

Examining the use of a Facebook group to share COVID related child physical activity information

- Wall
- Info
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- Authors

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Objective

This study investigated social media communication regarding physical activity (PA) and physical education (PE) during initial school closing and school re-entry planning phases of the COVID-19 pandemic to determine types of social media posts most effective at disseminating information, differences between phases, and sentiments relayed through comments.



Introduction

- Social media is an important form of communication because of its vast reach.
- Understanding what communication types are most effective can inform best practices for PA and PE information dissemination specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Methods

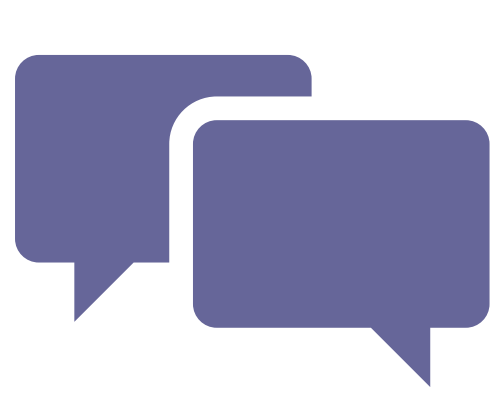
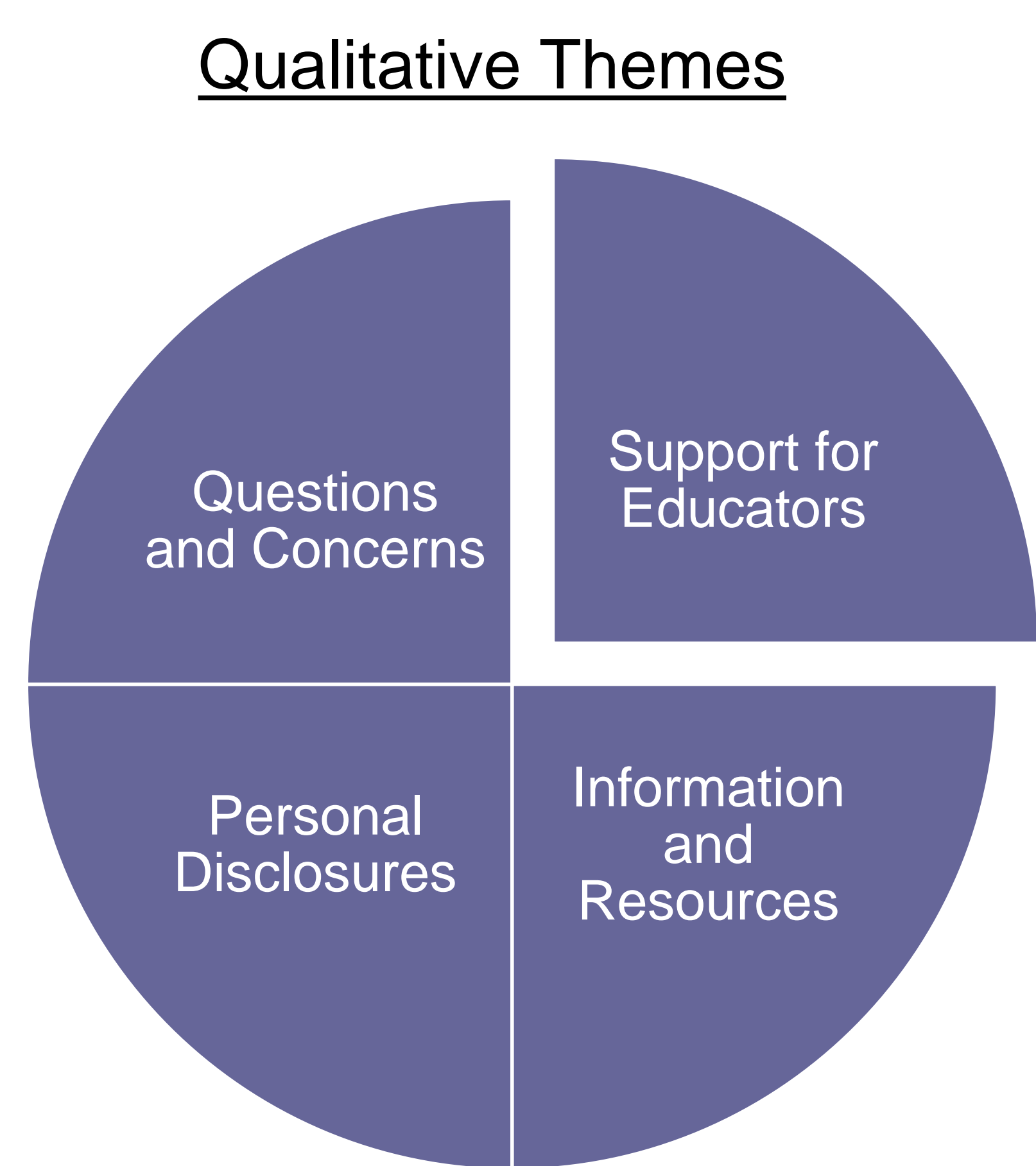
A mixed method design was used to examine posts across two phases of the pandemic within a public Facebook group (n=1,500) created to promote school-based physical activity.

- Phase I - onset of school closures through release of national school re-entry guidelines
- Phase II - release of guidelines through start of the school year
- 418 posts between March 1, 2020 – August 1, 2020.

One-way ANOVAs determined differences between content types and reactions, shares, and comments. Independent t-tests tested for differences in effectiveness between phases of the pandemic.

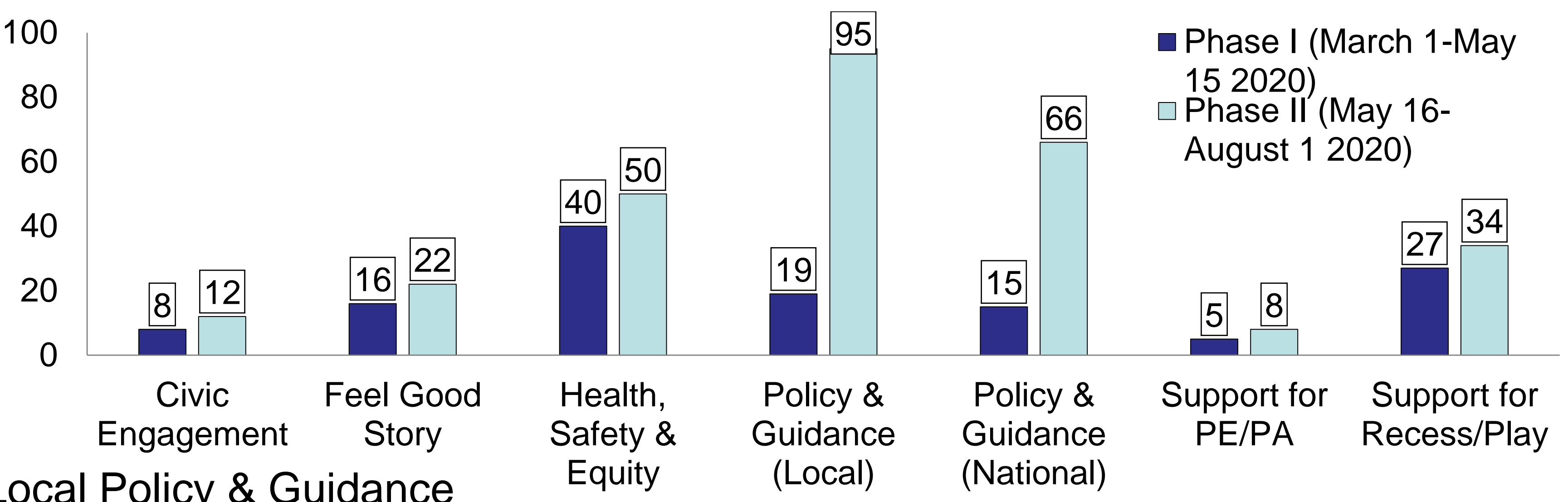
Inductive qualitative analysis produced themes from comments shared during each phase

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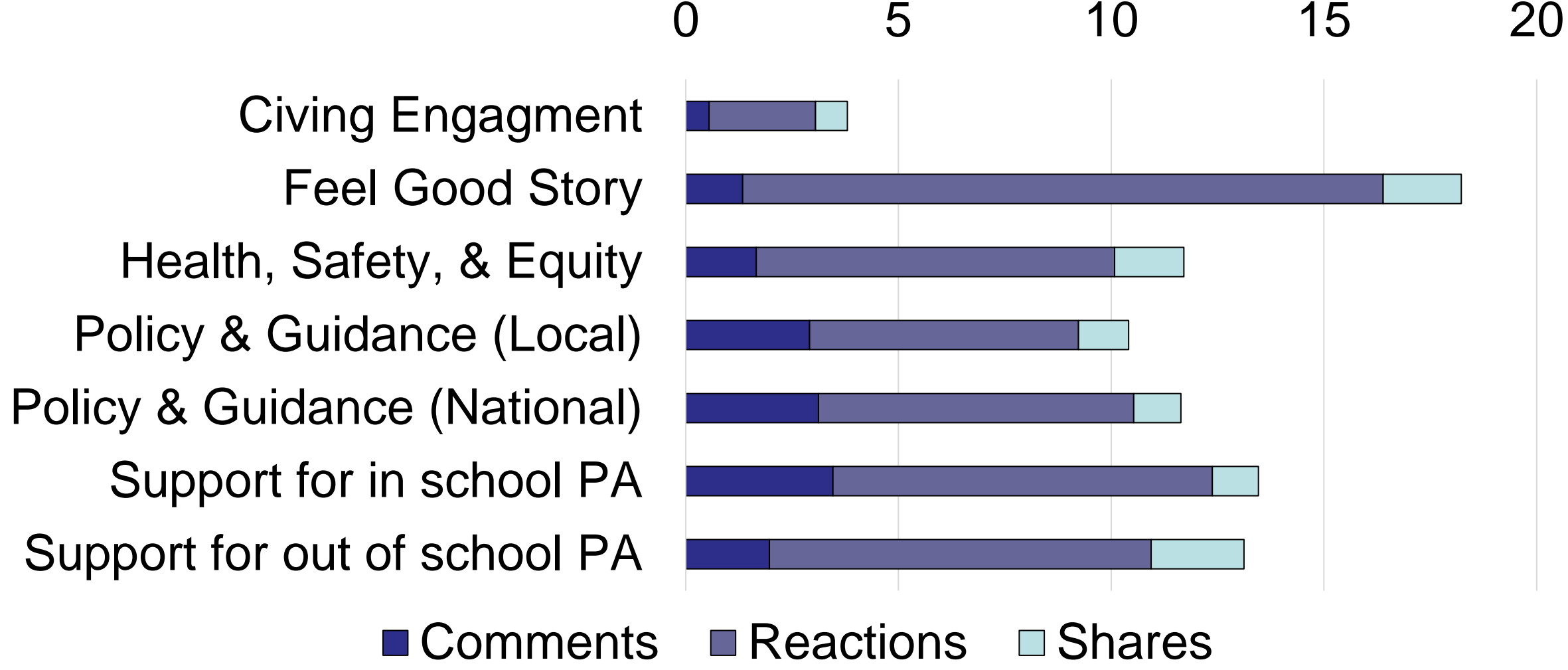


Results

Frequency of Post Type by Phase



Frequency of Engagement by Post Type



- National/Local Policy & Guidance posts had more comments compared to Civic Engagement.
- Feel Good Stories had the highest number of reactions.
- Members reacted more to posts made during Phase II.
- Four major themes of Information and Resources, Personal Disclosures, Questions and Concerns, and Support for Educators emerged.



Discussion

Using social media to share local and national guidance during a pandemic may be a promising strategy to disseminate information, encourage discussion, and provide member support.

The interaction and communication in a Facebook group appeared to be a source of social and informational support for members during the onset and initial school reentry phases of the COVID-19 pandemic

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