Exploring the influence of content attributes and emotional factors on user engagement in social media: A comprehensive review

Monu Bhargava*, Satyendra Arya*, Nitika Nadkarni*, Seenidwam Mahalakshmi*

Abstract In the current digital environment, it is essential to do research to comprehend the dynamics of user involvement on social media platforms. The purpose of this study is to examine how user engagement is shaped by the interaction between emotional aspects like sentiment analysis and emotional valence and content features like multimedia elements, language styles, and thematic relevance. We determine a wide range of studies about many aspects of the material that influence engagement, their efforts yield no results. Consequently, we highlight potential confounding variables that could account for these inconsistent results about the relationship between features and content engagement. We note that there is insufficient research to determine emotional reactions influence the association between content engagement and engagement. To ensure comprehensive study, future research should employ a wider communications plan created for the social media environment.

Keywords: social media communication, affective content, emotional effect, content marketing, content engagement, engagement behavior

1. Introduction

Social networking is a crucial component of digital marketing plans. When it comes to social networking sites, YouTube has become the industry leader in video sharing. Every month, YouTube is accessed over two billion users from over 100 countries. Each day, over one billion hours of video are viewed, and every minute, over 500 hours of new content are uploaded to the platform (Munaro et al 2021). The popularity of visual social media is growing on Instagram, users like posts 1.65 billion times a day and upload 42 million photos daily on average. Given that 70% of firms have an active Instagram account and 80% of customers follow at least one brand, it’s a part of this ubiquitous visual interchange (Rietveld et al 2020). Companies are investing a substantial of money to establish a robust online presence on social media sites such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, given the growing significance of these platforms for the sharing and interchange of information (Ma 2022). They have changed how brand material is produced, shared, and consumed, providing customers with countless options to obtain brand information and utilize it to inform their purchasing decisions (Dabbous and Barakat 2020). Due to social media’s enduring popularity on a worldwide scale, businesses’ social networks are growing at a faster pace in an effort to promote online customer contact. In April 2019, Facebook, the most popular social media platform boasted 2,375 million active monthly users (Shahbaznezhad et al 2021). Social media’s widespread use has completely changed how the public interacts and learns about businesses. Five features set social media apart from traditional media: participation, openness, discourse, communities, and connectedness. A group of online applications known as social media let users create and share information (Ji et al 2019). The beauty and fashion industries, which saw a rise to $532 billion in revenue in 2019 using the well-known, well-connected people known as social media influencers (SMIs) as a broad, cost-effective replacement for paid advertising. These product categories complement one another since beauty businesses are sold by fashion merchants and then collaborate with fashion labels to market products (Britt et al 2020). In the business world of today, engagement seems to be a keyword. Social media is so commonplace that marketers are embracing social media brand communities more and more to engage with customers and make it easier for them to share information about products and brands. Social media brand communities play a crucial role as strategic tools in the relational marketing era, helping to establish and maintain relationships between brands and consumers (Santos et al 2022). Companies find it crucial to be active on social media sites like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter for a
number of reasons, including brand and product promotion and public relations. According to estimates, the content marketing sector will generate almost $300 billion in revenue by 2019, more than doubling in five years (Schreiner et al 2021). The rise in popularity of mobile social networking sites (SNSs) over the past few decades has changed how people interact with one another in the virtual world. In particular, mobile SNS are membership-based online communities that allow users to communicate with others by creating private basic content and profiles, inviting close friends or family to access files and sending real-time messages on a range of topics (Pang 2021). One worldwide phenomenon affecting the current generation is the proliferation of social media technology. Popular travel social media sites like Booking.com, TripAdvisor, and Trivago allow hospitality and tourism businesses to market their brands to consumers and build relationships with them that go beyond the point of service (Li et al 2020).

Bazi et al (2020) delineates thirteen elements that fall under the six overarching categories of perceived content relevancy, technological considerations, aesthetics, connection, socio-psychology, and brand equity. Akram et al (2021) suggested that Online purchase intention (OPI) is positively impacted by hedonistic and utilitarian motives. Furthermore, the association between OPI is strongly and favorably moderated by eWOM and social value. Ultimately, customer engagement moderated two motivations and OPI. Gikas et al (2022) examined the relationship between consumer engagement, brand recognition, and textual features in branded Facebook image postings. Abbasi et al (2023) finds and evaluated the direct and indirect variables that are associated with travel destination photographs on social media that can be used to forecast eWOM. Using the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and Ducoffe's Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model as a general framework, they investigated how consumers' interaction and involvement with destination picture elements on social media impact their perceived value and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Historically, political scientists have used the term image to describe how a candidate presents themselves to people or their perceived ethos. Television is a qualitatively different technology than images, and television has been the focus of most empirical studies on images (Bossetta and Schmøkel 2020). A statement that is quite applicable to the state of affairs is fear is the most valuable commodity in the universe. Because they have particular need, they can experience fear. When they are not in a certain circumstance, we might experience terror. Fear can have an emotional impact and influence the learning, behavior, motivation, and communication skills (Ilyas et al 2022). Liadeli et al (2023) made recommendations for enhancing owned social media material that is tailored to communication. Deals are the least successful kind of content to increase engagement, material should address emotional demands. Content that communicates the benefits of a product functional in nature will encourage sales more than emotional content. Xiao et al (2023) looked into the key elements of short-form video advertisements that affect audience participation. They found that four essential elements of the sales technique expectancy, tie strength, and entertainment sales of short-form video performances are correlated with user engagement behavior using data analysis from the social media platform TikTok. Wang et al (2023) investigated the effects of the stereotypes that the news characters encounter on the emotive and behavioral reactions of news audiences in the social media news environment from the perspectives of reader experience and reader engagement. Qin et al (2023) examined how social support and subsequent engagement are impacted by perceived characteristics of live-streaming commerce (LSC). The results demonstrated that real-time interaction, perceived sincerity, and proximity have a good effect on informational and emotional support.

The rest of the paper as follows: Part 2 goes into great detail about the experimental methods. The results and discussion are covered in Parts 3 and 4, and the conclusion is covered in Part 5.

2. Materials and Methods

This section delves into the investigation of the impact of emotional factors and content attributes on user engagement in social media. Figure 1 shows the methodological design.
2.1. Social networks

Social media enables content creation, which in turn enables companies to communicate and establish connections with social media users. As a result, businesses can improve existing relationships with current clients and cultivate new ones with prospective clients (Wibowo et al 2020). Pay close attention to social media sites like Facebook and Twitter in the context of the study, as these are places where businesses can post content that have been produced by marketers.

2.2. Features of the content

In the overview of the categorization findings, the articles have at least one indication to measure each content characteristic are indicated for each one. Indicators of a social media post’s theme direction were considered. Examples of such posts include mentions of particular occasions or celebrities who serve as brand or company ambassadors (Eslami et al 2022). They provided the following examples of social media posts that were rich in media: Other components outside the text, such as pictures, hashtags, emoticons, or links (Brunskill and Gilbert 2023). A social media post’s visual height or textual line count are two examples of the markers they supplied to show how expansive the message was (Al-Subhi 2022). Social media post indicators that solicit feedback were included. Examples are surveys asking for input from customers or drawing prizes through raffles (Peters et al 2022). There were references to indicators of a social media post’s originality. For instance, if a letter was copied exactly from another source or penned by the original author (Rusadi and Nasrullah 2022). Indicators indicating the temporal context of a social media post were incorporated. For instance, when it was created or how fresh content is posted on a social media platform (Naseem et al 2022). A social media post’s priority inside a communication stream is visible. Examine the following situation: A news channel may allow a post to be pinned to the top instead of showing in the usual chronological sequence (Gibson and Trnka 2020).

2.3. Content interaction

Engagement is widely understood to be a psychological state, but it can also refer to how someone engages with the material, which is a byproduct of psychological operations. Using a paradigm, they identified five crucial aspects of consumer involvement behavior, such as the response’s valence (Pérez and Gomila 2021). While the psychological processes come after the conceptualization, they are nonetheless crucial to comprehending the causal mechanism behind the engagement relationship.

2.4. Community Experience

The collective interactions, engagements, and shared activities that take place inside a community or social group are referred as community experience. It covers the ambiance, interactions, and dynamics that people encounter when they take part in community-related activities, conversations, or pursuits of common interests. People’s opinions, sense of identity, and social ties in a specific group are shaped by their experiences in the community.

2.5. Behavioral Engagement

The behavioral engagement describes how people actively and visibly participate, get involved, and act in a certain context or environment. This phrase is used to characterize the observable behaviors and interactions that show an individual’s level of commitment and involvement in a given activity, task, or environment. It is used in education, psychology, organizational behavior, and social sciences.

2.6. Emotion

Because there are other extremely similar emotional ideas, such as preferences or emotions, it is highly challenging to describe emotion. Therefore, the Circumplex Model of Affect has attracted a lot of attention in place of a single description, especially for its introduction of a classification system as opposed to a broad definition of emotions (Jaeger et al 2020). The fundamental idea behind this paradigm is that feelings originate from the act of appraisal. In the domain of marketing, emotions have been shown to have a significant impact on human behavior. Emotions were emphasized as markers, mediators, and regulators of human reactions. As a result, the emotional context of an advertisement influences how viewers perceive and remember it (Schunk et al 2022).

3. Evidence that emotional reactions have a mediating effect

Even while there has been isolated data supporting the connections between emotional reactions and engagement behaviors between content qualities and emotions, they were only able to locate one study in the selection that had indicators for all three domains. A content analysis was used in this study to assess the emotional reaction, and two six-item semantic differential measures were used to rate the emotional arousal and valence of the material. They discovered that compared to promotional content, social media content is more stimulating and positively valenced.

https://www.malque.pub/ojs/index.php/mr
3.1. Acceptance

In response to the endorsement, participants said that they always felt rewarded by social media contact and that receiving likes, shares, and comments increased their emotional vigor. The Comparisons of Joy and Sadness Responses are displayed in Figure 2. Table 1 presents the numerical results of the responses to joy and sadness.

![Figure 2 Comparisons of Joy and Sadness Responses.](image)

**Table 1 Numerical Outcome of Joy and Sadness Responses.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Facets</th>
<th>Joy</th>
<th>Sadness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Participation

The majority of respondents gush about their virtual connections because they find them to be lively and humorous. The Comparisons of Exuberance and Depression Responses are displayed in Figure 3. The numerical responses to exuberance and depression are shown in Table 2.

![Figure 3 Comparisons of Exuberance and Depression Responses.](image)

**Table 2 Numerical Outcome of Exuberance and Depression Responses.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Facets</th>
<th>Exuberance</th>
<th>Depression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 Numerical Outcome of Exuberance and Depression Responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Facets</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Exuberance</th>
<th>Depression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3. Adjustment

The respondents thought that their virtual lives through social media contact were fulfilling. Respondents' anxiety levels rise when their friends are online but don’t reply back. The Comparisons of Anxiety and Tranquility Responses are displayed in Figure 4. Table 3 presents the numerical results of the responses to Anxiety and Tranquility.

Table 3 Numerical Outcome of Anxiety and Tranquility Responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Facets</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Tranquility</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4. Affective appeal

The main technique for evaluating affective appeal was classifying secondary data according to a set of unique emotion categories. Several studies have discovered a relationship between behavioral engagement and the emotional attractiveness of textual or video information. Regarding the utilization of particular content components, they discovered varying outcomes in terms of the impact of various components and the precise target of this impact. While some studies found that visual content prompted higher levels of engagement, other research found that video content had the reverse effect. Furthermore, with the topic area, they discovered differing outcomes for particular kinds of engagement behavior (Davis et al 2023).

According to the sample’s research, information engagement can be increased by including even a single interactive element. For example, questions are more likely to prompt comments from participants, while competitions are more likely to encourage similar activity. Regardless matter whether the social media content was shared or created originally, reposting user-generated content can increase content engagement. Nonetheless, engagement behavior is typically elicited more frequently by original material than by shared information (Kapoor 2022).
3.5 Timing

Weekdays have a substantial impact on engagement compared to weekends, according to the study content, that is published on days other than the weekend producing more engagement. There were no discernible impacts in other research that included timing as a variable. All of the studies in the collection looked at the impact of placing a social media post inside a content stream, and the findings indicated small but beneficial effect on engagement behaviors (Xu et al 2023).

3.6 Impact of content attributes on affective reactions

The first set of research looked into video advertisements affected viewers’ emotions. This group’s first study looked into the possibility that several dependent variables could be impacted by the emotional reactions the videos elicited. However, instead of investigating content features are responsible for these emotional reactions, they chose to show videos that they deemed to be either neutral or emotional (Ma 2022).

4. Discussion

The goal is to draw attention to particular discoveries and directions for future research that the body of literature on the connection between engagement, emotions, and content has produced. They first give a summary of the important findings for the study’s subjects listed below.

What aspects are taken into the account while choosing which social media content to publish with the network?

It is essential to comprehend the demographics, interests, and preferences of the intended audience. Content needs to be customized to the requirements and expectations of the target audience. The formats and audience behaviors of various social media platforms differ. Reach and engagement can be increased by selecting material that satisfies user preferences and the criteria of the particular platform.

What extent does the sentimentality of social media material affect level of engagement?

Sentimentality can impact user engagement levels since it directly influences how users perceive, and respond to social media material. Sentimentality, which encompasses a variety of emotions like happiness, melancholy, nostalgia, empathy, and humor, is the emotional tone or feeling that the content expresses. Users are more likely to connect with content that arouses powerful emotions, which increases the possibility of engagement in the form of likes, comments, and shares. Online communities are more likely to exchange and discuss sentimental information that speaks to members’ personal experiences, ideals, or aspirations, which raises engagement levels.

Which aspects of the material have been demonstrated to have a good relationship with content engagement?

One of the five categories of appeal emotional, transactional, transformative, humorous, and informative has been the subject of the majority of research. Funny material did not affect all engagement behaviors. Empathy can be elicited by transformational information that directly addresses needs or aspirations (Dhanesh et al 2022).

What is the emotional response get from interacting with content on social media?

The emotional reactions that arise from interacting with content on social media can differ, depending on the type of content, the user’s background, and the situation in the engagement occurs. Engaging with upbeat, humorous, or joyous content can make happy and joyful, which enhances wellbeing. Content that is intriguing or unexpected can arouse feelings of surprise and curiosity in a person, drawing them in and encouraging investigation. Emotional narratives, personal accounts, or significant social issues have the power to arouse compassion and empathy, which in turn helps people feel more connected to an understanding of one another.

Which aspects of the material have been demonstrated to have a good relationship with content engagement?

The research indicates that social media posts with a strong appeal and a high degree of media richness can positively impact engagement behaviors. However, these findings are frequently highly context-dependent and inconclusive. Evidence for mediating effects was also discovered. For example, it has been shown that posts that provide the chance to get compensated tend to receive fewer likes but may receive more comments. As an additional illustration, it was discovered that engaging content elicited more sharing behavior than incentive content and that the former produced more like behavior (De Vries 2019).

What effects do the qualities of content have on feelings?

The examination of viewers’ emotional reactions to video information yielded the primary conclusions for this inquiry. Each of them conducted an experiment using pre-selected stimulus material. However, different methods of measuring
emotional response were used, making it difficult to compare the outcomes. Only two researches examined the impact of additional content kinds on emotional reactions. The contrasting results of transactionally appealing material may be explained by the various social media channels that were employed as the distribution channel (Xu et al. 2021).

4.1. Impact on Emotions

Emotions have been an important topic in the field of information systems. For instance, the role of emotion in technology use was highlighted by expanding the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). In three lengthy field evaluations, they collected information on categorical emotional reactions through self-reports. (Sagnier et al 2020).

5. Final considerations

This study demonstrated the significance of integrating visually appealing and emotionally impactful elements in social media content strategies by showing that visual appeal is critical in grabbing users' attention and that emotional resonance affects the degree of engagement. Because of this, it would be extremely beneficial to compare social media content using a content classification system such as the one recommended in this review in terms of the affects emotional reactions and engagement habits. This will make subsequent research more comparable. To acquire a deeper comprehension of the relationship, they call for more research in this field employing multi-method designs and a dimensional understanding of affective reactions.

Ethical Considerations

Not Applicable.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding

The current review did not receive any financial support.

References


De Vries EL. (2019) When more likes are not better: the consequences of high and low likes-to-followers ratios for perceived account credibility and social media marketing effectiveness. Marketing Letters, 30(3-4), 275-91. DOI: 10.1007/s11002-019-09496-6


Gibson K & Trnka S. (2020) Young people’s priorities for support on social media “It takes trust to talk about these issues” Computers in human behavior, 102, 238-47.


Shahbazezehad H, Dolan R & Rashidirad M, (2021), The role of social media content format and platform in users’ engagement behavior. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 53(1), 47-65. DOI: 10.1016/j.jimart.2020.05.001


https://www.malque.pub/ojs/index.php/mr