

Genre of college students' social media posts: An analysis

¹Aldrin H. De Claro Jr., ¹Reyshien A. Dela Cruz, ¹Kim Louie N. Navarra, ¹Rose-Ann H. Vicente & ²Ersyl T. Biray

Abstract

The social media becomes the popular way of communication in the digital era. Among the top social networks as of October 2023, Facebook is the front runner with 3.03 million monthly active users globally (Dixon, 2023). Studies have established reasons why and how people use Facebook as their social media platform to exchange information and knowledge, and to connect with various people in this modern world. Like many different users, college students also take part in this platform. Purposely, this study determined the genre of Facebook posts shared by college students, and analyze the media forms of posts among them. The information posted and shared on the 45 Facebook accounts of undergraduate secondary education students of a state university in Western Visayas were observed and classified as to content and media forms. The content categories of social media posts were categorized as information, entertainment, social interaction, and marketing. Further, these categories are classified as to types: photo, text, video, and link. Results showed that the four genres of Facebook posts were prevalent on the students' accounts with entertainment as top ranked followed by information, social interaction, and marketing. Further, participants enjoy posting and sharing amusing content, such as memes, presented in photos, text, and videos, in that order of preference. The college students' desire to use Facebook for entertainment could be a combination of their previous gratifying experiences with general Facebook use and their views about the replication of these experiences through sharing posts that are relevant to them.

Keywords: *social media, Facebook, genre, content analysis, social interaction, college students*

Article History:

Received: December 29, 2023

Accepted: February 6, 2024

Revised: January 12, 2024

Published online: February 8, 2024

Suggested Citation:

De Claro, A.H., Dela Cruz, R.A., Navarra, K.L.N., Vicente, R.H. & Biray, E.T. (2024). Genre of college students' social media posts: An analysis. *International Student Research Review*, 1(1), 16-22. <https://doi.org/10.53378/isrr.01246>

About the authors:

¹Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English, College of Teacher Education, Aklan State University, Banga, Aklan.

²Corresponding author. Doctor of Philosophy. College of Teacher Education, Aklan State University, Banga, Aklan. Retired Professor. campdirect06262013@gmail.com



© The author (s). Published by Institute of Industry and Academic Research Incorporated.

This is an open-access article published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license, which grants anyone to reproduce, redistribute and transform, commercially or non-commercially, with proper attribution. Read full license details here: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Introduction

Social media is a popular trend today, especially among college students. Among them, Facebook is the most widely used online social network with about three billion monthly active users as of the second quarter of 2023 (Dixon, 2023). Thus, Facebook has gained an enormous amount of popularity. The use of Facebook among college students extend beyond connecting with friends to sharing and posting various contents and media on their accounts. They communicate on Facebook in a one-to-many style where they are the creators disseminating contents and information. They spend more time sharing various types of posts by continually logging in, pointing, clicking, uploading, commenting, sharing, tagging, and creating content within their internet portals.

Rouis et al. (2019) list a few of the most commonly used features of FB – content generation sharing, communication, and contact building. Facebook is focused on the generation of content created by users, also known as User Generated Content (UGC). This content has public roots, and its viability is dependent on a continued stream of users. By creating a profile, a Facebook user can share notes, photos, links, and videos with friends; that is, other members who are connected to an individual's online social network and thus have access to view the individual's profile.

College students can share and post a wide range of content, based on their interests, preferences, experiences, and personal lives. These various pieces of content can be accompanied by different forms of media. In this study, the genre in Facebook posts, as well as the media forms of posts among college students taking a teacher education program in a state institution in Western Visayas are determined.

Methodology

This study utilized content analysis to analyze the genre of posts shared in Facebook accounts of college students. Qualitative content analysis, according to Delve (2022), is a popular research methodology that draws attention to particular words or phrases from textual information to infer meaning about the research topic. The prevalence (frequency) of the term in the text or how it is utilized in the context of the article is interpreted and explained. Using content analysis, the themes or concepts under the content type and media forms, and the genre of Facebook posts that the 45 participants shared in their accounts were

determined and analyzed. The participants were Bachelor of Secondary Education students enrolled in a state university in Western Visayas during the second term of academic year 2022-2023.

A tally sheet or check sheet prepared by the researchers was utilized in gathering data. The tally sheet categorized the posts into two: genre and media forms. The observation of the Facebook posts covered from January 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023.

The data collected from the Facebook timelines were encoded, tallied, and tabulated for analysis. For interpretation of data, frequency count, rank, and weighted means were used through the Microsoft Excel software.

To interpret each Facebook post, the following descriptions were adopted: Information – this type provides users with resourceful and helpful information in the form of text, photo, link, and video (Dolan et al., 2019); Entertainment – this type of content refers to the extent that is fun and entertaining to media users in the forms of text, photo, link, and video (Dolan, et al., 2019); Social Interaction – this type of content includes activities requesting users to like, share or comment posts, visit an e-store, and also engage in offline activities in the forms of text, photo, link, and video (Triantafillidou et al., 2019); and Marketing – this type of content is a strategic marketing approach that focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience to gain profit in the forms of text, photo, link, and video (Content Marketing Institute, 2015)

Findings

Genre of Facebook posts. The genre of Facebook posts may be classified in terms of their content. There are four genres of posts: information, entertainment, social interaction, and marketing. During the observation period of the 45 Facebook accounts from January 1 to March 31, a total of 5,662 posts were recorded. Majority of the posts were related to entertainment, with a total of 4,045 posts (Mean = 1348.33 [Rank 1]). This result conforms with the result established by Park et al. (2017) which states that entertainment is the main reason for using Facebook. Posts on information and social interaction were ranked second and third, with Mean of 333.67 and 113, respectively, while marketing was ranked last with the least number of content posts, and a mean of 88.33.

Genre of posts in terms of media form. Four media forms were used in the Facebook posts shared by the participants. The most common form of media were photos, with a total of 3,567 posts, followed by texts, with 1,345 posts; third were videos, with 716 posts; and last were links, with only 34 posts. In the study by Chi and Phuong (2021), it was found out that the most frequent media type of posts were photos and links as the least posted.

When classified as to genre, photos that were the most common media forms were used most frequently for entertainment and information but not much in marketing and social interaction. Texts that were used next to photos were most prevalent in entertainment but least used in marketing. Links that were shared the least of the four media forms were used often for information and entertainment but not so much in marketing. As Zhang et al. (2020) put it, images in social media have stronger information carrying capacity and communication ability across language barriers that they become the major carrier of information.

Conclusion

Indeed, college students spend time in Facebook sharing a variety of posts. Most of the posts usually shared were for entertainment purposes. Considering the age of these college students, they are enjoyment seekers which are behaviors for social networking. The underlying reason for college students' high degree of desire to use Facebook for entertainment could be a combination of their previous gratifying experiences with general Facebook use and their views about the replication of these experiences through sharing posts that are relevant to them.

There is also a significant proportion of humor and gossip posts on Facebook. Students view a lot of entertainment content postings so the likelihood that these will be noticed is also high. The entertainment component has ramifications beyond just pure entertainment. Other posts, such as ones with helpful information, will very certainly include aspects of amusement, boosting the attention of posts with entertainment content.

With the upsurge of too much time spent on social media by college students, particularly Facebook, schools may conduct an information dissemination on the effects of excessive use of Facebook to students' academic performance. The imbalance in time and attention given to entertainment activities on the internet can potentially lead to academic distraction and Facebook addiction. The heavy use of Facebook or the internet for

entertainment could alter students' habitual behavior in reading, writing, and attention for completing academic tasks, which could eventually lead to a ripple effect on academic achievement.

It is also important to involve the parents, educational institutions, and health authorities to collaborate on how to encourage students to limit social media use and bring awareness to the consequences of excessive use, especially among the student population.

References

- Alias, A. A., Ab Manan, N. A., Yusof, J., & Pandian, A. (2012). The use of Facebook as language learning strategy (LLS) training tool on college students' LLS use and academic writing performance. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 67, 36-48.
- Atroszko, P. A., Balcerowska, J. M., Bereznowski, P., Biernatowska, A., Pallesen, S., Andreassen, C. S. (2018). Facebook addiction among Polish undergraduate students: validity of measurement and relationship with personality and well-being. *Computing Human Behavior*, 85, pp. 329-338
- Balcerowska, J. M., Bereznowski, P., Biernatowska, A., Atroszko, P. A., Pallesen, S., & Andreassen, C. S. (2020). Is it meaningful to distinguish between Facebook addiction and social networking sites addiction? Psychometric analysis of Facebook addiction and social networking sites addiction scales. *Curricular Psychology*, pp. 1-14
- Becharri, C., Donati, M. A., & Caterina, P. (2022). Boredom and problematic Facebook use in adolescents: What is the relationship considering trait or state boredom? *Addictive Behaviors*, 125, 107132. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2021.107132>
- Błachnio, A., Przepiorka, A., Senol-Durak, E., Durak, M., & Sherstyuk, L. (2017). The role of personality traits in Facebook and Internet addictions: A study on Polish, Turkish, and Ukrainian samples. *Computing Human Behavior*, 68, 269-275
- Caci, B., Cardaci, M., Scrima, F., & Tabacchi, M. E. (2017). The dimensions of Facebook addiction as measured by Facebook Addiction Italian Questionnaire and their relationships with individual differences. *Cyberpsychological Behavior Social Network*, 20(4), 251-258.
- Craig, K. (2011). Facebook and college students: Is marketing effective? *Chancellor's Honors Program Projects*. https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/1468

- Cvijikj, I. P., & Michahelles, F. (2013). Online engagement factors on Facebook brand pages. *Social Network Analysis and Mining*, 3, 843-861
- Dixon, S. J. (2023, November). Facebook: Quarterly number of MAU (monthly active users) worldwide 2008-2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/>
- Dolan, R., Conduit, J., Frethey-Bentham, C., Fahy, J., & Goodman, S. (2019). Social media engagement behavior: A framework for engaging customers through social media content. *European Journal of Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-03-2017-0182>
- Dolan, R., Seo, Y., & Kemper, J. (2019). Complaining practices on social media in tourism: A value co-creation and co-destruction perspective. *Tourism Management*, 73(8), 35–45.
- Erevik, E. K., Pallesen, S., Andreassen, C. S., Vedaa, O., & Torsheim, T. (2018). Who is watching user-generated alcohol posts on social media? *Addictive Behavior*, 78, 131-137.
- Gamble, C., & Wilkins, M. (2014). Student Attitudes and Perceptions of Using Facebook for Language Learning. *Dimension*, 49, 72.
- Georgalou, M. (2015). Beyond the Timeline: Constructing time and age identities on Facebook. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 9, 24-33.
- Heiss, R., Schmuck, D., & Matthes, J. (2019). What drives interaction in political actors' Facebook posts? Profile and content predictors of user engagement and political actors' reactions. *Information, Communication & Society*, 22(10), 1497-1513.
- Horzum, M. B., Canan Güngören, Ö., & Gür Erdoğan, D. (2021). The influence of chronotype, personality, sex, and sleep duration on Facebook addiction of university students in Turkey. *Biological Rhythm Res.*, 1-11.
- Kabilan, M. K., & Zahar, T. Z. M. E. (2016). Enhancing students' vocabulary knowledge using the Facebook environment. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5(2), 217-230.
- Norashiddin, F. A., Saad, N. H., & Yin, T. S. (2022). How Facebook post content affect online engagement in fashion industry – A comparison of FashionValet and Zalora. *Global Business and Management Research: An International Journal*, 14(3s), 238-255.

- Obaid, K., & Pukthuanthong, K. (2022). A picture is worth a thousand words: Measuring investor sentiment by combining machine learning and photos from news. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 144(1), 273-297.
- Park, E., Song, H. D., & Hong, A. J. (2022). The use of social networking services for classroom engagement? The effects of Facebook usage and the moderating role of user motivation. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 23(3), 157-171.
- Triantafillidou, A., Yannas, P., & Lappas, G. (2019). *Facebook content strategies: A case study of a subsidiary company in Greece*. 191–198. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-03012453-3_22
- Utami, N. A., Maharani, W., & Atastina, I., (2021). Personality classification of Facebook users according to Big Five personality using SVM (Support Vector Machine) method. *Procedia Computer Science*, 179, 177–184