

Background

Framing theory (Goffman, 1974) establishes that the use of frames to present information affects the audience's response to content. Our study sought to investigate the extent to which the framing typologies offered by Iyengar (1991) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) impacted Facebook engagement. To this end, our overarching research question is: **to what extent does the use of frames in Facebook content generated by Down syndrome nonprofits impact user engagement?** Primary analysis explored how the framing of content varies across organizational levels, and impact on user engagement. Additionally, we analyzed the impact of framing on tonality of user feedback in the form of impressions and comments. We were able to work alongside the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC) and utilized them as a case study.

Framing Typologies

Iyengar (1991)

1. **Episodic Frame:** Provide specific examples, case studies, or event-oriented reports that focus on individual trends or discussions
2. **Thematic Frame:** Share overarching themes or topics that relates to the Down syndrome community at large

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000)

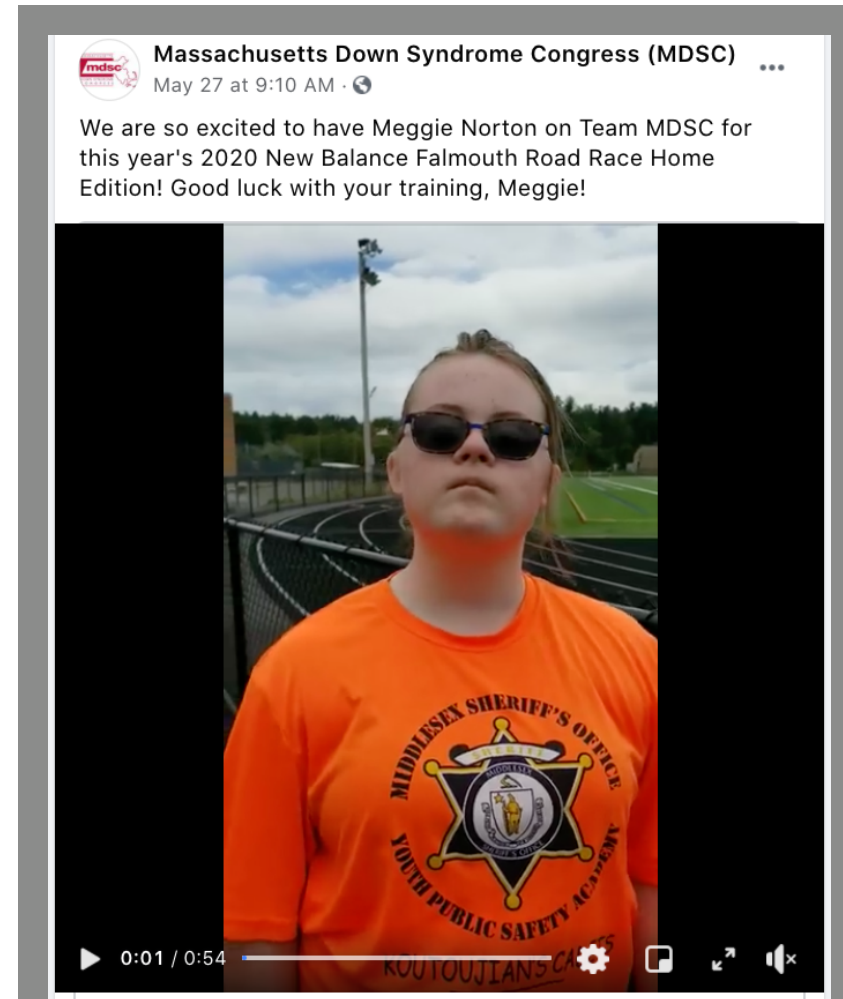
1. **Conflict Frame:** Emphasizes general conflict
2. **Human Interest Frame:** Focus on individuals, contains face or emotion
3. **Economic Consequence Frame:** Potential or actual economic consequences of an event
4. **Morality Frame:** Utilize moral prescriptions to cover an event or issue
5. **Responsibility Frame:** Attribute responsibilities of causing or solving something to an individual

Method

Organizations categorized as "nonprofit organizations" active on Facebook for a year were chosen. Posts were sampled between March 11th, 2019 - March 11th, 2020 using Crimson Hexagon and 5 random posts were selected from each organization using a random number generator. Final sample included 1,190 posts from 238 organizations. Coded by 2 authors; with an **average ICR of 0.88**, and **average % agreement of 95.08%**.

References

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harvard University Press. | Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. | Semetko, H. A., & Valkenburg, P. M. V. (2000). Framing European politics: A content analysis of press and television news. *Journal of Communication*, 50(2), 93-109. doi:<http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02843>.



Example of Facebook content by MDSC that includes Episodic and Human Interest Framing

Conclusion

- Content issued by national nonprofit organizations received a higher user engagement score than content issued by local nonprofits.
- Social media content that incorporates dimensions of Iyengar's (1991) episodic frame and Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) human interest frame are associated with the highest user engagement score.
- Iyengar (1991) frames have a significant relationship with tonality of impressions. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) frames have a significant relationship with tonality of impressions and comments.

Results: Framing, Organization Level and User Engagement

Both national and local organizations most frequently utilized Iyengar's (1991) episodic frame and Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) human interest frame.

National Organizations

- Posts with characteristics of human interest frame ($M = 547.59$, $SD = 232.31$) had higher user engagement score than posts with characteristics of responsibility frame ($M = 234.82$, $SD = 244.17$, $p = .010$)
- Impact of Iyengar frames on user engagement score was not significant ($p = .126$)

Local Organizations

- Posts with combination of human interest frame + responsibility frame ($M = 456.96$, $SD = 782.74$) had higher user engagement score than posts with characteristics of economic consequence frame ($M = -44.9$, $SD = 212.12$, $p = .029$).
- Impact of Iyengar frames on user engagement score was significant ($p = 0.047$); posts with a combination of episodic and thematic frame ($M = 216.12$, $SD = 138.94$) had higher user engagement score than posts with thematic - only characteristics ($M = -21.37$, $SD = 256.63$, $p = .036$).

Results: Framing and Tonality

Framing and Tonality of User Feedback: *Tonality of Comments*

- Semetko and Valkenburg (2000): Significant relationship with the tonality of comments, $\chi^2(48, N = 1190) = 393.24$, $p < .001$. Largest portion of user comments were positive.
- Iyengar (1991): No significant relationship with the tonality of comments, $\chi^2(12, N = 1190) = 9.26$, $p = .681$.

Framing and Tonality of User Feedback: *Tonality of Impressions*

- Semetko and Valkenburg (2000): Significant relationship with the tonality of impressions, $\chi^2(48, N = 1190) = 188.12$, $p < .001$. Majority of impressions were neutral, then positive.
- Iyengar (1991): Significant relationship with the tonality of impressions, $\chi^2(12, N = 1190) = 15.63$, $p = .029$. Majority of impressions were positive.

