- From Likes to Change: Assessing the Impact of Citizen Engagement on the
- European Commission's Social Media Platforms
- Tanase Tasențe¹, Cristian Opariuc-Dan^{1,2}, and & Cristina Dana Popescu¹
- ¹ Ovidius University of Constanța
- Romania
- ² University of Bucharest
- Romania

8 Author Note

9

10

- Department of Administrative and Social Sciences
- The authors made the following contributions. Tanase Tasente: Equal contribution,
- ¹² Conceptualization, Data curation, Investigation, Formal analysis, Resources, Software,
- Visualization, Writing Original Draft Preparation, Writing Review & Editing; Cristian
- Opariuc-Dan: Equal contribution, Writing Original Draft Preparation, Writing Review
- ¹⁵ & Editing, Data curation, Formal analysis, Resources, Software, Visualization; Cristina
- Dana Popescu: Writing Original Draft Preparation, Writing Review & Editing,
- 17 Professional proofreading.
- 18 Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Tanase Tasente,
- Postal address. E-mail: tanase.tasente@365.univ-ovidius.ro

3

20 Abstract

This study investigates the role of emotional resonance in social media communications 21 from the European Commission (EC) and its impact on public participation across various platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. Findings indicate that 23 emotionally resonant communications significantly enhance public engagement, with variations depending on the specific platform. Both positive and negative emotional resonance significantly impact participation, with the latter having a more pronounced effect. Our research highlights the critical importance of platform-specific strategies and the incorporation of emotional resonance in public communications to foster participation in policy dialogues. An analysis of the engagement rates and sentiment across platforms reveals unique tonal variations in the EC's discourse. The effect of emotional resonance on 30 public engagement is also found to be moderated by the choice of social media platform, 31 with certain platforms more significantly moderating the relationship between emotional 32 resonance and engagement than others. This study lays the groundwork for refining 33 communication strategies within a multi-platform digital governance environment.

Keywords: social media, public institutions, emotional resonance, public engagement, platform-specific strategies, digital governance

Word count: 4067 words in text body 1034 words in reference section

From Likes to Change: Assessing the Impact of Citizen Engagement on the European Commission's Social Media Platforms

40 Introduction

- In recent years, the rise of social media platforms has led to significant changes in the way
- institutions, including public organizations, communicate with their audiences. As a result,
- the importance of citizen engagement in the process of communication through social media
- has become increasingly recognized. This engagement involves not only a one-way flow of
- information from public institutions to citizens, but also an interactive dialogue between the
- 46 two parties.
- The concept of engagement in social media has been studied extensively in recent years,
- with researchers exploring various aspects of this phenomenon. One such study, conducted
- by Dolan et al. (2016), approached social media engagement behavior from a uses and
- 50 gratifications perspective, focusing on the motivations and benefits that users derive from
- engaging with social media. Meanwhile, the study by Dragseth (2020) explored how social
- ₅₂ media can be used to build engagement among students in the context of political science
- 53 education.
- Another important aspect of engagement in social media is the role it plays in activation
- campaigns aimed at consumers. Mirbagheri and Najmi (2019) conceptualized and developed
- 56 a scale to measure consumers' engagement with social media activation campaigns. Addi-
- tionally, Smith and Gallicano (2015) analyzed public engagement with organizations through
- social media, highlighting the importance of two-way communication between public insti-
- 59 tutions and citizens.
- The differentiating role of platform type in engagement with social media and social media
- advertising was explored by Voorveld et al. (2018), who found that the level of engagement
- varies across different social media platforms.
- 63 In addition to understanding the various aspects of engagement in social media, it is also

- important to recognize the significance of citizen engagement in the context of public insti-
- tutions. Citizen engagement plays a critical role in ensuring transparency and accountability
- in public decision-making processes. Furthermore, engagement with citizens can lead to the
- development of more effective policies and programs that better serve the needs of the com-
- 68 munity.
- 69 Moreover, the importance of citizen engagement in the process of communication through
- 70 social media cannot be overstated. Through social media, public institutions can engage
- ₇₁ in an interactive dialogue with citizens, build trust, and develop more effective policies and
- programs. As such, further research, and exploration of the concept of engagement in social
- media is critical for ensuring that public institutions continue to effectively communicate
- vith and serve the needs of their communities.
- 75 Citizen engagement through social media can also contribute to the empowerment of individ-
- vals and groups, giving them a voice in public decision-making processes and enabling them
- to hold public institutions accountable for their actions. This can help to build stronger,
- more resilient communities that are better equipped to respond to challenges and opportu-
- 79 nities.
- 80 It is also important to note that while social media has the potential to be a powerful tool for
- citizen engagement, there are also challenges and risks associated with its use. These include
- 82 issues related to privacy, security, and the spread of misinformation and disinformation. As
- such, public institutions must be mindful of these risks and take steps to mitigate them,
- while also leveraging the power of social media to engage with citizens in a meaningful way.
- Overall, the rise of social media has transformed the way public institutions communicate
- with citizens, placing a greater emphasis on engagement and two-way communication. Un-
- 87 derstanding the various aspects of engagement in social media is critical for public institutions
- to effectively communicate with and serve the needs of their communities. By leveraging the
- power of social media to engage with citizens, public institutions can build trust, empower

individuals and groups, and develop more effective policies and programs that better serve the needs of the community.

92 Literature review

- In studying the impact of citizen engagement on the European Commission's social media
- 94 platforms, it is crucial to discern the key concepts that underpin this research. These concepts
- ⁹⁵ are engagement, social media platforms, and sentiment analysis, which form the backbone
- of many academic discourses that revolve around these themes.
- ⁹⁷ Engagement, defined as the active interaction of users with digital content, is a fundamental
- element of any effective social media strategy. It encapsulates various forms of participation,
- 99 from comments and shares to likes and views (Mirbagheri & Najmi, 2019). Smith and
- Gallicano (2015) argue that engagement helps in establishing profound relationships with
- users, and it can vary according to the type of platform (Voorveld et al., 2018). The concept
- has found applicability in numerous contexts, including public health (Heldman et al., 2013),
- student learning (Dragseth, 2020), and corporate social responsibility (Doncel-Martín et al.
- 104 (2023)].
- The significance of engagement reaches a higher dimension in the political and public sphere.
- With social media platforms becoming an integral part of contemporary political com-
- munication (Flew & Iosifidis, 2020; Krzyżanowski, 2020), citizen engagement has become
- paramount, as seen in the activities of European Union (EU) agencies (Müller, 2022). There
- is a myriad of ways in which citizens engage with politics on social media, from commenting
- on posts to sharing and liking content (De Wilde et al., 2022). This interaction has been
- correlated with a spectrum of outcomes, such as influencing voting behavior (Marquart et
- al., 2020) and attitudes towards vaccination (Mascherini & Nivakoski, 2022).
- Simultaneously, social media platforms are becoming recognized as powerful tools for pro-
- moting and managing engagement. This dual role is exemplified in the case of the European
- 115 Commission's activities in Romania (Rus et al., 2021). Recognizing the potential of these

platforms to facilitate citizen engagement, EU institutions have taken steps to optimize their use, implementing various strategies (Bene et al., 2022; Kanol & Nat, 2021; Özdemir & Rauh, 2022).

In assessing the impact of citizen engagement on the EU's social media platforms, researchers employ an assortment of methods, one of which is sentiment analysis. This approach, which involves the systematic identification and categorization of the emotional tone behind words, aims to gauge public sentiment, attitudes, and emotions towards specific topics (Wei et al., 2021). It has been applied in diverse contexts, such as analyzing the emotional distribution in EU smart city communication (Kowalik, 2021) and exploring public opinions on climate change policy (Wei et al., 2021).

The European Union's social media landscape is remarkably complex, as shown by numerous studies. These platforms can simultaneously facilitate positive engagement, such as public service promotion (Hancu-Budui et al., 2020), and breed negative phenomena like hate speech (Doncel-Martín et al., 2023) and digital vigilantism (Allen & van Zyl, 2020). Furthermore, the influence of these platforms is shaped by broader societal and political developments, such as migration and smuggling across virtual borders (Bankston, 2021).

To sum up, understanding the impact of citizen engagement on the European Commission's 132 social media platforms is a multifaceted issue. These platforms offer opportunities for mean-133 ingful citizen engagement and public communication, but their influence is dictated by a 134 complex interplay of individual behavior, institutional strategy, societal trends, and techno-135 logical developments. This complexity calls for a nuanced understanding of each constituent 136 factor and their collective role in shaping the landscape of citizen engagement within the 137 context of the European Commission's social media platforms. It is a call to researchers, 138 policymakers, and practitioners to continuously explore this evolving realm to maximize the 139 benefits of citizen engagement while mitigating its potential pitfalls.

The present study

Relying on the theoretical framework previously described, the present study aimed to investigate public engagement across various official European Commission social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube). We also compared and contrasted the
patterns, trends, and characteristics of online user interactions and responses across these
platforms. Translating these aims into research questions (RQs), the present study investigated the following:

- RQ_1 . How is the communication with emotional resonance associated with higher public engagement levels?
- RQ_2 . Does social media platforms influences the emotional resonance on public engagement?
- RQ_3 . Does social media platforms moderates the effect of emotional resonance on public engagement?

To answer these questions, we assumed the following:

141

155

156

- H_I : Communications with emotional resonance are associated with higher public engagement levels.
- H_2 : Social media platform influences the emotional resonance on public engagement.
- H_3 : The effect of emotional resonance on public engagement is moderated by the social media platform utilized.

The novelty of our study lies in the fact that we have systematically compared and contrasted user engagement and emotional resonance across multiple social media platforms utilized by the European Commission. While previous research has generally focused on the impact of citizen engagement within a single social media platform, our study is unique in its comprehensive cross-platform analysis.

In this context, we have pursued an integrated approach to understanding how emotional resonance can influence public engagement levels across these platforms. Furthermore, we 166 have explored the moderating effect of the social media platform itself on the impact of 167 emotional resonance, a novel aspect that has not been fully addressed in previous research. 168 The innovative approach of this study allowed us to draw robust conclusions about the 169 nuanced relationship between communication strategy, emotional resonance, platform choice, 170 and public engagement. Our research has therefore not only provided key insights into the 171 patterns of citizen engagement on European Commission's social media platforms, but also 172 presented an advanced framework for understanding how such engagement can be effectively 173 harnessed and maximized for public outreach and policymaking. 174

Ultimately, this study has expanded the current discourse in the field of digital communication and citizen engagement, and opened up new avenues for future research on optimizing communication strategies in a multi-platform social media environment.

178 Method

179 Procedure used for data gathering

We used the Fanpagekarma, a prevalent tool for conducting analytics and monitoring on social media platforms to extract data for the official Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube channels of the European Commission. The data included post ID, message content, post type, post date, number of likes, comments, shares, and the rounded figure of followers for each post made by the European Commission, in the period from Feb 2019 to Apr 2023.

The engagement rate metric is commonly employed to gauge the extent of audience interaction with a brand or organization on social media platforms, and total number of reactions
(comprising likes, comments, and shares) were calculated, and divided by the total follower
count. A sentiment analysis method was used on engagement rate to reveal the trends and
a linear regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis.

191 Results

192 Overview of data analysis

We used R (Version 4.3.0; R Core Team, 2023) and the R-packages boot (Version 1.3.28.1; 193 Davison & Hinkley, 1997), caret (Version 6.0.94; Kuhn & Max, 2008), dplyr (Version 1.1.2; 194 Wickham et al., 2023), flextable (Version 0.9.1; Gohel & Skintzos, 2023), qqplot2 (Version 195 3.4.2; Wickham, 2016), ggpubr (Version 0.6.0; Kassambara, 2023a), interactions (Version 1.1.5; Long, 2019), knitr (Version 1.42; Xie, 2015), lattice (Version 0.21.8; Sarkar, 2008), lm. beta (Version 1.7.2; Behrendt, 2023), lubridate (Version 1.9.2; Grolemund & Wickham, 2011), MASS (Version 7.3.58.4; Venables & Ripley, 2002), Matrix (Version 1.5.4; Bates et al., 199 2023), misty (Version 0.4.11; Yanagida, 2023), mitools (Version 2.4; Lumley, 2019), mytnorm 200 (Version 1.1.3; Genz & Bretz, 2009), naniar (Version 1.0.0; Tierney & Cook, 2023), NLP 201 (Version 0.2.1; Hornik, 2020), nortest (Version 1.0.4; Gross & Ligges, 2015), papaja (Version 202 0.1.1; Aust & Barth, 2022), psych (Version 2.3.3; William Revelle, 2023), readxl (Version 203 1.4.2; Wickham & Bryan, 2023), relaimpo (Version 2.2.6; Grömping, 2006), rstatix (Version 204 0.7.2; Kassambara, 2023b), sasLM (Version 0.9.8; Bae, 2023), SentimentAnalysis (Version 205 1.3.4; Proellochs & Feuerriegel, 2021), survey (Version 4.2.1; Lumley, 2004), survival (Version 206 3.5.5; Terry M. Therneau & Patricia M. Grambsch, 2000), tinylabels (Version 0.2.3; Barth, 207 2022), tm (Version 0.7.11; Feinerer et al., 2008), and writexl (Version 1.4.2; Ooms, 2023) for 208 all our analyses. 200 The initial assumptions assessment was performed by descriptive univariate analysis, data 210 screening for outliers, and missing cases analysis, to verify univariate normality. We further 211 conducted a sentiment analysis, and, finally a linear moderated regression was used for 212 hypothesis testing. 213

4 Preliminary analysis

- Some extreme high values were identified on Facebook engagement rate (values over .00484),
- Instagram engagement rate (values over .0215), Twitter engagement rate (values over .000696)

217 and Youtube engagement rate (values over .000962) and replaced with missing values, how-218 ever only 5.15% scores were missing so we decided to remove entire cases.

Results suggested that all engagement rates were highly positively skewed and highly leptokurtic (see Tables 1 and 2) and the univariate normality assumption of the dependent variable was not met.

Please Insert Tables 1 and 2 around here

223 Sentiment analysis

222

228

229

A comprehensive sentiment analysis was conducted on data, both with (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) and without extreme outliers (see Fig. 3 and Fig. 4) suggesting distinctive tonal variations in the discourse employed by the European Commission across different social media platforms.

Please Insert Figures 1 and 2 around here

Please Insert Figures 3 and 4 around here

In the case of Facebook, the sentiment's indicator mean value was 0.14 (SD=0.10), showed 230 a tendency to a positive tone (M=0.14, SD=0.10 with extreme outliers). The sentiment 231 ranged between -0.27 and 0.63 (-0.27 and 0.65 with extreme outliers), the discourse with a 232 negative connotation averaged at 0.08 (SD=0.06), while the discourse with a positive under-233 tone demonstrated a mean of 0.22 (SD=0.09), thereby further substantiating a propensity 234 for positivity (M=0.08, SD=0.06, respectively M=0.22, SD=0.09 with extreme outliers). 235 In contrast to Facebook, the sentiment indicator on Instagram averaged at 0.12, which points towards a mildly positive sentiment, with the spectrum extending from -0.22 and 0.46 (-0.22 237 and 0.46 with extreme outliers). The mean sentiment score for negatively perceived discourse 238 was 0.07 (SD=0.05), and the positively perceived discourse showed an average of (M=0.07, 239

- SD=0.05, respectively M=0.20, SD=0.09 with extreme outliers), once again suggesting a bend towards positive discourse on this platform.
- Conversely, Twitter displayed a broader sentiment spectrum. Although the sentiment indicator mean was marginally higher than Facebook and Instagram at 0.15, it ranged from
 -0.62 and 1 (-0.67 and 1 with extreme outliers), implying a more diverse expression of sentiments. Negative discourse manifested an average of 0.07 (SD=0.07), identical to Instagram
 but more negative than Facebook. Interestingly, Twitter maintained the highest average
 score for positive discourse, at 0.22 (SD=0.12 with extreme outliers), equal to the positivity
 in Facebook and surpassing that on Instagram.
- On YouTube, the sentiment indicator's mean value was observed to be the lowest amongst the evaluated platforms at 0.10, spanning from -0.19 and 0.34 (-0.23 and 0.34 with extreme outliers), thereby indicating a more tempered sentiment. Negative discourse on YouTube scored the lowest mean of 0.03 (SD=0.03), while positive discourse registered the minimum average of 0.13 (SD=0.06 with extreme outliers) compared to the other platforms.
- In conclusion, despite a general inclination towards a slightly positive mean sentiment across all platforms, Twitter demonstrated the most substantial sentiment range, signifying the potential for both intensely negative and positive discourse. Instagram and Facebook depicted a modestly positive sentiment with less variability, while YouTube exhibited the most tempered sentiment range, with the lowest averages for both positive and negative discourse.
- A linear regression model was fitted using 12446 cases from the purified dataset, values on engagement rate over .000929525 were removed because of extreme outliers and the normality of dependent variable was not met (Anderson-Darling test =680, p < 0.001).
- The results suggested that the null hypothesis H_0 : Communications with emotional resonance are not associated with higher public engagement levels could be rejected (F(2, 12441)=11.06, p < 0.001) and the H_1 : Communications with emotional resonance are associated with higher public engagement levels was plausible, however the engagement levels was

explained only by 0.16% by the positive and negative resonance communications ($R^2=0.0016$, 266 RSR = 0.0002). 267 The positive $(B=0.00004, t=2.64, p=0.008, \beta=0.02)$ and negative (B=0.00010, t=3.51, p=0.008) $< 0.001, \beta = 0.03$) emotional resonance communications were both positively associated sta-269 tistically significant with engagement rates, and high values on emotional resonance, positive 270 or negative, were associated with high values on engagement rates. However, the relative 271 predictors relevance showed that negative emotional resonance (62.09%) contributed more 272 on engagement rates explanation than positive emotional resonance (37.91%) 273 Furthermore, we observed that the effect of social media platform was statistically significant on all platforms compared with Twitter and the null hypothesis $\mathbf{H_0}$: The effect of emotional resonance on public engagement is not moderated by the social media platform could be re-276 jected. (F(5, 12438)=1,240.04, p < 0.001). Adding the new as categorical predictor increased 277 the prediction power at 33.24% from 0.16% (R²=0.332, RSR=0.0002), as the most relevant 278 predictor was social network (99.61%), followed by negative emotional resonance (0.28%) 279 and positive emotional resonance (0.12%)280 Negative emotional resonance was still statistically significant positively associated by public engagement (B=0.00008, t=3.59, p<0.001, $\beta=0.03$), but not positive emotional resonance 282 $(B=0.00001, t=1.02, p=0.31, \beta=0.01)$, and compared by Twitter, engagement rates in-283 creased statistically significant on Facebook (B=0.00038, t=77.88, p<0.001, $\beta=0.58$), 284 Instagram $(B=0.00049, t=11.07, p < 0.001, \beta=0.08)$ and Youtube (B=0.00005, t=12.82, p)285 $< 0.001, \beta = 0.10$). 286 Finally, the hypothesis H_3 : The effect of emotional resonance on public engagement is mod-287 erated by the social media platform utilized was also plausible (F(11, 12432)=568.57, p < 288

0.001), the model with interaction terms explaining 33.41% of engagement rate's variance

 $(R^2=0.334, RSR=0.0002)$ and had a statistically significant better prediction power than the

second model (F(6, 12432)=6.34, p < 0.001).

289

290

291

The main effect of negative emotional resonance was statistically significant (B=0.00012,292 t=4.62, p<0.001, $\beta=0.04$), but not the main effect of positive emotional resonance (B=-293 0.00000, t=-0.02, p=0.981, $\beta=0$, and both were moderated by social network. Further-294 more, compared to Twitter influence, Facebook (B=0.00038, t=26.45, p<0.001, $\beta=0.59$) 295 and Youtube $(B=0.00004, t=4.73, p < 0.001, \beta=0.08)$ were statistically significant pos-296 itively associated with engagement rate, but not Instragram (B=-0.00026, t=-1.39, p=297 $0.165, \beta = -0.04$). 298 The positive association between negative emotional resonance and engagement rate (B=0.00012,299 t=4.62, p<0.001, $\beta=0.04$) was moderated statistically significant and negatively by Youtube 300 $(B=-0.00035, t=-3.46, p < 0.001, \beta=-0.04)$ and Facebook (B=-0.00019, t=-2.24, p = 0.025, p = 0.0019)301 $\beta = -0.03$), messages with negative emotional resonance posted on these social platforms re-302 ducing statistically significant the initial positive association. No moderation effect of Insta-303 gram was identified on association between negative emotional resonance and engagement 304 rate $(B=0.00207, t=1.23, p=0.218, \beta=0.02)$ (see Fig. 5) 305

Please Insert Fig. 5 around here

306

311

Between positive emotional resonance and engagement rate was no statistically significant association, $(B=-0.00000, t=-0.02, p=0.981, \beta=0)$, but our results showed a positive and statistically significant interaction effect with Instagram $(B=0.00278, t=3.74, p<0.001, \beta=0.11)$ and Youtube $(B=0.00017, t=2.97, p=0.003, \beta=0.05)$ (see Fig. 6)

Please Insert Fig. 6 around here

Compared to Twitter posts, if the messages with positive emotional resonance were posted on Instagram or Youtube, the engagement rate increased statistically significant and the effect was most powerfull on Instagram than on Youtube. No interaction effect was observed on Facebook related on positive emotional resonance (B=0.00005, t=0.89, p=0.374, $\beta=0.02$)

316 Discussion

The current study embarked on an investigative journey to examine public engagement across a range of social media platforms utilized by the European Commission, laying specific emphasis on the impact of emotional resonance within disseminated content. The vital role of social media in communication strategies of public institutions has been widely recognized (Smith & Gallicano, 2015), accentuating the necessity for an in-depth comprehension of the dynamics of engagement.

Our collected data validates our primary hypothesis (H1), implying that communications imbued with emotional resonance, regardless of its positive or negative polarity, are associated with augmented public engagement. Nevertheless, the capacity of emotional resonance to illuminate engagement levels remains marginal (0.16%). This finding is consistent with the complex nature of engagement behaviours outlined in existing academic discourse (Dolan et al., 2016; Dragseth, 2020; Mirbagheri & Najmi, 2019), thereby underscoring the need for further scrutiny of additional factors influencing public engagement.

Our secondary hypothesis (H2) proposed that the choice of the social media platform would significantly influence the effect of emotional resonance on public engagement. The empirical evidence corroborates this assertion, indicating that different platforms potentially cater to diverse user expectations and conventions. This alignment with prior research revealing platform-specific variations in engagement patterns (Voorveld et al., 2018) underscores the necessity for the European Commission to recognize and adapt to these heterogeneous engagement patterns when designing their communication strategies.

The tertiary hypothesis (H3) posited that the chosen social media platform would moderate
the impact of emotional resonance on public engagement. The acquired data affirmed this
premise, demonstrating a statistically significant moderating effect. This indicates that the
characteristics of individual platforms may shape the public's interaction with emotionally
resonant messages, highlighting the need to tailor such communications to align with the

norms specific to each platform.

This research is constrained by its reliance on secondary data obtained from platforms, suggesting that future studies could potentially reap benefits from primary data collection methodologies. Furthermore, this study did not associate Engagement Rate (ER) with significant simultaneous events, potentially overlooking the effect of emotional reactions provoked by these events. Future investigations could probe these associations, thereby enhancing our understanding of emotional impacts and expanding the existing body of knowledge in this domain.

Additionally, the scope of this research was confined to the European Commission's use of four primary social media platforms. Future inquiries could potentially explore other platforms or public institutions to determine the universality of the observed patterns. Furthermore, while our focus lay primarily on emotional resonance, future research could delve into other aspects of communication, such as tone, complexity, and framing.

To conclude, this study underscores the imperative role of both emotional resonance and platform-specific norms in propelling public engagement on social media. The ability to establish an emotional connection with the audience, made possible through well-conceived and executed posts, emerges as a powerful tool for amplifying engagement levels. Such engagement is not merely about expanding the reach or visibility of public institutions like the European Commission, but is a mechanism for fostering a dynamic and participatory relationship between these institutions and the citizens they serve.

Understanding these dynamics enables public institutions to tailor their communication strategies more effectively. By acknowledging the varying norms and expectations tied to different social media platforms, institutions can ensure that their messages resonate more strongly with their intended audiences, ultimately enhancing the impact and penetration of these messages. The choice of platform is not incidental but plays a significant role in how emotional resonance influences engagement, urging public institutions to be thoughtful and strategic in their selection and use of these platforms.

Moreover, by refining their social media strategies based on these findings, public institutions
have the opportunity to foster greater citizen engagement. Higher engagement can lead
to increased public awareness, enhanced understanding, and potentially even behavioural
change - critical goals for public communication strategies. It can also help public institutions
gain insight into public sentiment, thus providing valuable feedback that can be used to
improve policies and services.

In addition, the insights derived from this study can help public institutions increase the
effectiveness of their public communication. By leveraging emotional resonance and considering platform-specific norms, these institutions can design messages that are more likely to
engage citizens and generate a meaningful response. This has the potential to transform the
landscape of public communication, making it a more interactive, responsive, and impactful
domain.

Despite its limitations, this study provides an invaluable point of departure for further research into the intricate world of social media engagement. It opens up avenues for exploring
other influential factors and for deepening our understanding of the relationship between
emotional resonance, platform norms, and public engagement. These insights could be crucial in helping public institutions navigate the complex dynamics of social media engagement,
enhancing their ability to communicate effectively with the public, and ultimately, improving
their service to society.

References

- Allen, K., & van Zyl, I. (2020). Digital vigilantism, social media and cyber criminality.
- Paris: Enact/European Union.
- Aust, F., & Barth, M. (2022). papaja: Prepare reproducible APA journal articles with R
- Markdown. https://github.com/crsh/papaja
- Bae, K.-S. (2023). sasLM: 'SAS' linear model. https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=
- sasLM
- Bankston, J. (2021). Migration and smuggling across virtual borders: A European Union
- case study of internet governance and immigration politics. In Digital Identity, Virtual
- Borders and Social Media (pp. 73–97). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Barth, M. (2022). tinylabels: Lightweight variable labels. https://cran.r-project.org/package=
- 399 tinylabels
- Bates, D., Maechler, M., & Jagan, M. (2023). Matrix: Sparse and dense matrix classes and
- methods. https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=Matrix
- 402 Behrendt, S. (2023). Lm.beta: Add standardized regression coefficients to linear-model-
- objects. https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=lm.beta
- Bene, M., Ceron, A., Fenoll, V., Haßler, J., Kruschinski, S., Larsson, A. O., Magin, M.,
- Schlosser, K., & Wurst, A.-K. (2022). Keep them engaged! Investigating the effects
- of self-centered social media communication style on user engagement in 12 European
- countries. Political Communication, 39(4), 429–453.
- Davison, A. C., & Hinkley, D. V. (1997). Bootstrap methods and their applications. Cam-
- bridge University Press. http://statwww.epfl.ch/davison/BMA/
- De Wilde, P., Rasch, A., & Bossetta, M. (2022). Analyzing citizen engagement with Euro-
- pean politics on social media. Politics and Governance, 10(1), 90–96.
- Dolan, R., Conduit, J., Fahy, J., & Goodman, S. (2016). Social media engagement behaviour:
- A uses and gratifications perspective. Journal of Strategic Marketing, 24(3-4), 261–277.
- Doncel-Martín, I., Catalan-Matamoros, D., & Elías, C. (2023). Corporate social responsibil-

- ity and public diplomacy as formulas to reduce hate speech on social media in the fake
- news era. Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 28(2), 340–352.
- Dragseth, M. R. (2020). Building student engagement through social media. Journal of
- Political Science Education, 16(2), 243–256.
- Feinerer, I., Hornik, K., & Meyer, D. (2008). Text mining infrastructure in r. Journal of
- Statistical Software, 25(5), 1–54. https://doi.org/10.18637/jss.v025.i05
- Flew, T., & Iosifidis, P. (2020). Populism, globalisation and social media. International
- Communication Gazette, 82(1), 7-25.
- Genz, A., & Bretz, F. (2009). Computation of multivariate normal and t probabilities.
- Springer-Verlag.
- Gohel, D., & Skintzos, P. (2023). Flextable: Functions for tabular reporting. https://CRAN.
- R-project.org/package=flextable
- Grolemund, G., & Wickham, H. (2011). Dates and times made easy with lubridate. Journal
- of Statistical Software, 40(3), 1–25. https://www.jstatsoft.org/v40/i03/
- Grömping, U. (2006). Relative importance for linear regression in r: The package relaimpo.
- Journal of Statistical Software, 17(1), 1–27.
- 431 Gross, J., & Ligges, U. (2015). Nortest: Tests for normality. https://CRAN.R-project.org/
- package=nortest
- 433 Hancu-Budui, A., Zorio-Grima, A., & Blanco-Vega, J. (2020). Audit institutions in the
- European Union: Public service promotion, environmental engagement and Covid crisis
- communication through social media. Sustainability, 12(23), 9816.
- 436 Heldman, A. B., Schindelar, J., & Weaver, J. B. (2013). Social media engagement and public
- health communication: Implications for public health organizations being truly "social."
- Public Health Reviews, 35, 1–18.
- 439 Hornik, K. (2020). NLP: Natural language processing infrastructure. https://CRAN.R-
- project.org/package=NLP
- 441 Kanol, D., & Nat, M. (2021). Group type and social media engagement strategies in the

- EU: The case of British interest groups on Facebook. Journal of Public and Nonprofit
- 443 Affairs, 7(2), 205–219.
- 444 Kassambara, A. (2023a). Ggpubr: 'ggplot2' based publication ready plots. https://CRAN.R-
- project.org/package=ggpubr
- 446 Kassambara, A. (2023b). Rstatix: Pipe-friendly framework for basic statistical tests. https:
- //CRAN.R-project.org/package=rstatix
- 448 Kowalik, K. (2021). Social media as a distribution of emotions, not participation. Polish
- exploratory study in the EU smart city communication context. Cities, 108, 102995.
- 450 Krzyżanowski, M. (2020). Digital Diplomacy or Political Communication? Exploring Social
- Media in The EU Institutions from a Critical Discourse Perspective 1. In Digital Diplo-
- macy and International Organisations (pp. 52–73). Routledge.
- Kuhn, & Max. (2008). Building predictive models in r using the caret package. Journal of
- Statistical Software, 28(5), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.18637/jss.v028.i05
- Long, J. A. (2019). Interactions: Comprehensive, user-friendly toolkit for probing interac-
- tions. https://cran.r-project.org/package=interactions
- 457 Lumley, T. (2004). Analysis of complex survey samples. Journal of Statistical Software,
- 9(1), 1-19.
- Lumley, T. (2019). Mitools: Tools for multiple imputation of missing data. https://CRAN.
- R-project.org/package=mitools
- Marquart, F., Goldberg, A. C., & de Vreese, C. H. (2020). "This time I'm (not) voting": A
- comprehensive overview of campaign factors influencing turnout at European Parliament
- elections. European Union Politics, 21(4), 680–705.
- 464 Mascherini, M., & Nivakoski, S. (2022). Social media use and vaccine hesitancy in the
- European Union. Vaccine, 40(14), 2215-2225.
- 466 Mirbagheri, S., & Najmi, M. (2019). Consumers' engagement with social media activation
- campaigns: Construct conceptualization and scale development. Psychology & Market-
- ing, 36(4), 376-394.

- Müller, M. (2022). Spreading the word? European Union agencies and social media atten-
- tion. Government Information Quarterly, 39(2), 101682.
- 471 Ooms, J. (2023). Writexl: Export data frames to excel 'xlsx' format. https://CRAN.R-
- project.org/package=writexl
- Özdemir, S. F., & Rauh, C. (2022). A Bird's eye view: Supranational EU Actors on Twitter.
- 474 Proellochs, N., & Feuerriegel, S. (2021). SentimentAnalysis: Dictionary-based sentiment
- analysis. https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=SentimentAnalysis
- R Core Team. (2023). R: A language and environment for statistical computing. R Founda-
- tion for Statistical Computing. https://www.R-project.org/
- Rus, M., Tasente, T., & Camara, V. (2021). Social media communication of public institu-
- tions. Case study: Representation of the European Commission in Romania. Technium
- soc. Sci. J., 17, 119.
- Sarkar, D. (2008). Lattice: Multivariate data visualization with r. Springer. http://lmdvr.r-
- forge.r-project.org
- Smith, B. G., & Gallicano, T. D. (2015). Terms of engagement: Analyzing public engagement
- with organizations through social media. Computers in Human Behavior, 53, 82–90.
- Terry M. Therneau, & Patricia M. Grambsch. (2000). Modeling survival data: Extending
- the Cox model. Springer.
- 487 Tierney, N., & Cook, D. (2023). Expanding tidy data principles to facilitate missing data
- exploration, visualization and assessment of imputations. Journal of Statistical Software,
- 489 105(7), 1–31. https://doi.org/10.18637/jss.v105.i07
- 490 Venables, W. N., & Ripley, B. D. (2002). Modern applied statistics with s (Fourth). Springer.
- https://www.stats.ox.ac.uk/pub/MASS4/
- Voorveld, H. A., Van Noort, G., Muntinga, D. G., & Bronner, F. (2018). Engagement
- with social media and social media advertising: The differentiating role of platform type.
- Journal of Advertising, 47(1), 38-54.
- Wei, Y., Gong, P., Zhang, J., & Wang, L. (2021). Exploring public opinions on climate

- change policy in Big Data Era A case study of the European Union Emission Trading
- System (EU-ETS) based on Twitter. Energy Policy, 158, 112559.
- Wickham, H. (2016). ggplot2: Elegant graphics for data analysis. Springer-Verlag New York.
- https://ggplot2.tidyverse.org
- Wickham, H., & Bryan, J. (2023). Readxl: Read excel files. https://CRAN.R-project.org/
- package=readxl
- Wickham, H., François, R., Henry, L., Müller, K., & Vaughan, D. (2023). Dplyr: A grammar
- of data manipulation. https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=dplyr
- William Revelle. (2023). Psych: Procedures for psychological, psychometric, and personality
- research. Northwestern University. https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=psych
- 506 Xie, Y. (2015). Dynamic documents with R and knitr (2nd ed.). Chapman; Hall/CRC.
- https://yihui.org/knitr/
- Yanagida, T. (2023). Misty: Miscellaneous functions 't. yanagida'. https://CRAN.R-
- project.org/package=misty

Table 1

Descriptive analysis. Presence of extreme outliersa

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max	Skew (SE)	Kurt (SE)
Facebook	3371	0.0015	0.0019	0.0010	0	0.0404	6.4933 (0.042)	81.9762 (0.084)
Instagram	3182	0.0067	0.0069	0.0048	0	0.1589	6.4272 (0.043)	93.0693 (0.087)
Twitter	14944	0.0002	0.0006	0.0001	0	0.0297	21.1298 (0.02)	837.7101 (0.04)
Youtube	3411	0.0007	0.0130	0.0002	0	0.7420	55.0118 (0.042)	3128.44 (0.084)

Table 2

Descriptive analysis. Extreme outliers removed

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max	Skew (SE)	Kurt (SE)
Facebook	3241	0.0012	0.0009	0.0009	0	0.0048	1.4594 (0.043)	1.8452 (0.086)
Instagram	3089	0.0059	0.0041	0.0047	0	0.0214	1.3995 (0.044)	1.7972 (0.088)
Twitter	14132	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0	0.0007	1.488 (0.021)	2.1633 (0.041)
Youtube	3164	0.0002	0.0002	0.0001	0	0.0010	1.4692 (0.044)	1.4995 (0.087)

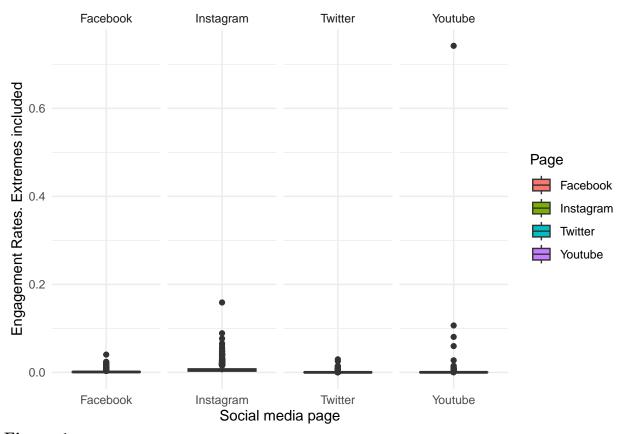


Figure 1

Boxplot of engagement rates on social media channels. Extremes included

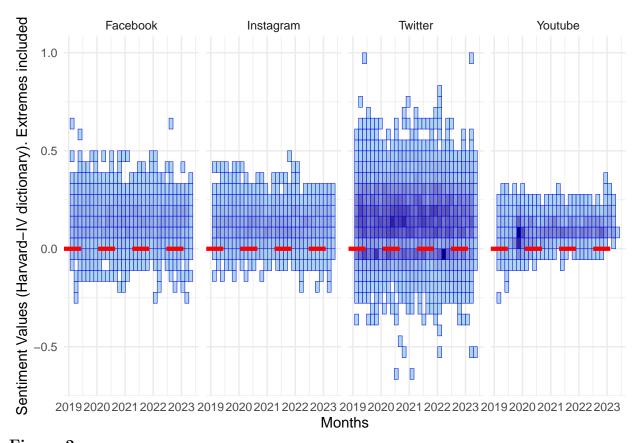


Figure 2
Sentiment analysis chart on social media channels. Extremes included

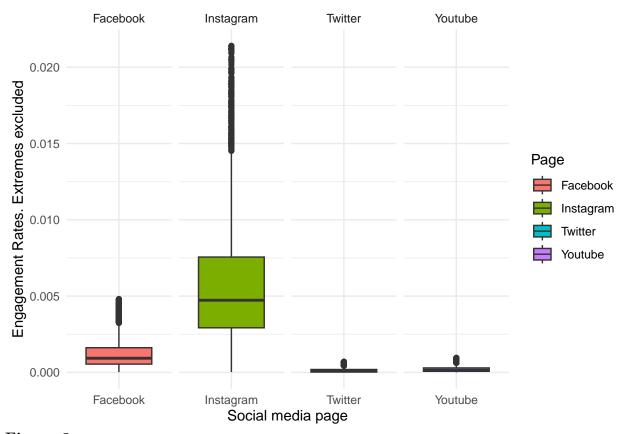
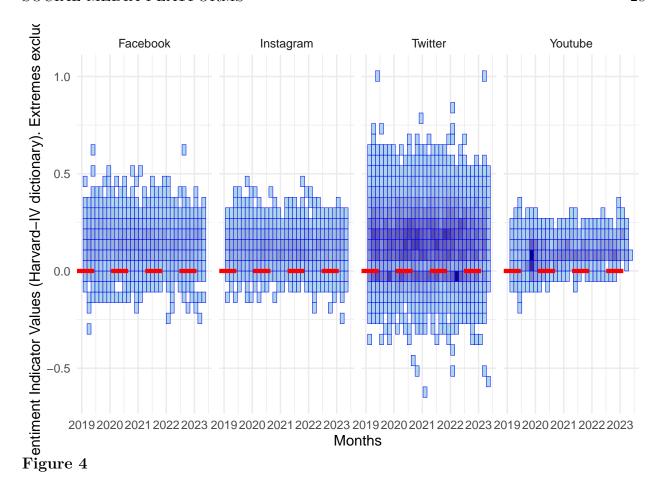


Figure 3

Boxplot of engagement rates on social media channels. Extremes excluded



 $Sentiment\ analysis\ chart\ on\ social\ media\ channels.\ Extremes\ excluded$

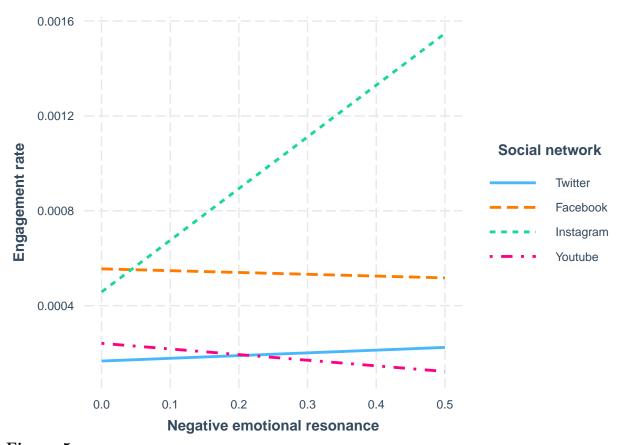


Figure 5

Interaction effect between social network and negative emotional resonance on engagement rate

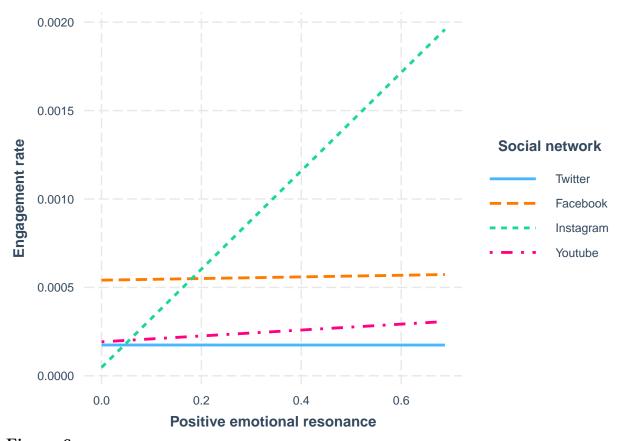


Figure 6

Interaction effect between social network and positive emotional resonance on engagement rate