

Engagement Analysis: Student-Centered Vs. Lecturer-Centered Faculty Instagram Posts

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the engagement metrics of Instagram posts from a Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation (FSR) account, focusing on the distinction between student-centered and lecturer-centered content. With nearly 2 billion active users on Instagram, effective engagement strategies for educational institutions are paramount. Employing a quantitative research design, the top 20 posts from the faculty official Instagram account that garnered high interaction rates were analyzed, assessing likes, comments, shares, and reach from October to December 2024. The findings indicate that student-centered posts generated higher engagement rates (average of 16.48%) compared to lecturer-centered posts (average of 8.75%). This suggests that content highlighting student achievements, activities, and narratives fosters greater interaction and connection among followers. Storytelling techniques and user-generated content have been identified as effective strategies to enhance engagement, as they create a sense of community and belonging among students. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that well-crafted narratives not only evoke emotional responses but also build authenticity in communication. The results underscore the importance of aligning social media content with audience preferences to optimize engagement. By understanding these dynamics, faculties can tailor their social media marketing strategies to increase student enrollment and retention while strengthening their online presence. Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on social media engagement in higher education, highlighting actionable insights for effective digital communication.

Keywords: Student-centered; Lecturer-centered; Engagement metrics; Instagram; Social media.

How to Cite

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INTRODUCTION

Instagram is one of the popular social media in this modern world. Instagram has massive usage and there are almost 2 billion active users every month (Statista, 2024). It is one of the most popular indispensable tools for humans to communicate, especially when it comes to higher education. Among the various social media platforms, Instagram is one of the social media platforms used by universities and faculty members to connect with students and alumni, promote academic activities, and important announcements, and highlight achievements throughout the years. The interesting part about Instagram is the visual appeal and content attraction. Its visual-centric nature and interactive features make it a good platform for enhancing engagement and building a good sense of community. In addition, the effectiveness of social media engagement is moderated by content context (Shahbaznezhad, H., 2022). Even though this platform is widely used worldwide, there is a need to understand how different types of content, specifically student-centered vs lecturer-centered content, affect engagement metrics such as likes, comments, saves, shares, and reach. Not all posts generate the same level of engagement (Soares, J. C. *et al*, 2022). Therefore, understanding these differences is essential to optimize social media strategies in academic settings.

Student-centered content on Instagram focuses on what resonates with students, such as their involvement in academic activities, events, and achievements. This type of content purposely aims to engage students by reflecting their interests, experiences, and preferences. To achieve this objective, the faculty should prioritize the content that fosters a sense of their followers, celebrates students' achievements, and encourage active participation. This approach not only enhances student engagement but also improves the image of institutions on social media platforms. Siminto *et al.*, (2024) stated that one of the successes in social media to reach the target audience, which is students, is using exciting and educational content. The faculty needs to develop content relevant to their followers' demographic (Redstone & Villasenor, 2020).

Regarding lecturer-centered content, its effectiveness in engaging students on Instagram often be a question mark on its ability to balance professionalism and relatability. Lecturer-centered posts which usually highlight academic achievements, institutional updates, or academic staff milestones enhance credibility and inspire students by showcasing a good example as a role model within the educational setting. However, studies indicate that while such content may build institutional trust, it also often lacks participatory appeal compared to student-centered content, which emphasizes student engagement in social media. Chen *et al* (2018) indicated that social media strategies that apply student-centered posting will enhance engagement and satisfaction.

Therefore, the use of social media platforms, particularly Instagram, has become an integral part of communication strategies for educational institutions. With its visually driven format and widespread popularity, Instagram offers a unique opportunity for faculty to engage with students, showcase institutional achievements, and promote academic events. However, the effectiveness of different types of content in fostering engagement remains a subject of debate. Lecturer-centered content, which typically focuses on faculty accomplishments, institutional updates, and academic milestones, has traditionally been the dominant approach. In contrast, student-centered content, which highlights student achievements, experiences, and involvement, is increasingly recognized for its potential to create more meaningful interactions and build a sense of community. Understanding the comparative impact of these two content types on engagement metrics is crucial for optimizing social media strategies in higher education. This study explores the engagement dynamics of student-centered versus lecturer-centered Instagram posts on faculty official Instagram accounts, providing insights into how different content strategies influence student interaction and engagement.

Research Objectives

This study aims to compare the engagement performance of student-centered and lecturer-centered Instagram posts published by the Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation (FSR). Specifically, the study aims:

1. To examine the engagement metrics of student-centered and lecturer-centered posts on the FSR official Instagram account.
2. To compare the engagement performance of student-centered and lecturer-centered Instagram posts based on likes, reach, and engagement rate.
3. To identify which type of content, student-centered or lecturer-centered, generates higher audience engagement on the FSR official Instagram account.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Instagram Engagement Metrics

Instagram, a visual-focused social media platform, is one of the most important tools for any educational institution to connect with the audience, particularly students, academic staff, and stakeholders such as parents, industry partners, and alumni. Over the years, the studies have explored the multiple aspects of Instagram's role in tertiary education, specifically focusing on how engagement metrics can measure the effectiveness of the faculty initiative for content-creating strategies. Engagement metrics, including likes, comments, shares, saves, reach and overall interaction rates, are usually used to assess the success rate of posts and the level of followers' participation (Fuch, 2021). These elements provide valuable insights into the content preferences of followers, which can help the faculty to strategically create content that reaches desired audiences. Engagement is a key indicator of how well the content is accepted by the audience, making it an important factor in determining the influence of social media strategies (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

Ways to Improve Instagram Engagement Metrics

There are several factors to get better Instagram engagement metrics. Firstly, the timing and frequency of content posting have been acknowledged as important considerations influencing engagement and the rate of interaction. Mufadhol et al. (2024) insist that content quality is a strong predictor of customer engagement, particularly in engaging and relevant content. Apart from that, the consistency of content posting will also help to build confidence and foster a sense of trust among followers. For example, if the faculty shares the updates, announcements, and event highlights at a regular interval tends to promote a higher engagement than sporadic and periodic postings.

Next, the quality content. This element also plays a vital role in engagement. Visual content such as high-quality images, videos, and interesting information generally caught more attention from followers, rather than text-heavy posts (Mufadhol et al., 2024). Interactive content, such as polling activities and question stickers available in Instagram story features, makes followers feel more connected to the faculty. Apart from that, storytelling techniques such as sharing student success stories, students' activities, and alumni achievements evoke emotional responses, thus increasing engagement. As an admin of a social media account, they must empower their storytelling abilities to engage their followers. Through a good narrative, they will have a good connection with their followers to foster the authenticity of the content (Psomadaki, et al, 2019).

Finally, the leverage of user-generated content (UGC) has proven to be an effective strategy to increase engagement metrics. Encouraging the followers, such as staff, students, and alumni, to contribute to their content, such as likes, comments, shares, and saves, will foster a sense of community, and they feel like they are part of the story. The media materials, such as photos and videos, are more internet users generate such content (Ryan, 2014). In addition, according to Statista (2023), 72% of millennials agreed that UGC is a necessary source of information when followers look for those things. All in all, by

analyzing the engagement metrics and continuously planning strategies to create engaging content, the faculty may maximize their efforts to on their Instagram presence and strengthen their connection to their followers.

Lecturer-centered Posts Vs Student-centered Posts

Social media postings significantly influence the level of engagement, including lecturer-centered posts and student-centered posts may offer different benefits and challenges. Lecturer-centered posts focused on showcasing the faculty achievements, expertise, and academic activities demonstrated by the lecturers. These include research publications, conference presentations, job promotions, and so on. However, not many studies have been done to investigate lecturer-centered posts to ensure better engagement among followers on Instagram accounts. Indeed, the challenge of the lecturer-centered post is the struggle to engage the students' demographic effectively, leading to a lack of personal and interactive elements that resonate with them.

In contrast, the student-centered posts focus on the experience, achievements, and activities of students and alumni. These posts include success stories, events organized by students, and user-generated content produced by them. It has been explained that the importance of social media on students' engagement in that account. According to AL-Bahrani et al., (2015), social media is one of the effective tools for students to communicate and interact with. Since social media is related to students as the main client of the faculty, the site must focus on the activities that relate to their daily life activities. This could be one of the factors that lead them to enroll in the program offered by the faculty and university. Šola et al, (2021) emphasized that the appropriate content will have a positive influence on the program of study and higher education institutions choice. Therefore, this is a need to explore more about the content related to the lecturer and students to ensure the engagement on Instagram account.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs quantitative design research as it acquires data from Instagram insights. This study aims to analyze the engagement metrics on the Instagram platform, particularly the faculty official account. Therefore, the descriptive research approach is suitable for analyzing likes, shares, comments, reach, and impressions to understand user interactions with specific social media content. The formula used to calculate the engagement rate is as follows:

$$\text{Engagement Rate by Reach (ERR)} = \left(\frac{\text{Total Engagements}}{\text{Reach}} \right) \times 100$$

*Total Engagements = Likes + Comments + Shares + Saves
 *Reach = Total number of unique users who saw the post

Figure 1. The Engagement Metric Formula

A non-probability sampling, which is known as purposive sampling is employed that can be effectively applied to analyze engagement metrics on Instagram, focusing on the content or user interactions to achieve research objectives. This sampling deliberately selects posts on specific timeframes based on posts with high engagement. By concentrating on this specific period, researchers can efficiently explore the recent trends and behaviors relevant to achieving the research objective and, therefore, might understand the content performance (Etikan & Bala, 2019)

The researcher collects the data that have specific criteria. The top 20 Instagram posts with over 100 likes will be selected from October 2024 to December 2024. The researcher focused on posts with high levels of engagement (e.g., likes, comments, shares, saves, and reach) that focused on student-centered content and lecturer-centered content.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The analysis of engagement metrics from the Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation (FSR) Official Instagram account, spanning October to December 2025, revealed a difference in performance between student-centered and lecturer-centered posts. Table 1 shown below is the descriptive statistics of the top 20 posts that received a higher engagement rate from 1st October 2024 to 31st December 2024:

Table 1: Descriptive data related to Insight of Instagram Engagement from October 2024 - December 2024: Top 20 posts receive high number of likes and reach

Posting Type	Likes	Reach	Engagement Rate (%)
Student-Centered	263	1632	16.48
Student-Centered	223	1240	18.63
Student-Centered	225	1673	13.87
Lecturer-Centered	215	2616	8.75
Student-Centered	206	3696	5.87
Student-Centered	188	6379	3.39
Lecturer-Centered	186	1185	19.49
Student-Centered	181	3045	6.54
Student-Centered	183	2454	8.56
Student-Centered	176	2525	7.72
Student-Centered	176	1850	10.11
Lecturer-Centered	147	2379	7.40
Student-Centered	150	2240	7.46
Lecturer-Centered	151	1591	9.93
Lecturer-Centered	141	1714	8.58
Student-Centered	143	1370	10.73
Student-Centered	138	1751	8.05
Student-Centered	135	1495	10.30
Student-Centered	137	1877	7.94
Student-Centered	134	1749	8.12

Based on Table 1 above, the highest engagement rate (19.49%) was observed in a lecturer-centered post with 186 likes and a reach of 1,185 accounts. This indicates that content highlighting the lecturer's involvement or related topics generates a higher level of interaction, implying that this type of content resonates more with the audience in terms of engagement. For student-centered posts, the highest engagement rate was 18.63% with 223 likes and a reach of 1,240 accounts. While this engagement rate is strong, it is generally lower than that of lecturer-centered posts, indicating that the content focused on students may not generate as much interaction, although it remains effective.

Further analysis regarding three analyses; namely overall engagement rates, an average of likes and reach per post to compare the students-centered posts and lecturer-centered posts. Figure 1 shows that student-centered posts achieved an average engagement rate of 18.5% significantly higher than the 10.3% engagement rate for lecturer-centered posts. Posts featuring students consistently outperformed lecturer-centered content across all measured metrics, highlighting the audience preference for student-focused content.

In terms of the number of likes, as shown in Figure 2, student-centered posts received an average of 243 likes, while lecturer-centered posts garnered an average of 120 likes, indicating less audience resonance. The reach of student-centered posts was notably higher, as presented in Figure 3, averaging 1,436 accounts per post compared to 890 accounts for lecturer-centered posts.

These findings underscore the effectiveness of student-centered content in driving higher engagement on FSR's social media platforms. Prioritizing such content can significantly enhance audience interaction and reach.

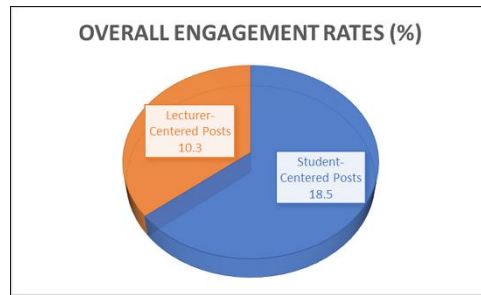


Figure 2. The Engagement Rates (Student-Centered Posts vs Lecturer-Centered Posts)

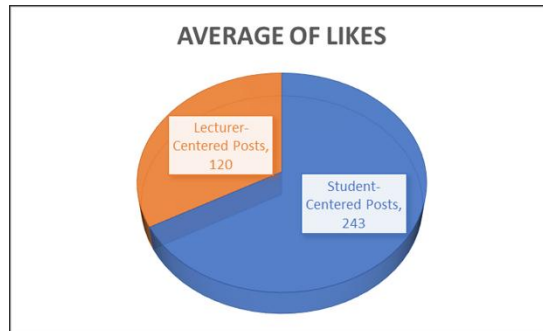


Figure 3. The Average of Likes (Student-Centered Posts vs Lecturer-Centered Posts)

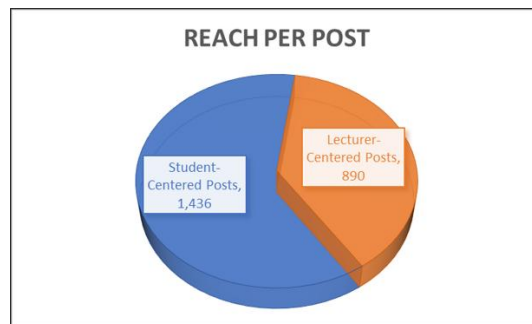


Figure 4. Reach Per Post (Student-Centered Posts vs Lecturer-Centered Posts)

The analysis of engagement metrics between lecturer-centered and student-centered posts on FSR's social media platforms reveals distinct audience interaction patterns, aligning with existing research on social media engagement in educational contexts.

While lecturer-centered posts occasionally achieve high engagement rates, their average performance is comparatively

lower. This trend suggests that content focusing solely on academic achievements may not fully resonate with the broader student body, who may perceive such posts as less relatable or engaging. This observation aligns with findings by Junco et al. (2011), who noted that while social media can enhance student engagement, the nature of the content shared significantly influences the level of student interaction.

In contrast, student-centered posts consistently outperform lecturer-centered content across all measured metrics, indicating a strong audience preference for content that features students. This preference underscores the importance of relatability and peer recognition in driving engagement. Unlike lecturer-centered posts, which may focus on institutional prestige, student-centered posts emphasize personal and collective achievements, fostering a sense of pride and belonging. According to Rival IQ's 2024 Higher Education Social Media Engagement Report, posts featuring students tend to generate higher interaction rates due to their relatability and emotional appeal. Highlighting student achievements fosters a culture of encouragement and inspiration, where students feel valued and motivated. This aligns with findings by Alhabash and Ma (2017), who noted that user-generated content or content involving community members drives higher engagement and fosters stronger connections within the audience.

CONCLUSION

The findings from the social media performance analysis reveal that student-centered content consistently outperforms lecturer-centered content in terms of reach and engagement. It is important to have the data because, for some reason, social media needs to fulfill the needs of their followers to ensure that social media is kept relevant. According to Smith & Johnson (2020), the audience tends to engage more with the content that meets their interest or needs. The results also indicate a higher engagement rate for student-centered content, averaging 18.5% compared to 10.3% for lecturer-centered content. This also highlights the significant preference for content centered around students' experiences, activities, and perspectives. When content is appropriate for the target audience's personal or professional identity, it tends to generate a higher level of interaction (Harris & Lee, 2019). The increased engagement rate indicates that students are more likely to interact with content that speaks to their daily experiences, concerns, and aspirations, reinforcing the importance of tailoring social media strategies to the preferences of the target audience. The success of student-centered posts underscores the importance of focusing on content that resonates with the primary audience. By celebrating and showcasing student life, institutions can foster a sense of community, increase engagement, and build a vibrant and interactive social media presence. Balancing this with other content types ensures a comprehensive strategy that caters to diverse audience segments.

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