

A Content Analysis on the Instagram Profiles of College Fitness Centers

Introduction

Central question: How could BU FitRec increase engagement on Instagram?

Hypotheses

Source Credibility

H1: Social media accounts with higher source credibility will have higher user engagement rates.

Information Richness

H2: Social media accounts with higher levels of investment in information richness will experience higher user engagement rates

Perceived Personal Relevance

H3: Social media accounts with higher levels of personal relevance will have higher user engagement rates.

Theory

Elaboration Likelihood Model

- Communication theory that allows us to predict the persuasiveness of messages
- Commonly used in marketing and advertising strategies
- ELM asserts that people process persuasive messages along two routes: **central and peripheral**

Central Route

Most utilized in important decision making

Persuading readers through the use of hard facts and statistics



Peripheral Route

Most utilized in decision-making that does not require deep thought processing

Relies on heuristics (something being pretty) Emotional cues

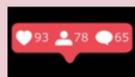


Methods

User Engagement

The extent to which users are interacting with an account/post.

$$\text{Post Engagement Rate} = \frac{\text{Followers}}{\text{Likes} + \text{Comments}} \times 100$$



Universities with student populations = 20-50k

Final sample included 86 University Gym Instagram accounts

We did a qualitative content analysis for the first 20 posts, with the most recent post being no later than March 1st, 2020

A total of 1,720 posts were included in the sample



Source Credibility is a peripheral cue of ELM that views positive engagement with a message source as a cue of that source being credible.

1 - Tone of comments: positive, negative, neutral



2 - Qualitative engagement: if anyone is tagged in the comments

Information Richness is the extent to which the information in a post is able to persuade the user to behave a certain way by making it useful.

1 - Number of hashtags in the post caption

2 - Link to more information: Link can be on the post itself or in the caption

3 - Useful information in the image: Details on an event, how to do something, or directions on how to get somewhere



1 - Mention of school name



2 - Mention of academic calendar

Results

- 1 Avg. followers per account: **2938.42**
- ★ Avg. likes per post: **67.72**
- 🗨️ Avg. comments per post: **0.91**

Avg. user engagement rate:



2.34

Source credibility

Tone of comments of posts

Positive: **22.59%** +
Negative: **0.61%** -

Qualitative Engagement

User tags another user: **19.39%**
Account tags another user: **2.04%**
Account & users tag other users: **1.77%**

Information Richness

Posts with no hashtags: **42.99%**
Images had useful information: **23.27%**
Captions included link for more info: **25.99%**

Personal Relevance

Mention school name **48.37%**
Mention academic calendar **3.74%**

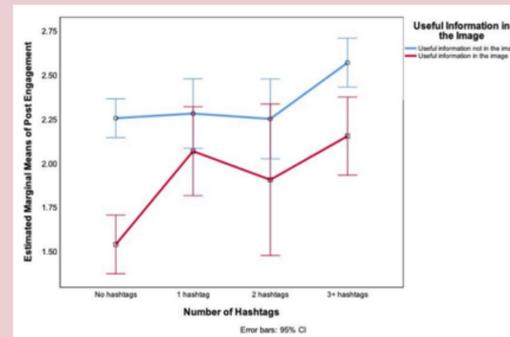
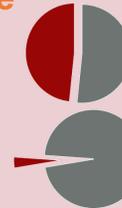


Figure 1: Estimated Marginal Means of Post Engagement Rate between Number of Hashtags and Useful Information in the Image

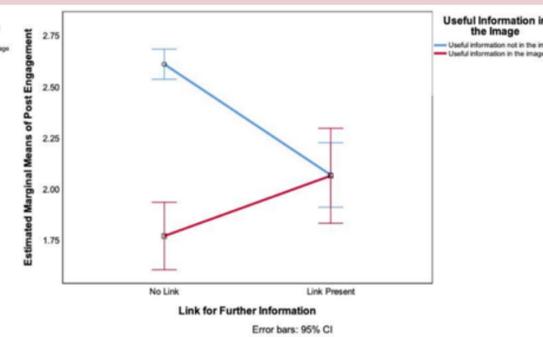


Figure 2: Estimated Marginal Means of Post Engagement Rate between Link for Further Information and Useful Information in the Image

Discussion

- **Hashtags are good, 3 or more are even better**
 - 3+ hashtags is associated with higher user engagement
- **If you're going to include useful information on the image**
 - Add hashtags (The more, the merrier!)
 - Ex: (i.e. #fitnesstip, #bostonfitness)
- **Focus on identifying with the students**
 - This goes beyond mention of the school
 - Discuss the academic calendar (Ex: spring break, finals)
- **If you are going to add links, add them externally**
 - It is unlikely users will type up a link that is in an image
 - If you want to use a link, make sure it is clickable
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- **Giveaways**
 - Giveaway posts generated so much engagement, we had to remove them from our sample to conduct data analyses
 - If you want to launch engagement, giveaways encourage users to like, comment and tag friends in the post

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Thank you to BU FitRec for their collaboration.