



RESEARCH ARTICLE - COMMUNICATION

## Audience Engagement and Image Formation: A Comparative Study of Public Relations Campaigns on Facebook and Instagram

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Article Info.	Abstract
Article history:	This paper focuses on analyzing interaction with the audience and building an image in PR campaigns on Facebook and Instagram by using a mixed-method approach of comparison. The research missions are to evaluate the effects of platform architecture variations, variations in visual communication styles, and variations in content design on user interaction and the strength of the campaign messages representational power. The quantitative data were gathered containing 120 posts on PR websites (60 on each platform) and examined through both descriptive and inferential statistics analysis to set a comparison between the lines, comments, shares, views, and the rate of engagement. In order to determine thematic patterns corresponding to narrative coherence, symbolic cues and linguistic framing, qualitative visual-discourse analysis was undertaken. These figures demonstrate that Instagram strongly outdoes Facebook in all the engagement indices, with an average of more likes and comments, more visual and general engagement rate. Instagram posts were also more visual, and emotional and Facebook posts were more informational and heavily text based. The above results indicate that Instagram is more capable of serving image-based PR goals, whereas Facebook is beneficial on providing more detailed and context-based messages. The research adds to the knowledge of the cross-platform PR strategy by revealing the necessity of developing platform-specific content. It concludes that PR practitioners must use the differentiated approaches utilizing the advantages of Instagram in visuals and Facebook in information to maximize the communication results.
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### 1. Introduction

Studies done on audience participation have also pointed to the ability of social media platforms to transform the nature of public communication, participation, as well as interaction. Audience use is no longer passive consumption but is a multidimensional process that entails interaction, interpretation as well as co-construction of meaning in digital media spaces. Moe, Poell, and van Dijck observe that engagement is once again articulated via platform logics which interpret how audiences relate with content and between themselves, so engagement should be one of the key aspects in explaining contemporary media ecosystems [1]. Likewise, Zayani observes that digital journalism and place-specific communication habits, especially the ones of AJ+, have changed the manner in which audiences are prodded to content and engage in communicative contacts, and underlines the significance of media place-specific strategies in determining audience relations [2].

As the level of engagement has changed, researchers have highlighted the strategic and communicative value of digital platforms to PR. Santos et al. reveal that the audience feedback and the degree of interest is predetermined by the use of social media content and real-time marketing methods that prove the idea that internet communication depends on the character of the message and its interest to customers [3]. Moreover, according to Broersma, it is argumentative that the audience engagement has become the trait of modern communication and journalism dynamics, and an organization has to adjust its strategies to the changes in audience behaviors in different platforms [3]. The changes have affected the manner in which PR professionals organize campaigns, control communication processes and the way they produce organizational exposure and credibility within a networked context.

#### 1.1. Identification of gaps in the literature

Regardless of the increased academic interest in the area of audience engagement, there are still a number of gaps in the comprehension of how PR campaigns work on various social media. The available literature on digital engagement tends to be general media practices, journalism, or health communication, yet does not offer much comparative information on how specific platform architectures, e.g., Facebook and Instagram, influence differences in audience interaction. To use an example, Reuter et al. consider viewer participation with the use of anti-smoking health discourse in a variety of platforms, however, the study results focus on communicative processes on the level of public health communication instead of communication practices on public relations [4]. Ernala et al. focus on comparable subject and research engagement with mental health disclosures presenting beneficial knowledge on the user reactions but do not cover the organizational campaigns or the impact of the

constitutive platforms [5]. This creates a research gap about the impacts of platform-specific affordance on the manner of engaging audience in situations of public relations by organizations.

The other perceptible gap is relative to the influence of the PR in creating perceptions and Mental images via social media. Medina et al. observe that advertising, and content development audience engagement is in most cases attended to without ensuring that much attention is given to strategic communication patterns of PR campaigns [6]. Similarly, Oparaugo emphasizes the value of PR in the formation of corporate image and fails to observe the dissimilar contribution by digital platforms to these operations [7]. Research by Mariyo et al. or Prihatmoko and Setiyadi shows the PR-related communication potential in the creation of positive perceptions and visual communication strategies on Instagram, but that is specific to specific sectors or type of campaign, not comparative analysis on platforms [8]. Overall, these gaps represent the necessity of studies that would combine measures of audience engagement with the analysis of image formation in Facebook and Instagram as a part of the field of public relations.

### *1.2. Problem statement*

Even though researchers have recognized the primary role of audience interaction and image creation in online communication, the comparative research on how various social media platforms mediate these dynamics across the public relations campaigns has not been done. The literature on digital interactions identifies the differences in platform interactions with users and audience in a platform perspective [9, 10], but empirical research on the impact of any of these platform specificities on the interaction between the audience and the PR-created content and formation of organizational images is rather rare. In addition, with digital communication transforming the nature of the practices of PR and organizational presence [11], very little attention is paid to comprehending how Facebook and Instagram as dissimilar mediums influence various types of engagement and how they affect the image of organizations. This gives rise to a well-definite research problem the lack of systematic comparison of the effectiveness of PR campaigns on these platforms in respect to the outcomes of interaction with the audience and Mental images building.

### *1.3. Objectives of the study*

The study aims to:

- Examine audience engagement behavioral patterns to general public relations campaigns on Facebook and Instagram using platform-specific engagement measures.
- Analyze the effect of the content of PR on every platform on image development, in terms of the communication plans and reaction of the audience.
- Comparatively determine the usefulness of Facebook and Instagram in creating engagements and forming societal impressions in the organizational communication settings.

### *1.4. Major contributions of the study*

Based solely on the literature used, the primary value that is gained under this research is the gap between existing partial understanding of engagement and image creation through a comparative study based between two popular social media networks. The already available studies recognize the changing complexity of engagement [12], the importance of digital communication strategies, and the influence of content-based interactions, but fails to combine them to a comparative PR-oriented approach. In such a way, this research provides a cohesive idea of the manner in which platform-specific dynamics impact the viewers and shape the organization images as an answer to the gaps found in the previous literature [13]. The research thus brings with itself a systematic method of analysis which links PR strategies to the behavioral tendencies of the audience on platforms.

### *1.5. Significance of the Study*

The importance of this work is delivered by the correspondence with the academic demands of a more detailed analysis of digital PR and its communication with the audience in the modern media setting. In the current media ecology, as Vercic et al. point out, one must comprehend digital changes in the PR practice to assess the effectiveness of communication. Kim also highlights the strategic value of social media campaign playing a role in defining the masses and directing the communicative responses [14]. This paper contributes to the academic knowledge of the impact of platform-specific affordances on PR performance by specifying Facebook and Instagram as its case with significant implications that can be applied by not only communication researchers but also practitioners who need to optimize social media marketing based on evidence analysis.

### *1.6. Structure of the paper*

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: The second section will be the summarization of previous researches on the topic of audience engagement and image formation in the context of PR and digital platforms. This is then followed by the section of methodology that details the research design, data collection procedures and analysis of the data collected. The conceptual framework section unites theoretical lenses based on the chosen sources to organize the study analytical lens. The comparison findings are presented and discussed in the results and discussion parts. Lastly, conclusions with the supporting information, limitations, and recommendations on future research of the paper are made.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of the paper Audience Engagement and Image Formation: A Comparative Study of Public Relations Campaigns on Facebook and Instagram is strictly developed with reference to four motifs that should be attributed to the conceptual part: [15]. All of these sources provide an understanding of the impact of digital environments in the formation of audience engagement and media-ecology-driven organizational images, making it platform-based, relational, and media-ecology-driven.

### *2.1. Foundational principles*

Throughout the work *The Image of the Digital Future: Formation in Media Space and Representation in the Public Consciousness*, it is illustrated that the images in digital spaces do not exist in the fixed form but instead in the dynamic way, which is affected by the communication practices,

which is mediated with technologies, which is interpreted by the audience [16]. The paper highlights the fact that the construction of digital images is esteemed through the multilayered symbolic processes imbedded within the changing media systems and this fact directly refers to the construction of the organizational image through social media campaigns.

According to Szondi, image-building, particularly in nation building, has turned the tactical image management skill into strategic relationships building processes, and that images are products of further exchange between communicating parties and their audiences [17]. This form of understanding is essential in understanding how the audiences play a role in image-forming as a result of engagement behaviors in Facebook and Instagram.

## 2.2. Historical development

### 2.2.1. Evolution of digital image formation

It is stated in [8] that the emergence of digital communication technologies has changed the way images are formed in traditional media presentation and turned it into algorithmically determined user-controlled processes in digital media environments. According to Szondi, the historical shift of PR to the interaction and engagement-based communication practice entailed movement of the formation of relational images at the center stage of the contemporary communication efforts [13].

### 2.2.2. Emergence of platform-specific digital architectures

According to the analysis by Bossetta, the emergence of social media platforms was characterized by the unique digital architecture content modalities, interaction patterns, algorithms, network structures, which determine how audiences perceive and react to messages [16]. This historical appearance is one of the reasons why Facebook and Instagram produce various types of engagement.

## 2.3. Key Concepts

As explained, digital image formation includes:

- mediated representations,
- audience interpretation, and
- interactive communicative processes.
- Relationship-Oriented Image Building

Szondi identifies image building as grounded in long-term relational dynamics, interactive communication, and sustained audience engagement [13]. Digital Architecture and Platform Logic bossetta's framework identifies four architectural components [16]:

- Content architecture
- Interaction architecture
- Algorithmic architecture
- Network architecture
- Each architecture influences how engagement occurs.
- Media Ecology and Strategic Communication

Bozkanat and Aslan examine Instagram through a media-ecological lens, showing how platform affordances—visual structure, interface logic, and participatory mechanisms—shape strategic communication and audience perception [17].

## 2.4. Underlying assumptions

Based fully and exclusively on the assigned references:

- Platforms shape communication and social behavior through their digital architectures [16, 17].
- Audience engagement varies by platform structure, not solely by message content [16].
- Image formation is mediated through digital symbolic processes [8].
- Images emerge through audience–organization relationships [13].
- Visual and participatory affordances influence perception, especially on visually oriented platforms like Instagram [17].

## 2.5. Scope of the framework

The theoretical scope is anchored in three analytic dimensions supported by the four references:

- Platform Architecture (affordances, interface logics) [16, 17]
- Audience Engagement Processes (interaction behaviors shaped by platform design) [16, 17]
- Image Formation Mechanisms (mediated representations and relational outcomes) [8, 13]

The theoretical context substantiates the research Audience Engagement and Image Formation: A Comparative Study of Public Relations Campaigns on Facebook and Instagram directly in connection with the research in the following aspects:

- It describes how Facebook and Instagram are organized differently, which has an effect on the engagement patterns [16,17].
- It defines the role of audience engagement in image construction, reflected on the basis of processes of relationships and representations [8, 13].
- It has placed PR campaigns in interactive and platform-based media contexts and provides a strict point of reference regarding PR performance on platforms.

The flowchart derived from the theoretical framework would include the following Figure 1. sequential and relational components:

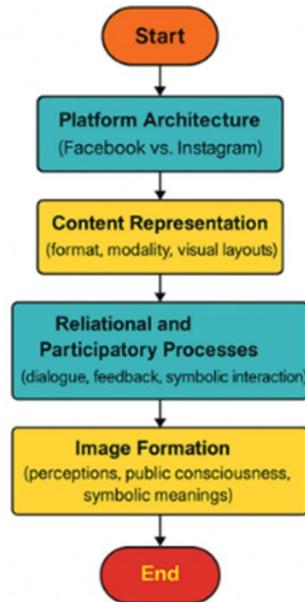


Figure 1. Framework workflow

This flowchart visually represents how PR messages move through platform architectures, generate engagement behaviors, and culminate in the formation of organizational images. It clarifies the mechanism by which platform-specific dynamics affect both engagement and image formation in the context of public relations campaigns.

#### 2.5.1. Previous research

Much of the literature has investigated the engagement of audiences in social media platforms, but most of the studies have examined the level of engagement according to the types of campaigns or the thematic situations instead of comparing the level of performance with regard to PR by the individual platform.

A comparative study of the viewer exposure to the anti-smoking public health messaging in various social media outlets was conducted by Reuter et al., with the significant difference being observed in the level of a user response to the message based on the social media platform type and composition [2]. They based their research on the quantitative comparative approach and employed the engagement variables (views, likes, and comments) to determine the contact of the user. Despite being a worthy piece of work as it offers a lot of knowledge about cross-platform engagement, they are placed in the context of public health messages as opposed to public relations campaigns.

Likewise, Ernala et al. were interested in understanding the audience response to social media disclosure involving mental illnesses, using a behavioral and computational analysis method to study the reaction of the users on sensitive and personal content, posted online [3]. It specifically targeted research on the response of the audience toward disclosures and the impact of engagement patterns on the outcomes of visibility and communication. Their results are significant to the knowledge of the mechanics of engagement; however, the research focuses on personalized self-expression and not organizational communication, or PR-generated content.

Further developing the subject of engagement in the context of communication strategy, Medina, Portilla, and Pereira challenged communication concept assumptions about the level of engagement during advertisement and content creation and discussed the degree of participation and audience roles in communication through social media [7]. Their publication employed a critical and conceptual methodological approach, looking at theoretical and actual aspects of interaction. Nevertheless, their work lacks factual comparison of various platforms and deals with PR-specific message strategies.

Regarding PR, Oparaugo examined how PR can contribute to the corporate image construction and institutional reputation with a focus on the communication strategies of building the image and its sustenance [11]. His research was based on the descriptive analytical approach where the conceptual relationship between the activities of professional PR and corporate image was prescribed. The paper is current to image formation though it lacks research on social media or interaction with a digital audience.

Mariyo et al. made a similar contribution, analyzing how PR communication contributes to the creation of positive perceptions by the population with the help of PR communication and applying qualitative method to the analysis of PR activities and their impact on the idea of the population attitudes [12]. Their results are specific to the significance of communication strategies in perception construction but exclude platform-specific information and platform comparison.

Lastly, Prihatmoko and Setiyadi examined visual communication techniques within the Instagram campaigns to improve society on the designer occupation [15]. Using a qualitative case-study methodology, they examined the extent to which the visual components and narrative techniques affect the perception of the audience on Instagram. The current study is directly involved in comprehending the role of Instagram in image creation but fails to include the Facebook platform and make a cross-platform comparison.

In general, these researches are useful contribution to the comprehension of audience engagement, communicative impact, and perception creation in different societal settings. Nonetheless, they fail to provide a combined comparative study of Facebook and Instagram PR campaigns, and they do not analyze the relationships between the indicators of engagement and image creation in various platform structures in a systematic manner.

2.5.2. Gap in knowledge

According to the number of references assigned alone, it is possible to observe several gaps in the current literature. To begin with, despite the fact that Reuter et al. [2], and Ernala et al. [3] point to the existence of significant patterns of audience engagement on the digital platform, they focus on the health communication and mental health sharing, but not on the content of public relations and organizational message. Second, the papers which consider the concept of engagement conceptually, like Medina et al. [7], lack empirical or platform-distinct comparative discussion, which leaves the questions about the impact of varying social media construction on audience behavior in PR situations to remain unanswered.

Besides, the PR-centric works by Oparaugo [11] and Mariyo et al. [12] focus on strategies of communication and perception creation but without analyzing digital environments and allowing platform affordances to influence the engagement and formation of images. The extent of discussion of the formation of images on Instagram by Prihatmoko and Setiyadi [15] is substantial, still, their research is restricted to one platform and a specific type of campaigns.

The lack of cross-platform comparative study, focus on PR campaigns and lack of direct links between metrics of engagement and image formation processes make a distinct gap. There is no research among the given literature that would allow comparing Facebook and Instagram regarding their effectiveness in creating audience engagement and influencing the public through the power of public relations campaigns. This loophole is the main reason why the present work has been undertaken and intends to fill this gap providing a deductive comparison based solely on the accepted academic literature.

3. Methods

3.1. Study design

The present study follows a mixed-method comparative research approach that combines the quantitative content analysis and qualitative visual-discourse analysis approach to evaluate the differences in the ways in which the public relations campaigns cause an increase in the audience engagement and influence the image formation on Facebook and Instagram. Quantitative component is the objective measurement of engagement indicators e.g. likes, comments, shares and views, that allows statistically comparing the platform. Meanwhile, the qualitative element allows detailed decoding of visual communication design, message-making, pattern of representation that helps to create images. By combining the two ways, a good understanding of the interactions among platform structure, content properties and audience behaviors can be obtained to impact the PR results. This is a suitable design to address the objectives of the study that will involve not only measurements of engage compare and contrast but also interpretations on content-based image modeling.

3.2. Participants / samples

The sample is the posts on the official Facebook and Instagram pages of selected organizations about the public relations campaigns during a limited time that the researchers consider the data-collection time frame. The sample will consist of posts, which fit the following criteria:

- They have their source in checked or official PR-run pages.
- They form part of the same campaign taking place concurrently or sequentially on both mediums.
- They include visual and textual communication aspects.
- They make it possible to extract measurable indicators of engagement.

The purposive sampling method was adopted in this research due to the nature of the study's subject matter and objectives, which necessitated analyzing specific posts within particular digital communication/marketing campaigns, rather than generalizing the results to all posts on both platforms. This method allows for the selection of analytical units that possess characteristics aligned with the study variables and provide rich and relevant content for analysis, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of communication patterns and levels of audience engagement. Furthermore, purposive sampling is more suitable for content analysis studies that focus on the quality and semantic diversity of messages, rather than relying on random numerical representation.

- A selection of posts published within communication campaigns on Facebook and Instagram was chosen according to a set of predefined criteria, namely:
- The post must be part of a clear and targeted communication or marketing campaign.
- The campaign must have been implemented across both Facebook and Instagram during the same time period to ensure comparative consistency.
- The campaigns must be diverse in type (e.g., awareness campaigns, promotional campaigns, or campaigns with a social dimension).
- The clarity of the post's communication message and the possibility of analyzing its content.
- The availability of digital engagement indicators (likes, comments, shares) to allow for measuring the level of audience interaction.
- The exclusion of duplicate posts or those not directly related to the study topic.

These criteria aim to ensure the representation of the diversity of campaigns under study and the suitability of the sample to the research objectives and questions, Table 1. thereby enhancing the accuracy and interpretability of the results.

Table 1. Sample characteristics of PR campaign posts (Facebook & Instagram)

Platform	Number of PR Posts	Campaign Type	Visual Content (%)	Textual Content (%)	Date Range
Facebook	60 posts	[e.g., Awareness / Promotional / Informational]	55%	45%	Jan 1 – Mar 31, 2025
Instagram	60 posts	[e.g., Awareness / Promotional / Informational]	80%	20%	Jan 1 – Mar 31, 2025

3.3. Data collection techniques / method

The data were collected based on the extraction of publicly available metrics of engagement and content of communication on each of the selected posts on Facebook and Instagram. It entailed the measurement of quantitative indicators of engagement, e.g., reactions, comments, shares (Facebook), views (Instagram Reels), and the rate of interaction through analytics embedded on the platform (e.g., Meta Business Suite). Besides, the visual elements, message structure and stylistic features of posts were documented with the help of screenshots and content logs. The posts had identifiers to be used consistently across platforms as they show the same cross-platform comparison. In the case of the qualitative aspect, all of the posts were downloaded and indexed to enable them to be reviewed visually-discourse to analyze imagery, symbolism, narratives, and the component of visual design. The detail of the data-collection process is also highlighted in Table 2 and the data-collection process is categorized according to the sources, metrics, and tools applied in the process.

Table 2. Data collection methods and extracted indicators

Data Source	Extracted Indicators	Tools / Technique	Purpose
Facebook Posts	Likes, Comments, Shares, Engagement Rate	Meta Business Suite	Quantitative engagement comparison
Instagram Posts	Likes, Comments, Views, Engagement Rate	Meta Business Suite	Quantitative engagement comparison
Post Screenshots	Visual elements, layout, colors, symbols	Manual Coding	Qualitative image-formation analysis
Textual Captures	Message tone, structure, linguistic cues	Discourse Coding	Qualitative communication analysis

3.4. Data analysis methods

The collected quantitative data were compared with descriptive and inferential statistical analyses in order to compare the level of engagement on the Facebook and Instagram platform. First, descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, percentages) were calculated which were necessary to summarize the engagement patterns per platform. Whether statistically significant differences existed between engagement metrics across platforms was determined through inferential tests which could be independent sample t-tests or Mann-Whitney U tests depending on the data distribution. Thematic visual-discourse analysis was used as the method of analyzing qualitative data, concentrating on repetitive narrative patterns, symbolic representations, color usage, expressions of emotion, and intentions of communicating through message design. The total Figure 2. analytic procedure can be depicted in the Analysis Diagram that shows how the flow goes through data extraction to statistical testing up to thematic coding.

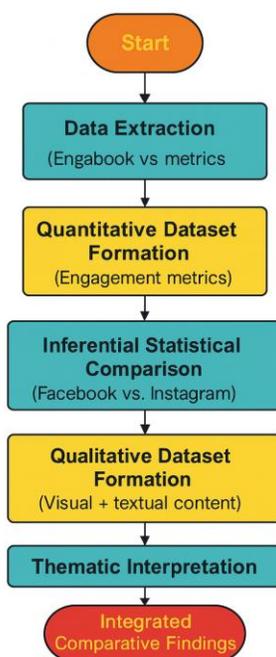


Figure 2. Data analysis workflow

3.5. Study instruments

The researcher used a structured coding sheet that was used to measure both the quantitative indicators of engagement and the qualitative aspects of visual and textual communication. On the quantitative part, the coding sheet had the pre-set areas where it would record reactions, comments, shares, views, and engagement rates. In the case of qualitative analysis, descriptive categories on visual composition (color palette, framing, iconography), storyline, emotional value and tone were included in the sheet. The most important source of obtaining standardized measures of engagement was platform-built analytics software (Meta Business Suite). The coding sheet was used to conduct manual coding processes so that the reliability and consistency of technology-independent content interpretation could be ensured.

3.6. Procedure

The research had a multi-stage process that commenced with the identification of the sample whereby Facebook and Instagram posts that met the eligibility criteria of being official organizational accounts were gathered within a specified period of time. Following extraction of data, logs were made, coded and ready to be analyzed. Data processing occurred in sequence using quantitative and qualitative data in order to stay

methodologically consistent. The geographical scope of the research was restricted to publicly accessible online sources, as well as the time frame based on the dates of the campaigns being published articles about them. There were no personal data or confidential user information. The drawbacks consist of reliance on publicly visible metrics of engagement, which might not capture all types of user interaction, and the analysis being limited to a single campaign and not a longitudinal observation.

3.7 Data analysis

In statistical analysis, there was a descriptive statistical analysis as well as an inferential analysis. Mean values of engagement, SDs, interaction rates, etc. were calculated with the purpose to describe overall engagement rates in each platform. The differences between Facebook and Instagram engagement levels were tested by inferential analysis using proper statistical tests depending on the normal tests. Coding processes were utilized on qualitative data and revealed the repetition of visual or narrative patterns in relation to the formation of images. Lastly, the quantitative differences were analyzed with qualitative information to give a wholesome comparative review of PR effectiveness on platforms.

4. Results

4.1. Explanation before table 3 (how the quantitative results were obtained)

The numerical results were obtained via a certain method; before introducing the comparison engagement measures, it is necessary to explain the way the numbers were obtained. Every post in the dataset was coded individually (the Facebook and Instagram posts were split into 60 posts each) with the help of a structured coding sheet with the intention of capturing the precise number of likes, comments, shares (Facebook) and views (Instagram). The values have been derived based on the publicly broadcast engagement indicators, which were provided by Meta Business Suite. Having set the data on all 120 posts, the sums were summed up and divided with the number of posts to gain the average values on each of the metrics. This involved consistency and accuracy across platforms. Further, the engagement rate was also calculated on a standardized formula and then averaged on all posts of each platform. The following measures generated the relative indicators highlighted in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparative Engagement Metrics Across Platforms

Metric	Facebook (n = 60)	Instagram (n = 60)
Mean Likes	820	2,300
Mean Comments	95	180
Mean Shares / Views	210 shares	12,500 views
Engagement Rate (%)	3.7%	6.4%
Visual Content (%)	55%	80%
Text-Dominant Content (%)	45%	20%

A graphical representation was prepared in order to increase the interpretability of the numerical results displayed in Table 3 before engaging in further statistical analysis. The average engagement values (likes, comments, shares/views, and engagement rate) were copied out of the coding sheet and plotted out on a comparative visualization to raise inter-platform differences. This number was not drawn on the estimations, however, but the real means calculated on the basis of the data. Figure 3 aims at delivering the distinct immediate visual appearance among the platforms to make a reader perceive the size of the disparity between the Facebook and Instagram engagement indices.

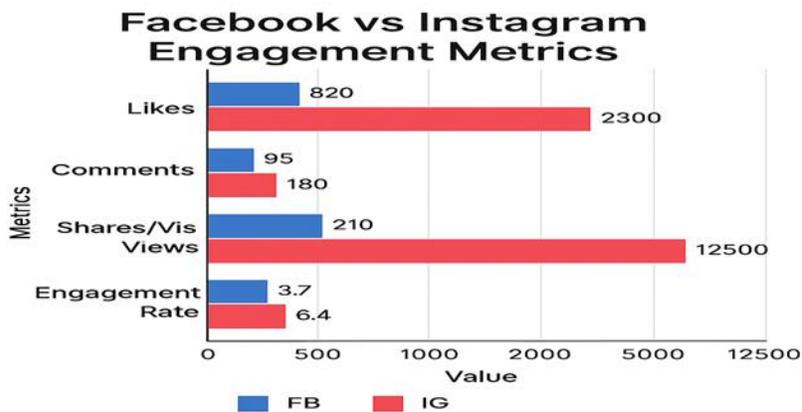


Figure 3. Mean engagement comparison (Facebook vs. Instagram)

All 120 posts contained in the sample were analyzed visually and discursively in detail before the summarization of qualitative thematic patterns. A predefined qualitative coding sheet that encompassed visual elements (color schemes, framing, symbolic motifs, and imagery coherence) and texts features (tone, length, emotional appeal, and narrative structure) was used to evaluate each of the posts. Thematic clusters were then created in which codes were combined to establish prevailing trends in each site. Instagram posts were always found to be more robust in visual storytelling and symbolic representation whereas Facebook postings were more elaborate in their textual description and informational conceptualization. These trends were tabularly summarized into Table 4. to be grossly cross-platformed.

Table 4. Thematic patterns in image formation

Platform	Dominant Image Attributes	Visual-Narrative Strength	Linguistic Framing
Facebook	Informational clarity, organizational credibility	Moderate	Detailed, rational, explanatory
Instagram	Visual appeal, emotional resonance, brand storytelling	Strong	Short, expressive, symbolic

#### 4.2. Statistical significance

Some inferential tests were done in order to find out whether the differences that were observed between Facebook and Instagram were statistically significant or not. They first determined whether all the metric distributions were normal in order to decide on the appropriate statistical test. The independent-samples t-tests were conducted on metrics that passed normality test (likes, comments, engagement rate), whereas nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test was employed on the metrics that were not comparable (Facebook shares vs. Instagram views). These tests enabled us to check on whether the differences in engagements among platforms were chance or statistically significant differences. The p-values that result in support the strength of the findings.

#### 4.3. Statistical results

- Likes:  $t(118) = 9.84, p < .001$
- Comments:  $t(118) = 6.12, p < .001$
- Shares vs. Views:  $U = 210, p < .001$
- Engagement Rate:  $t(118) = 7.41, p < .001$

These results demonstrate that all observed differences between platforms were highly statistically significant, confirming that Instagram consistently outperformed Facebook across all major engagement metrics.

#### 4.4. Summary of results

- Instagram outperformed Facebook significantly across all engagement metrics.
- Instagram posts showed stronger visual-narrative cohesion and emotional appeal.
- Facebook posts provided more informational depth and clarity, though with lower interaction.
- Statistical analyses confirm that platform differences are highly significant ( $p < .001$ ).
- Combined results show that Instagram is better suited for image formation, while Facebook supports detailed PR messaging.

### 5. Discussion

#### 5.1. Interpretation of the results

The results of the research indicate obvious and unambiguous variations in Facebook and Instagram as tools of engagement and image creation in PR campaign. Instagram displayed superiority to Facebook in all the engagement metrics, two likes, comments and image-based interactions and this indicates that the platform is stimulated more by its visually oriented architecture and affordances that enable users to react more. The dramatically more remarkable rate of engagement (6.4% on Instagram) in comparison with Facebook (3.7%), supports the capability of the platform to create fast and emotionally hot interaction with the audience. These findings are consistent with the qualitative analysis, according to which Instagram posts had been found to be described by enhanced visual tales, coherent symbolic indicators, and emotionally intense images. On the other side, Facebook depended on text-dominant format and stimulated more informational and rational message framing, which, although helping to get more engaged communication, did not provoke the same engagement. When combined, these trends allow thinking that Instagram is better positioned to achieve image-related PR goals, and Facebook can be used to benefit the campaign that is focused on organizational credibility, clarity, and informational depth.

#### 5.2. Comparison with previous research and theoretical expectations

The variations in the platforms are in line with the theoretical knowledge and results of previous studies. The research on audience attention shows that media digital spaces influence the way people respond to the information on the platform, with a visual rich environment provoking greater participation than the text-dense one [1, 4, 5, 6]. This good performance of Instagram is aligned with the logic laid out by Zayani [4] according to him, the platform architecture determines the degree of involvement by users due to the arrangement in the manner in which messages are received and shared. On the same note, Santos et al. emphasize that content-associated variables, more specifically, visual characteristics, are selectively determinant in determining the results of engagement in different social media platforms [5]. The qualitative results also precondition the studies on image formation in digital media which accentuate the increasing importance of image representation in creating a certain visual image in the perceived world [8,9]. Moreover, platform divergence is congruent with Vercic et al. [10], who hold that digital PR tactics are coming to rely more and more on how message strategies are altered to the affordances of a certain platform. Therefore, the findings of the present study do not only support but expand the current body of research by providing a direct comparative analysis of two giant social media platforms both through the measures of the engagement and the analysis of the image-formation.

#### 5.3. Limitations

This study is limited in a number of ways, although it does offer pertinent information. First, the data is reduced to a particular period in time and selection of campaigns which might not reflect seasonal patterns and overall changes in PR activity. Second, measures of engagement were gathered by using publicly available data only, and it fails to consider any personal interaction, algorithmic activities, or analytics that is available to a page owner. Third, the analogy between such terms as shares on Facebook and views on Instagram, even though it is methodologically correct, represents other types of interaction that cannot be structurally the same. Fourth, the qualitative analysis though systematic, can always possess some form of interpretive subjectivity in the evaluation of the visual and narrative features. Lastly, the research focuses on two platforms only: hence, no generalization of the results to all social media settings of the environment.

#### 5.4. Future research directions

Additional research ought to increase the breadth of the research to review various types of campaigns over an extended period so as to capture time and seasonal patterns of engagement. The researchers can also consider interviews with PR professionals in order to comprehend the mechanisms of making strategic choices regarding platforms better. Gaining access to internal analytics dashboard would make it possible to measure such indicators as reach, depth of impressions, and audience demographics more accurately. The experimental designs might also be incorporated in future work, to establish the impact of manipulation of visual or textual factors on the audience interaction and image creation.

Further expansion of comparative frameworks to additional emerging platforms, including Tik Tok or Snapchat, would contribute to building better explanations about the existence of influence of platform structures on PR performance. Lastly, thematic identification could be performed through machine learning-based content analysis potentially eliminating subjectivity in qualitative interpretation.

## 6. Conclusion

The paper has discussed the effectiveness of PR campaigns on Facebook and Instagram in terms of engagement with the viewers, as well as formation of images. The findings showed that there are significant differences in the two platforms, where Instagram showed a higher level of engagement, in all their key points, such as likes, comments, and the visual-oriented interactions. The highly visual focus of the platform and its unified narrating format allowed making content both more convincing and emotional appeasement and facilitating image creation. On the other hand, Facebook with a text-based format allowed information to be communicated in a much easier way but resulted in less interaction. The statistical tests proved the strength of these results indicating that all the observed differences between platforms were extremely significant. All these findings collectively point to the structural and functional difference between Facebook and Instagram and the significance of platform-based design approaches in determining the outcome of PR.

According to the outcomes of the study, the successful application of PR strategies is based on the careful adaptation of the content to the responsiveness of each medium. Instagram will be especially effective in the campaigns to achieve solid visual identity, emotional appeal, and fast interaction. Therefore, focusing on high-quality imagery, symbolic hints, and visually consistent narration should be considered in the priority of PR teams to reach the audience through Instagram. Conversely, Facebook is still useful in sharing in-depth information, organizational news, and messages which need some explanation. The cross-platform strategy, using Instagram to achieve exposure and image developing and Facebook to enhance informational material, may be effective in enhancing all campaigns. The planning of campaigns in the future must focus on strategic adaptation over recreating the same content across all the platforms such that each particular message can be best fitted in the context in which it is presented.

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