shares also contribute to this dimension. Since Instabloggers share this information only with brands they work with, this study lacks such data.

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