

# The Image + Text Formula in Brand Social Media Posts that Really Works

LUNCH  
LECTURES  
@MSI

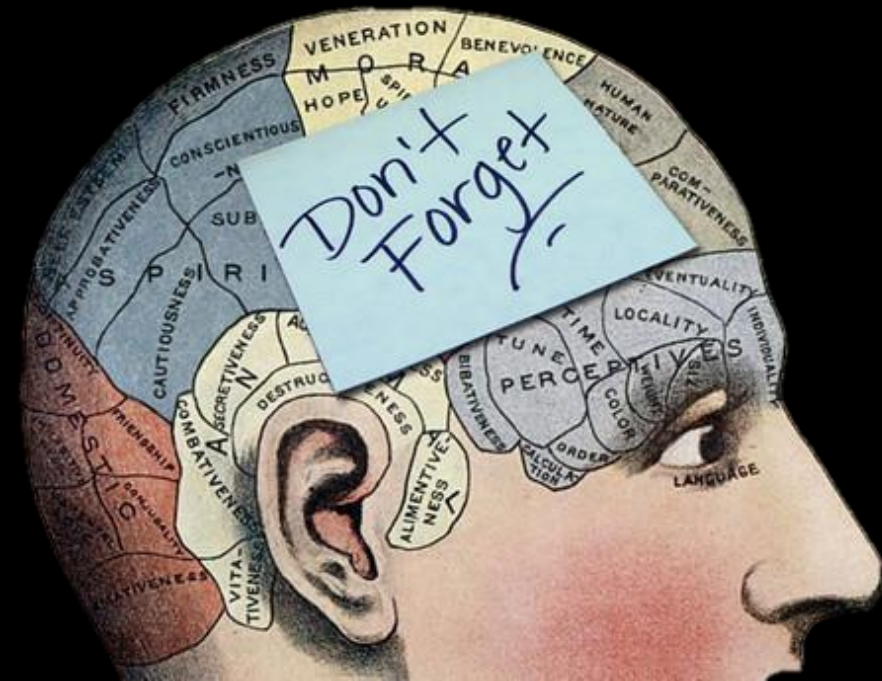
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# Agenda

- Managerial problem
- Facts and figures
- Past research
- Multimodality and social media composition
- Three projects:
  1. Text and Image Intentions (Villarroel O. et al. 2019)
  2. Visual patterns (Farace et al. 2019)
  3. Social media brand narratives (Farace et al. 2020)
- Summary
- What's next?

# Facts and Figures

- 70% of companies invest in content marketing (HubSpot)
- When people hear information, they're likely to remember only 10% of that information three days later
- However, if a relevant image is paired with that same information, people retained 65% of the information three days later (Brain Rules)



- **95 million** images posted on Instagram daily with **8,500** likes and **1,000** comments per second
- Web posts with visuals drive up to **180%** more engagement than those without
- **66%** of brands do not seem to understand what type of images contribute to consumer sharing

Taboola

HubSpot

 CURALATE

 olapic  
Acquired by **Monotype**

If it doesn't spread, it's dead (H. Jenkins)

Limited number of  
modes that are at your  
disposal to compose  
social media posts

However, unlimited  
combinations are  
possible

**Brands need to understand the right  
combination or mix**



# Marketing Research

- Most research on digital brand content focuses mainly on compositional cues of **word/character content and style** (Berger and Milkman 2012; Luangrath et al. 2016; Villarroel Ordenes 2019; Lee et al. 2019; Borah et al. 2020; Jalali and Papatla 2019)
- Recent research is starting to focus on image content (visual concealment) and its impact on social media outcomes (Sevilla and Meyer 2020) and its interplay (image colorfulness) with text (Li and Xie 2020)

# Multimodality

“Meaning is made with different semiotic modes, each offering distinct potentialities and limitations. If we want to study meaning we need to **attend to all semiotic modes being used** to make a complete whole”  
(Jewitt, Bezemer and O’Halloran 2016, p. 3)

# Text-image relationships

- In social media, caption and image are presented separately **in their own** visual frames
- The text within the image and the image are offered in the **same visual** frame

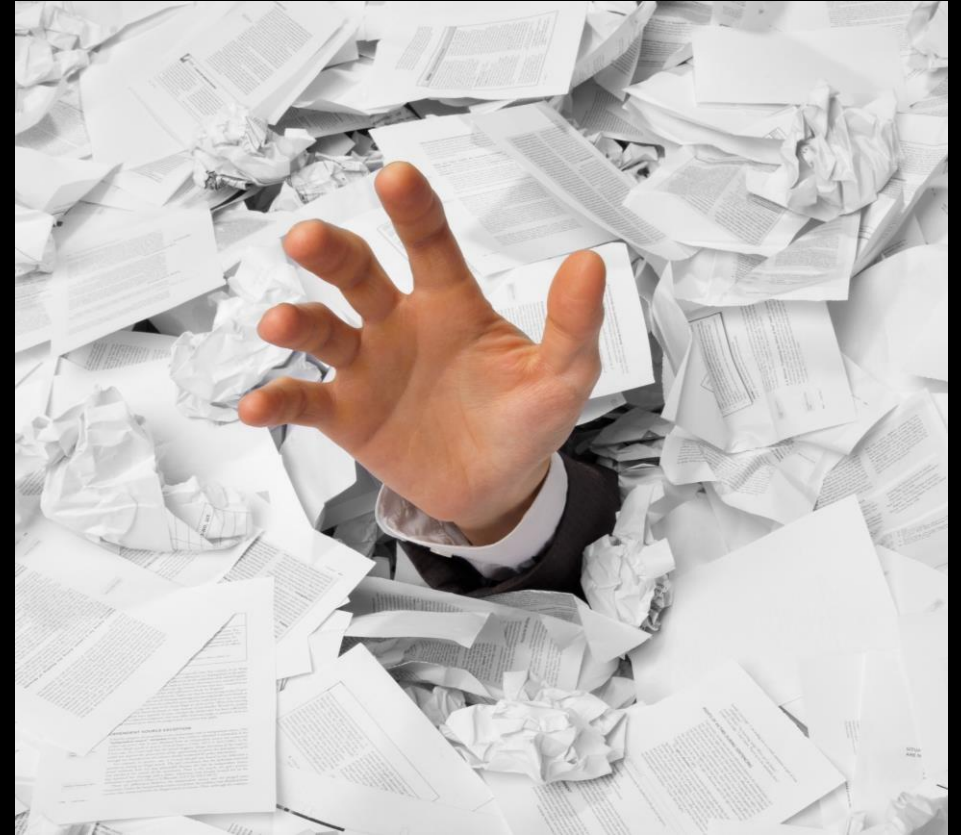




# Cutting through Content Clutter: How Speech and Image Acts Drive Consumer Sharing of Social Media Brand Messages



- Consumer sharing declined 50% in the past years
- 60% brands lack of a documented content strategy
- The continuous stream of message frequently gets buried in big data



Marketing Land (2018)

# Research gaps and objectives

- Develop an overarching theoretical framework to study streams of brand generated messages
- Investigate its impact on consumer sharing behaviors

# Online Brand Messages

Firm generated content follows similar communicational patterns than advertising – all about “calls to action”

- *“Check out today’s deal”*
- *“Come and visit us this Friday”*
- *“Buy today and get a 5% discount”*
- *“Don’t miss this last chance”*
- *Have you seen our last products?*

(Content marketing Institute 2017; Kumar et al 2016)




# Speech Acts – Message Intentions


Informational

 Nike.com @nikestore · May 23  
The Air Jordan 11 Retro Low 'True Red'

Expressive

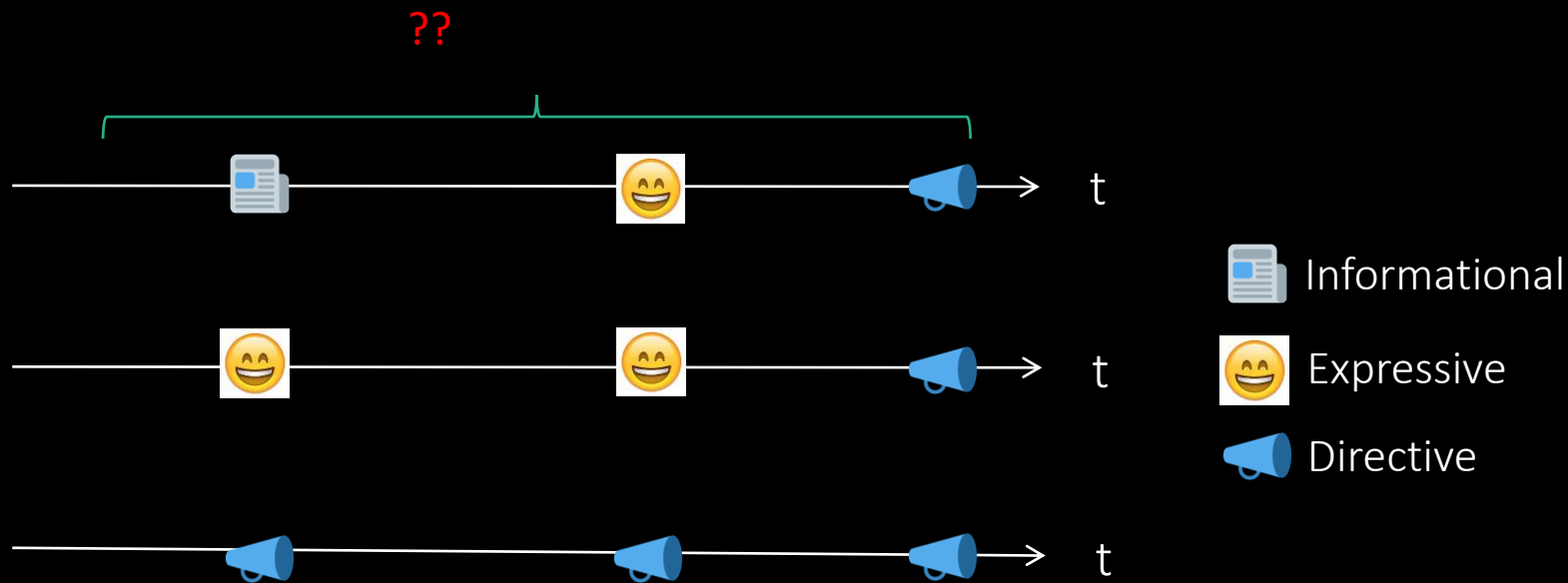
 Nike.com @nikestore · Jun 25  
Fast is fun. The @usnikefootball CJ3

Directive

 Nike.com @nikestore · May 27  
Create your deception. Customize the  
Nike Hypervenom II now, exclusively on  
NIKEiD [swoo.sh/1FZRbOw](https://swoo.sh/1FZRbOw)

# Speech Act Sequence

- Earlier events influence consumer's evaluations of subsequent events
- No single brand communication attempt is likely to accomplish the complete sales job by itself





# Image Acts - Intentions

Social media messages are generally multimodal, such that they contain both text and images (Mazloom et al 2016)



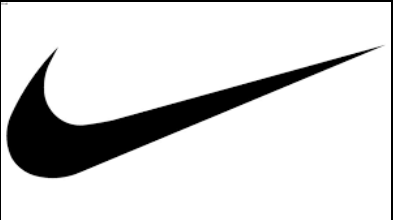
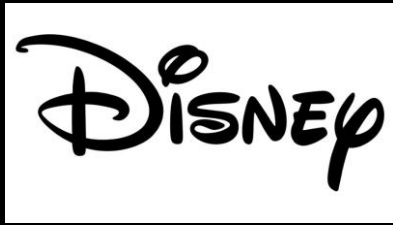
Offer information



Direct actions

# Empirical Study

12,374 Facebook brand posts and 29,413 original brand tweets from October 2014 to May 2017



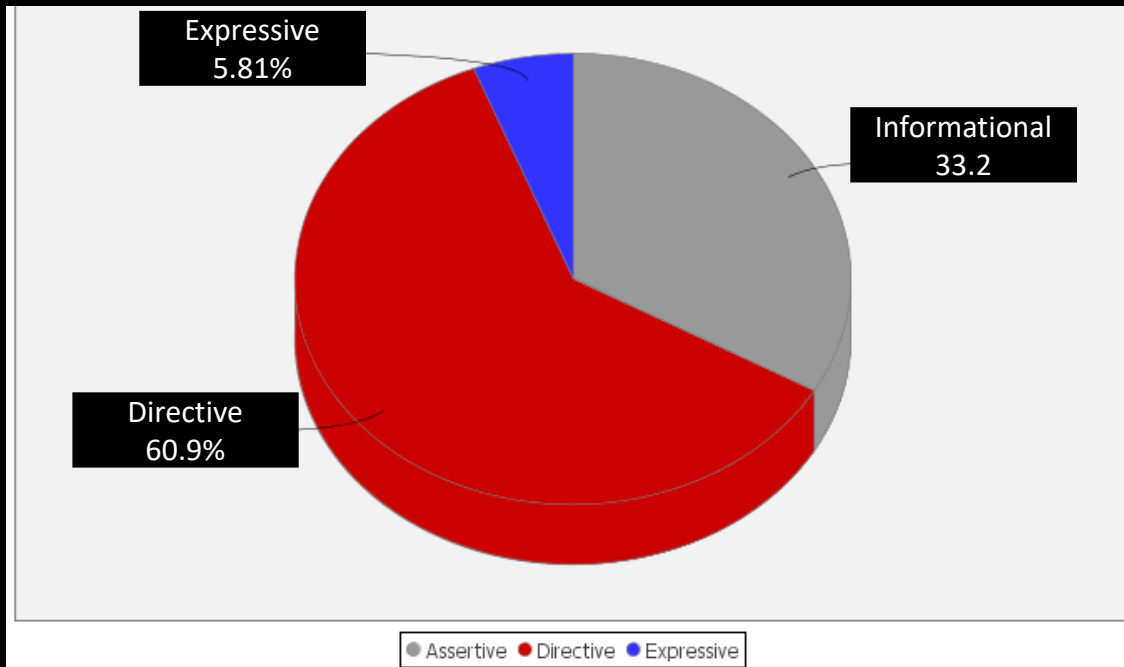


# Model Specifications

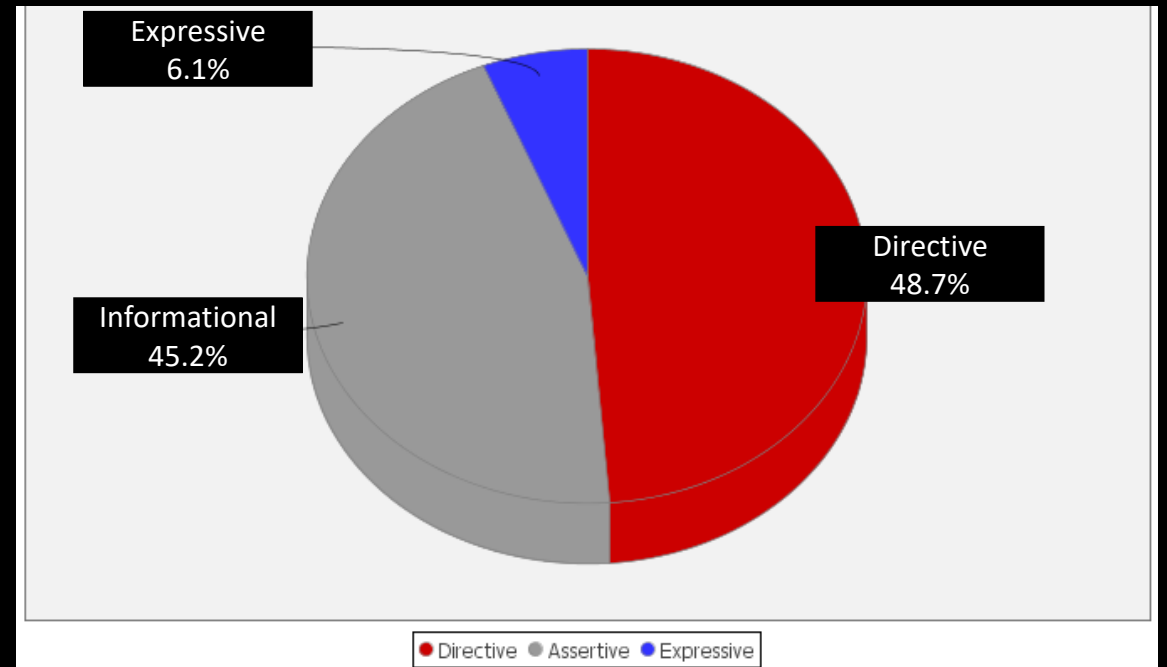
- Use of supervised machine learning to automatically classify brand posts into informational, expressive and directive
- Use Upwork.com to human annotate more than 8,000 images
- Control variables such as message valence, arousal, brand differences, day and hour of the week, etc.
- We account for endogeneity (strategic/dynamic posting) by including Control Functions
- A lagged dependent variable (share/retweet count<sub>-1</sub>) was included to account for carryover effects and the effect of virality of a previous tweet
- Use of a Negative Binomial Model to predict sharing

# Descriptive Statistics

Speech Acts in Twitter



Speech Acts in Facebook



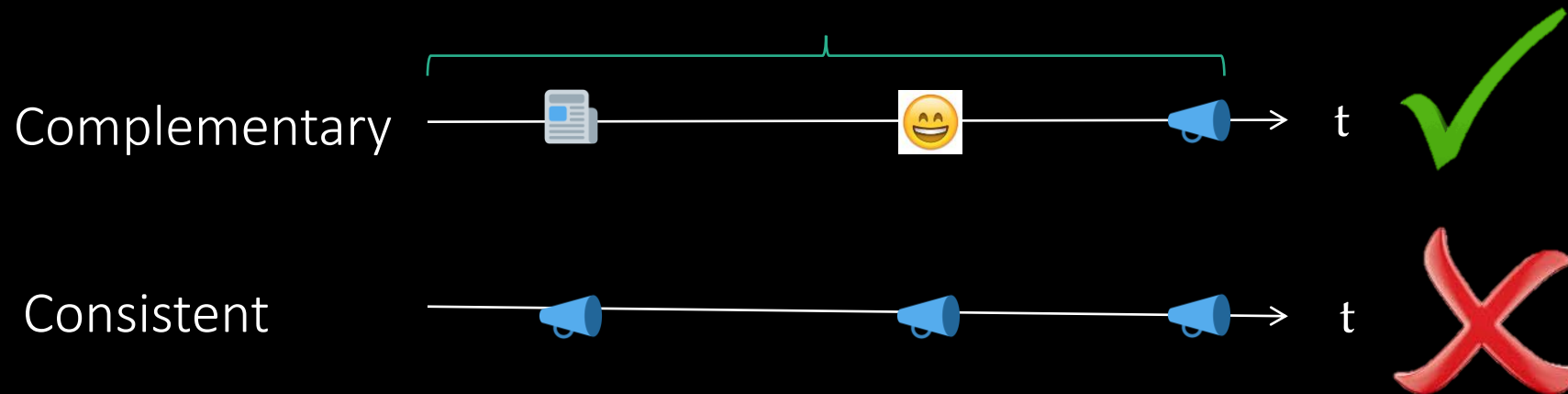
# Findings

- **Informational** (*we have an event this Friday*) and **expressive** messages (*Fridays' events are fun*) are more shared than **directives** (*Come to our event on Friday!*)
- Their use facilitates (rather than direct) social media conversations



# Findings

Varying message intention across sequences is a better strategy than consistency



# Findings



**IMAGE (A)**

Informational text - Directive image



**IMAGE (B)**

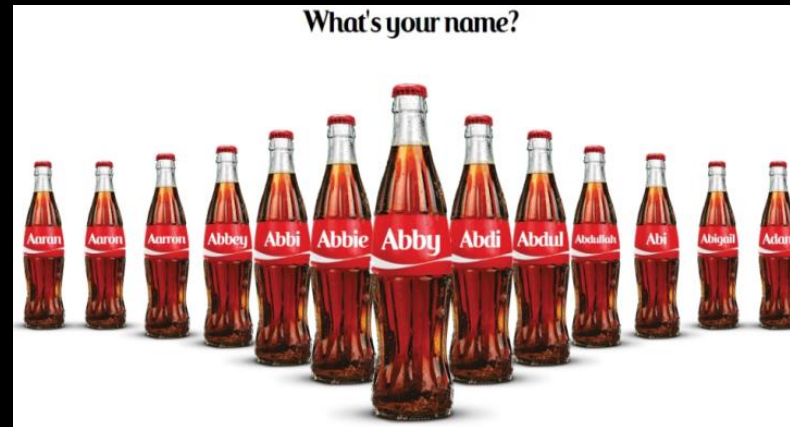
Directive text - Directive image



# Patterns in Motion: How Visual Patterns in Ads Impact Product Evaluations

Farace, Stefania, Anne Roggeveen, Francisco Villarroel Ordenes, Ko De Ruyter, Martin Wetzels, and Dhruv Grewal, *Journal of Advertising* 49, no. 1 (2020): 3-17.

The visual pattern, or visual alignment of products in an ad, represents a critical decision for designers





# Past research

Visual advertising stimuli are decisive for determining consumer product evaluations (Chae and Hoegg 2013)





# Research gap and objectives

- Investigating the influences of (a)symmetric alignments of *identical* objects
- Addressing the joint impact of visual patterns and verbal information on product evaluations
- Identifying the mechanisms that define the relationships among visual patterns, verbal information, and consumer evaluations

# Visual patterns (Hekkert 2006)



**Regular** patterns feature alternated, progressive, or linear arrangements



**Irregular** patterns do not have a planned arrangement



# Motion

- Real or imaginary trajectories formed by the regular arrangement of objects in images, creates a sense of motion (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006)
- Objects placed randomly may elicit associations unrelated to motion (Luffarelli, Stamatogiannakis, and Yang 2018)

# Motion in Text

- Dictionary of Motion Words (LIWC 2015)
- Congruity in the intentions communicated by an ad image and the related text results in enhanced consumer responses (Poor, Duhachek, and Krishnan 2013)






# Findings Experimental Studies





# Findings Nike Study


 **Nike.com** ✓  
@nikestore

Move more, move better with [#AirMax](#)

Tap in to get notified, and see the collection. Launching 3.26.

[go.nike.com/jhuBI1IAvpX](https://go.nike.com/jhuBI1IAvpX)





 **Nike.com** ✓  
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# Images and Text as Integrated Wholes: The Interplay between Narrative Images and Text Salience, and its Implications for Consumer Sharing



The combination of the type of image and text are crucial decisions for social media managers



Caption

Image

Text within  
the image  
(TWI)





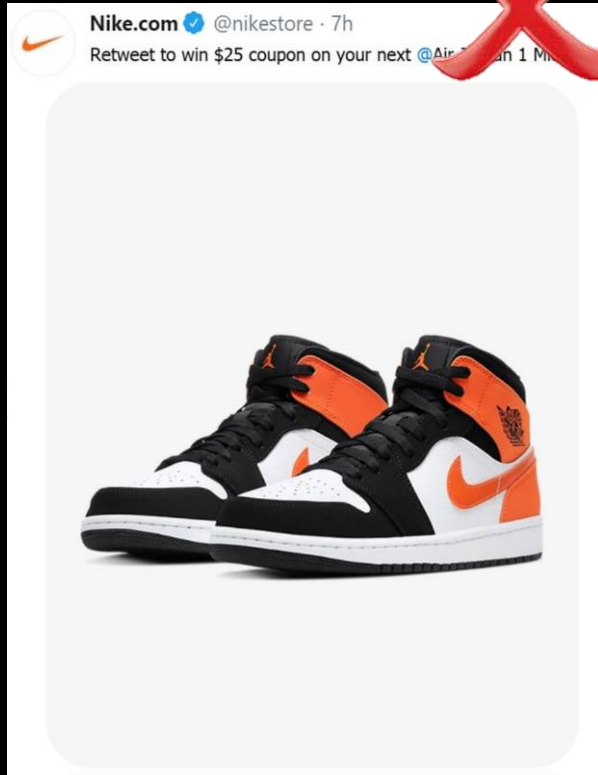
## Past research

- Static visuals can generate perceptions of movement, which increase consumer engagement and, in turn, enhance brand attitudes (Cian, Krishna, and Elder 2014)
- The subtle dynamism in the design of marketing stimulus can increase arousal, which, in turn, can increase subjective ratings (Mourey and Elder 2019)

# Research gaps and objectives

- Investigating the influences of narrative images on consumer sharing
- Addressing the joint impact of the type of image and textual information (at the caption level) on consumer sharing
- Identifying the mechanisms that define the relationships among narrative images, textual information, and consumer sharing

# Findings Study 1



CONCEPTUAL



NARRATIVE

# Findings Study 2



CONCEPTUAL



NARRATIVE

# Text Salience

(Kress and van Leeuwen 2006)

The degree to which the text in a social media post draws attention to itself, due to its size, its place in the foreground or its overlapping of other elements, its color, its tonal values, its sharpness or definition



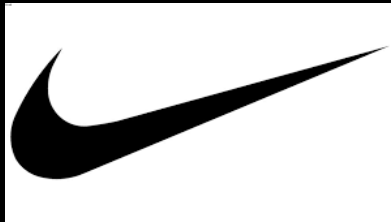
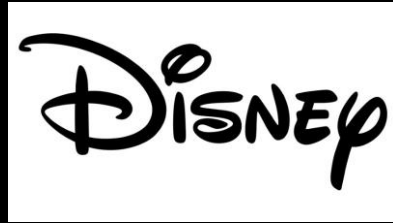
Low Caption Salience



High Caption Salience

# Setting

8,121 original brand tweets (not responses to customers) from May 2016 to May 2017



Brand	Industry	Total Tweets
Disney	Hospitality	2,277
Amazon	Retail trade	2,062
Tesco	Retail trade,	1,066
McDonalds	Eating & drinking places	283
Coca Cola	Food	1,112
Ford	Manufacturing	251
Nike	Apparel & accessory stores	1,080

# Model Specifications

- Selection Bias (Focus only on Tweets with images). Heckman Correction was applied
- We account for endogeneity (strategic/dynamic posting) by including Control Functions
- Number of shares or retweets follows a negative binomial distribution, with an over-dispersed count around the mean (Heimbach and Hinz 2016)
- A lagged dependent variable (share/retweet count<sub>-1</sub>) was included to account for carryover effects and the effect of virality of a previous tweet



# Findings



# Findings




Amazon  @amazon · Apr 2

There's hope in togetherness, even when we're apart.  
Thanks to [#believeinrainbows](#)



Amazon  @amazon · Apr 2

There's [#hope](#) in togetherness , even when we're apart. THANKS to [#believeinrainbows](#)



# Summary

When using text and image, practitioners should carefully consider:

- message intentions (assertive, expressive or directives) at the text and image level, because directive content at both levels might decrease consumer sharing (Project #1)
- the perceptions evoked by regular vs. irregular visual patterns, because inconsistency in visual and verbal elements might dampen consumers' product evaluations (Project #2)
- the use of conceptual vs. narrative images, because when combined with salient captions, they provide reversed findings (Project #3)

# What's next?

- Cisco projects that global internet traffic from videos will make up **82%** of all consumer internet traffic by 2021 (Cisco)
- **85%** of Facebook and Instagram users watch video on the platforms with the sound off (Digiday)
- In platforms such as Pinterest or Instagram there is no presence of caption. Then multimodality is only given using text within image

# References

- Villarroel Ordenes, Francisco, Dhruv Grewal, Stephan Ludwig, Ko De Ruyter, Dominik Mahr, & Martin Wetzels. "Cutting through content clutter: How speech and image acts drive consumer sharing of social media brand messages." *Journal of Consumer Research* 45, no. 5 (2019): 988-1012.
- Farace, Stefania, Anne Roggeveen, Francisco Villarroel O., Ko De Ruyter, Martin Wetzels, & Dhruv Grewal. "Patterns in motion: how visual patterns in ads affect product evaluations." *Journal of Advertising* 49, no. 1 (2020): 3-17.
- Farace, Stefania, Francisco Villarroel O., Dhruv Grewal, & Ko De Ruyter. "The Multimodal Social Media Brand Post: Bridging Visual Semiotics and Consumer Sharing" *Working Paper*.

# THANK YOU!

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