

A Study of Global Brands' Social Content on Instagram

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper was to examine the current practices of social media marketing communication on Instagram by major global brands and investigate the effectiveness of different message appeals and content types in generating consumer reactions. The results show that rational appeal and informational content were used most frequently on Instagram by global brands. Brand posts with emotional appeal and social content received the most likes from consumers. This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How frequently do global brands post content on their Instagram accounts?
2. Is there any difference among message appeals employed by the brand posts on global brands' Instagram accounts?
3. Is there any difference among content types employed by the brand posts on global brands' Instagram accounts?
4. Is there any difference in consumer response toward global brands' social media post using different message appeals and content types?
5. Is there a significant interaction between message appeals and content types on numbers of consumer responses (likes and comments)?

Research Method

This research employed a content analysis to examine social content posted on the Instagram platform by the global brands. The present study referred to the lists of the Best Global Brands 2020 (Interbrand, 2020) and 20 Most Followed Brands on Instagram in 2019 (Ramakrishnan, 2019) to select brands to be analyzed. Only brands appeared in both lists were selected. The eleven global brands finally selected are as follows: Nike, Chanel, Gucci, Zara, LV, Dior, Adidas BMW, Mercedes Benz, Prada and Starbucks.

The data collected for this study were obtained from the posts of eleven global official brand pages on Instagram. During the one month period between November 1 and November 30 2020, a total of 781 posts were obtained. After reviewing all of the posts, 232 video form of posts were removed. The remaining 549 posts of photo form were used for final analysis. The data were analyzed in terms of message appeals, content types and consumers' reactions of likes and comments.

Results

A. RQ1 Descriptive analysis of collected data

The final data set included 549 brand post samples from Instagram. On average, each global brand made 50 posts on their Instagram platform per month on November 2020, or about 12.5 posts per week.

B. RQ2 Message appeals

The research findings showed that the social media posts using rational appeal (66.8%) was significantly more (X^2 (df =20, n=549) =160.323, $p=.000 < .001$) than those using mixed appeal (30.8%) and emotional appeal (2.4%). As a whole, the message appeal used most frequently on Instagram by global brands was rational appeal and the message appeal used least was emotional appeal.

C. RQ3 Content types

In terms of the content type of social media posts, only three kinds of content types were observed. No remuneration post was found in the brand post samples. Informational content (96.4%) was used more significantly (X^2 (df =20, n=549) =88.05, $p=.000 < .001$) than social content (2.9%) and entertainment content (0.7%). In general, the content type used most frequently on Instagram by global brands was informational content and the content type used least was entertainment content.

D. RQ4 Consumer response

Two ANOVA tests were conducted to examine whether differences existed on likes and comments among brand posts using different

message appeals and content types.

The results showed that there is a significant difference in likes (F (2,546) = 15.54, $p=.000 < .001$), but no difference in comments (F (2,546) = 2.83, $p=.06 > .001$) among brand posts in terms of message appeals used. Brand posts with emotional appeal received the most likes. The post hoc test results showed that emotional appeal received more likes than rational appeal. Mixed appeal also received more likes than rational appeal.

Another ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference in likes (F (2,546) = 3.59, $p=.02 < .05$), but no difference in comments (F (2,546) = 0.83, $p=.43 > .05$) among brand posts using different content types. Among three content types, social posts received the most likes. The post hoc test results revealed that social posts received more likes than informational posts.

E. RQ5 Interaction effects between message appeals and content types on consumer responses

In order to answer research question 5, Mancova test was conducted to further analyze the interaction effects between message appeals and content types on the responses of consumers towards brand posts in the social media Instagram platform. The results suggested that overall there was a significant interaction between message appeals and content types in generating likes (F (9, 546)=4.93, $p=.000 < .001$), but no significant interaction in comments (F (9, 546)=1.30, $p=.232 > .05$). Brands' social media content using social post type and rational appeal generated more likes than any other combinations, while messages combining entertainment post type and rational appeal resulted in the least reaction.

Conclusions

As a whole, the most frequently used message appeal by global brands was rational appeal. The most frequently employed content type was informational post. Along with the findings of message appeals, the majority of brand posts analyzed in this study employed informational content in a rational way.

However, when considering consumers' engagement with social media content, it was interesting to find that emotional appeal received the most likes while rational appeal received the least likes from consumers. In a similar way, social posts received more likes from consumers than informational posts.

Finally, when examining interaction effects between message appeals and content types, this research found that brand posts employing rational appeal with social content generated the most likes from consumers. However, rational appeal with entertainment post produced the least likes.