



Responses to Mental Health Awareness Posts on Instagram from Verified and Unverified Accounts

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INTRODUCTION

- Around 90% of teens use social media, 76% specifically use Instagram.
- Prior research has found that spending too much time on Instagram is positively associated with anxiety and depression
- It has been suggested that Instagram posts advocating for mental health from influencers, or people with a high prevalence on Instagram, could reduce the stigma against mental health issues
- Therefore, it could be important to study and compare the responses to both influencers (those who are verified on Instagram) and non-influencers (those who are not verified) who advocate for mental health awareness

The purpose of this study was to compare the differences in responses to posts on Instagram for accounts that are verified and accounts that are not verified that advocate for mental health.

METHODS

Design:

- I conducted a content analysis study using LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) software
- **Subjects:**
 - The subjects of my study were 100 comments; 50 comments on mental health posts from verified accounts and 50 comments on mental health posts from unverified accounts on Instagram.
- **Data collection:**
 - Used the # mentalhealthawareness on Instagram to find posts from verified and unverified accounts
 - Picked the first 5 posts from 5 verified posts and the first 5 posts from unverified accounts and selected the first 10 comments under each post.

Variables:

- If the account is verified/not verified
- The total number of likes and views on the posts from verified accounts and the total number of likes and views on the posts from unverified accounts
- LIWC variables assessing emotional tone of comments

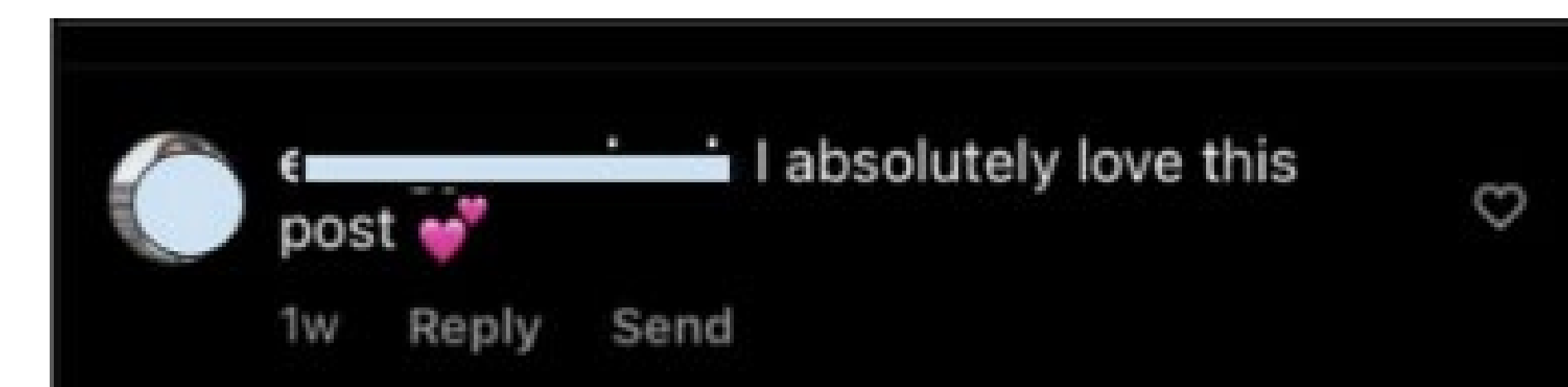
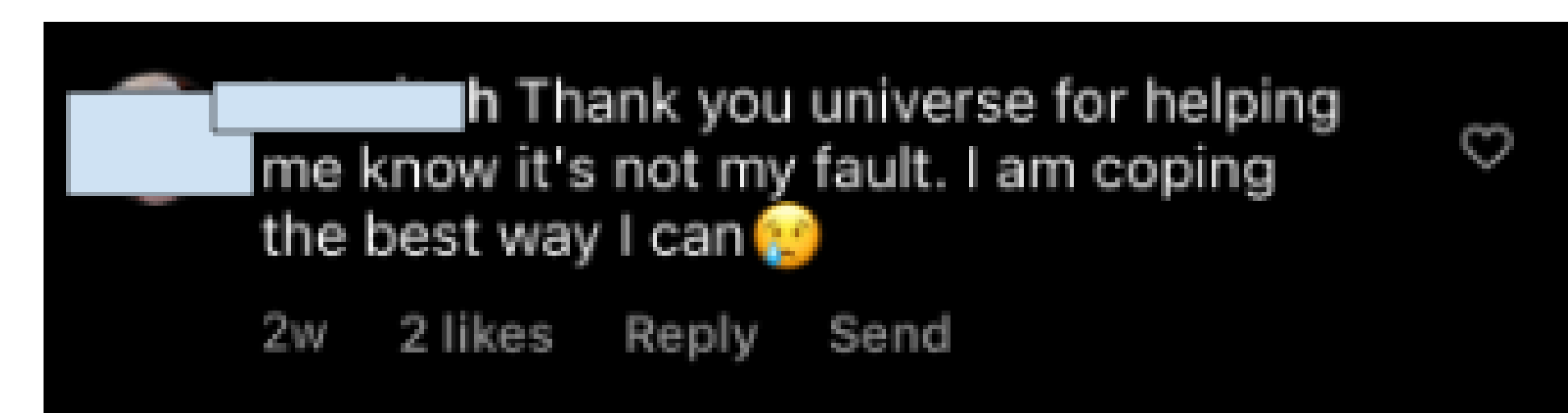
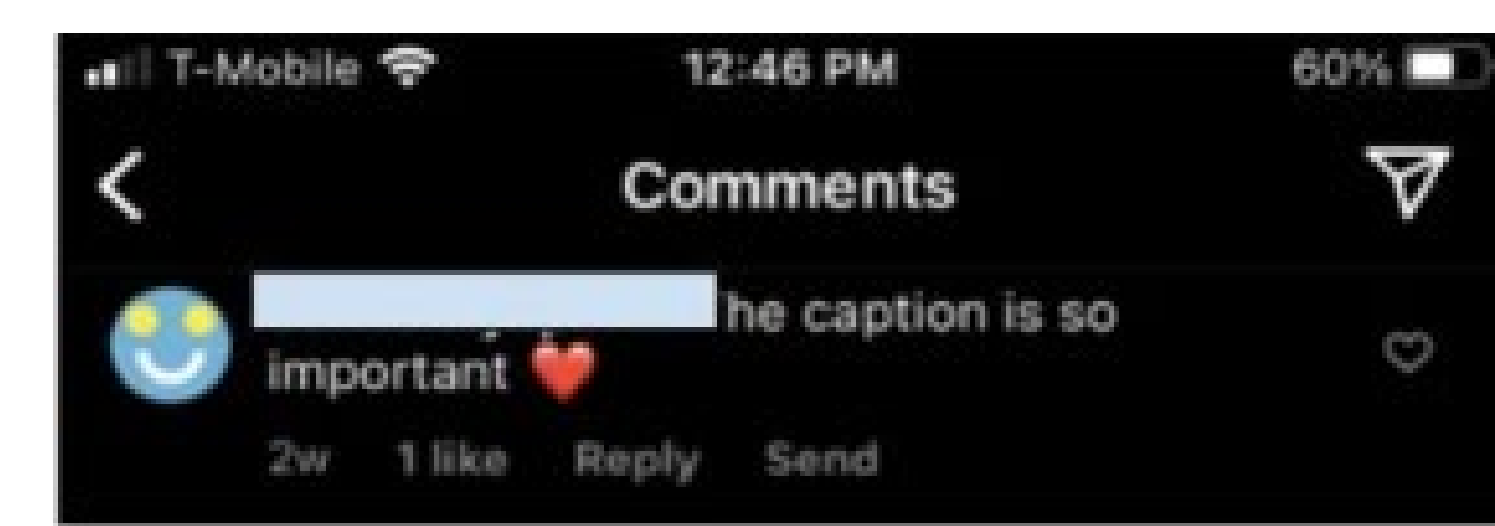
LIWC Variables	Examples:
Positive emotion	"Love this"
Negative emotion	"So boring"
Anger	"This is very offensive"
Anxiety	"I'm very worried, can't sleep at night"
Sadness	"I'm sobbing"

Analysis:

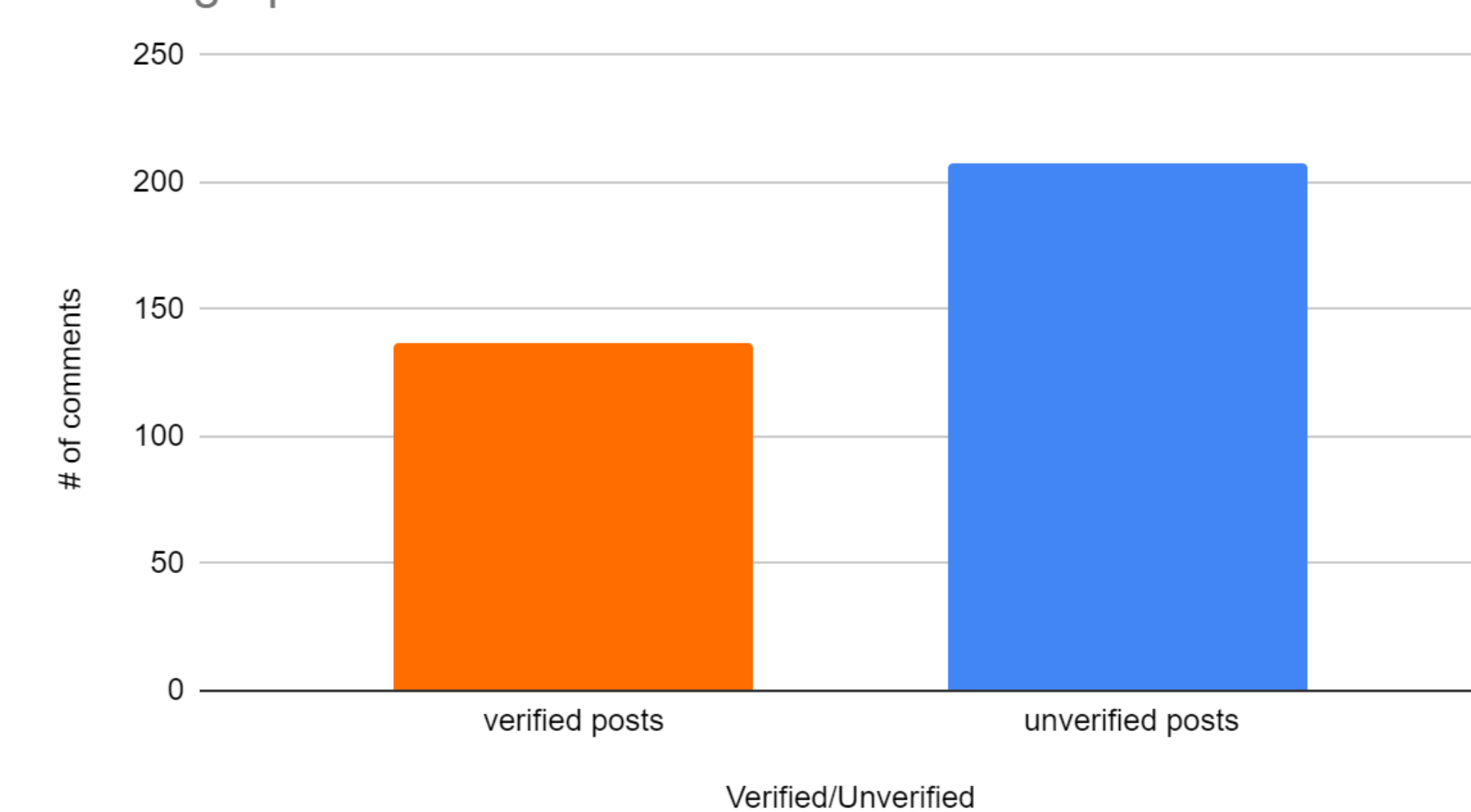
Descriptive statistics were collected and t-tests were run for each LIWC variable comparing comments from verified accounts and unverified accounts.

RESULTS

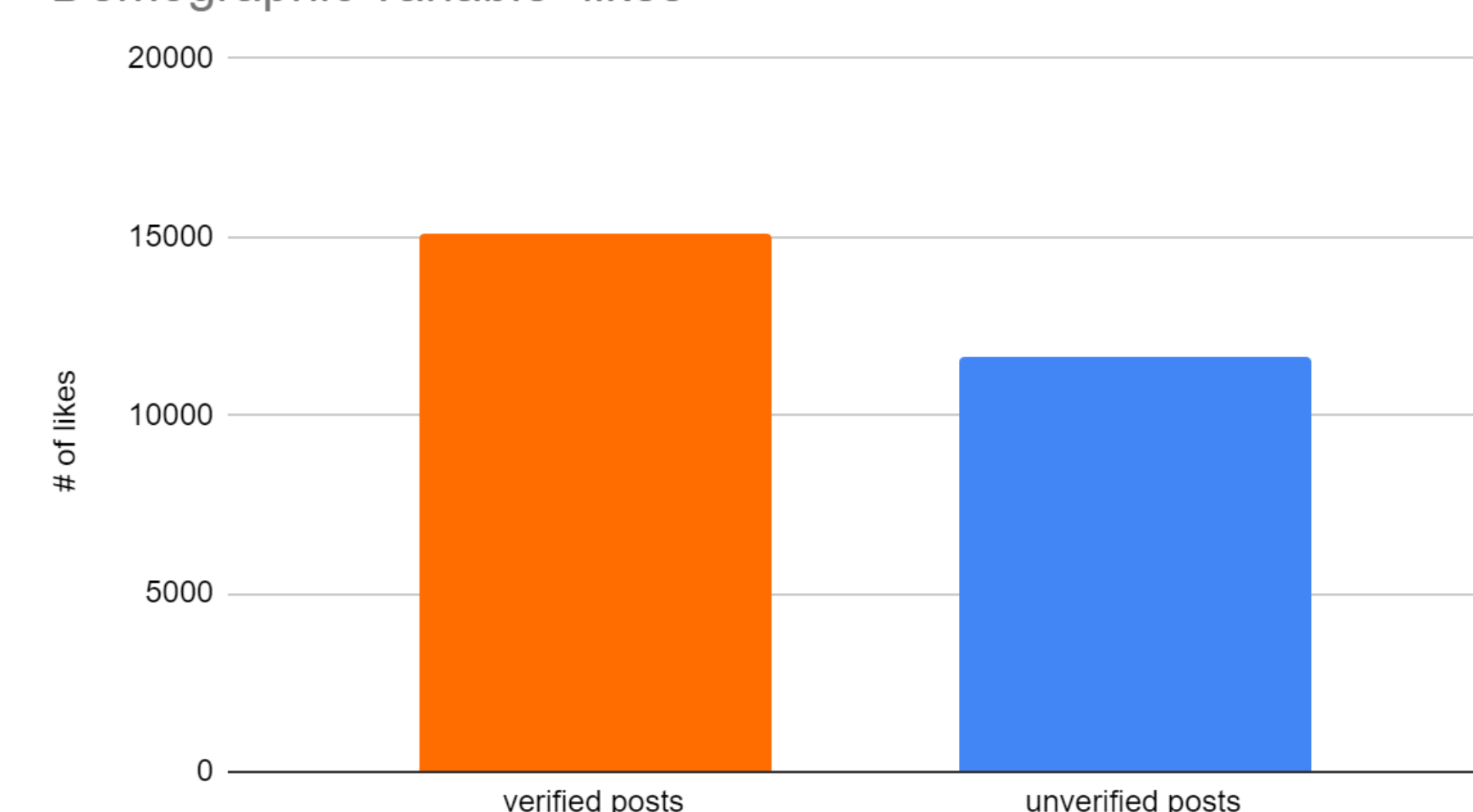
Examples:



Demographic variable - comments

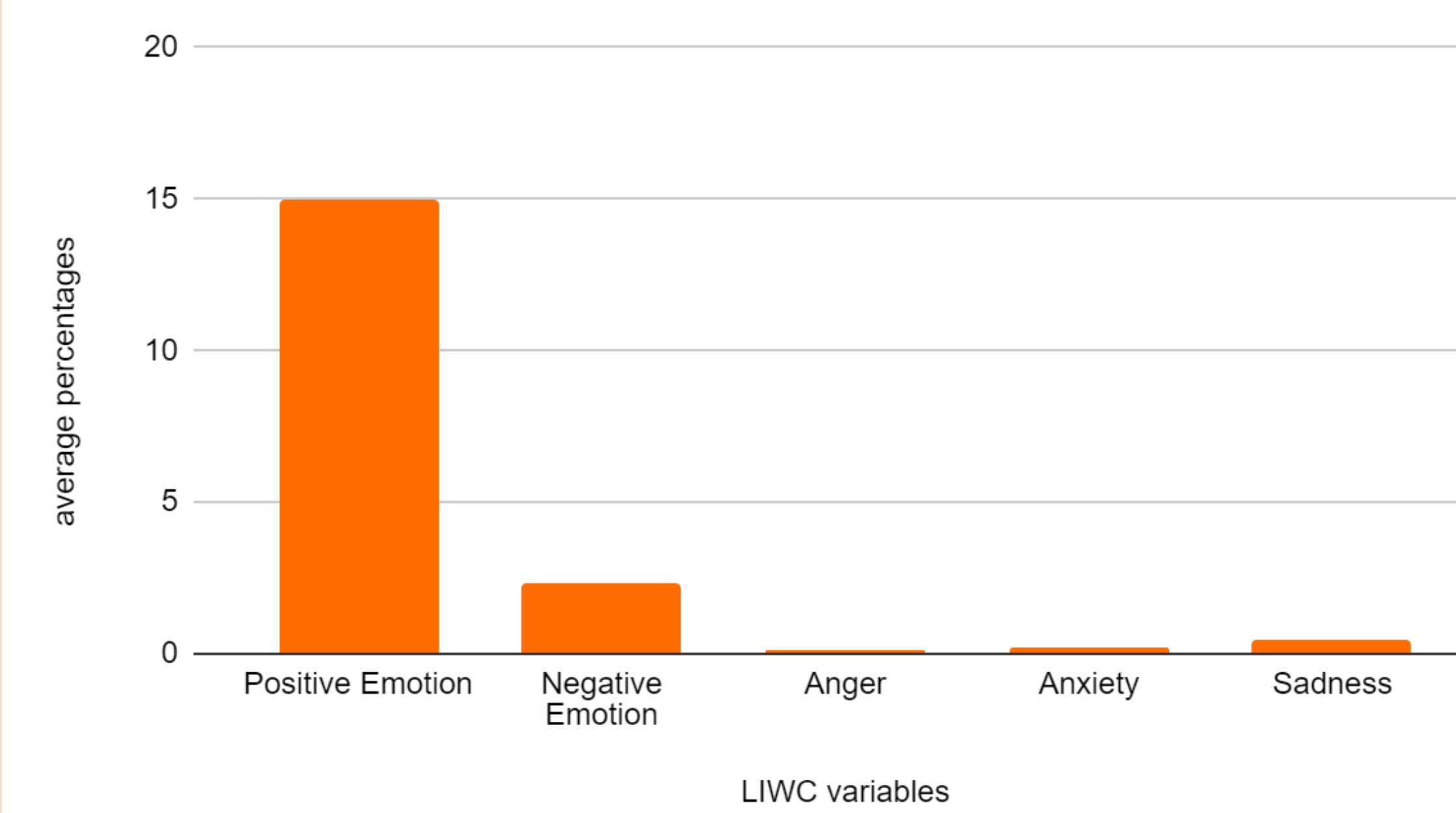


Demographic variable- likes

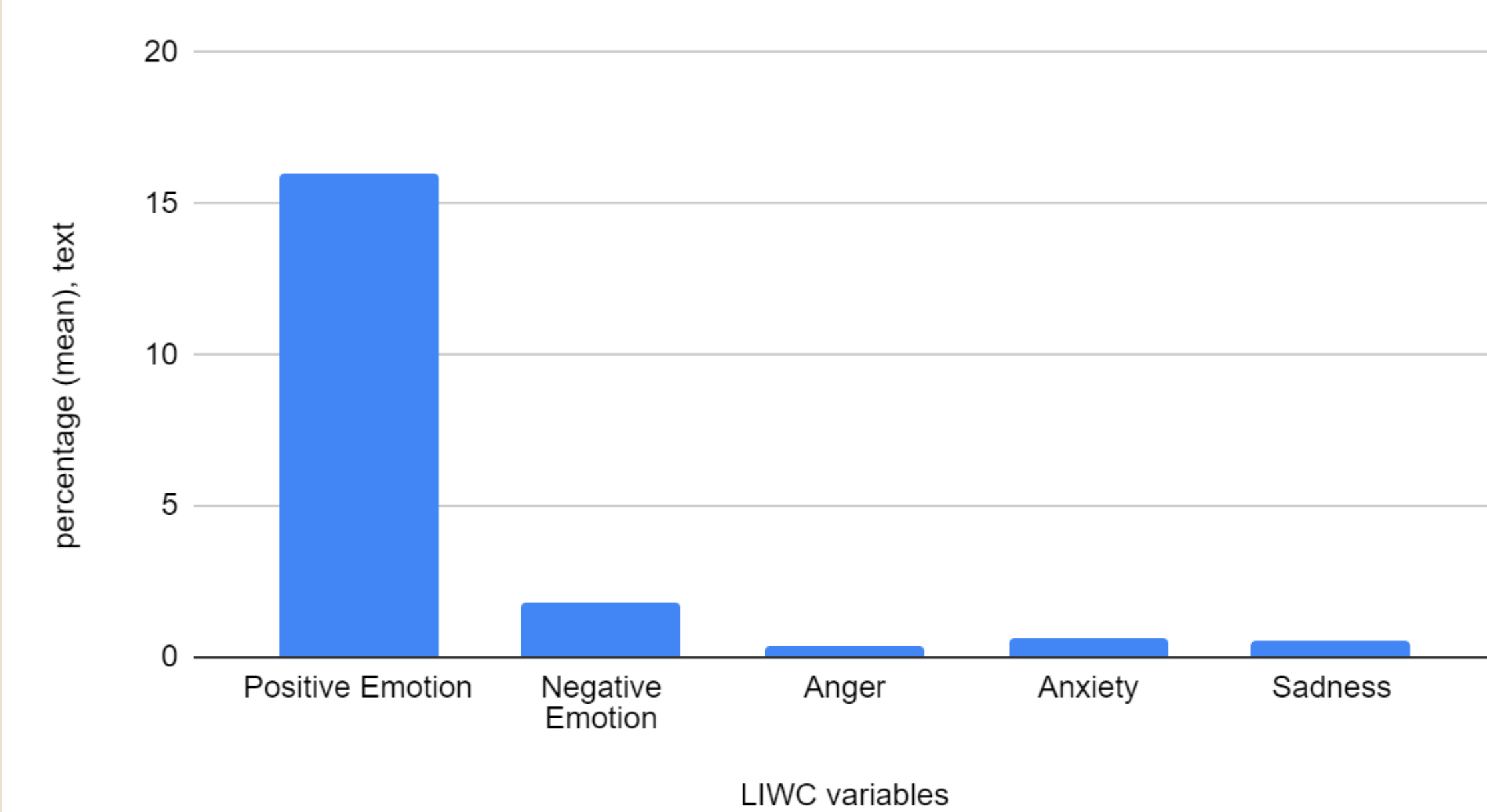


RESULTS

Means of LIWC Variables for Verified Accounts



Means of LIWC Variables for Unverified Accounts



	T-value	P-value
Positive emotion	-0.350	.727
Negative emotion	.355	.7240
Anger	-0.632	.529
Anxiety	-1.178	.242
Sadness	0.442	0.659

CONCLUSIONS

Main Findings

- The mean for positive emotion words appears higher than the means for negative emotion words, anxiety, anger, and sadness words in posts that advocate for mental health awareness.
- There are no differences in the reactions towards posts that advocate mental health awareness between verified and unverified Instagram accounts

Implications and Limitations

- I think there were no differences in the reactions to mental health posts from verified and unverified accounts because the content that people post on Instagram is more important than if the account is verified or unverified.
- For example, posting a personal experience about a mental health struggle on an unverified account might get more support than a post about a cute dog on a verified account .
- Additionally, I believe that most comments were positive because the posts encourage conversation about mental health which is necessary.
- One limitation in the study was that we only looked at 10 comments per post. Analyzing more comments may have improved results

Next Steps

- We can analyze if the type of mental health post that matters to users. The people who would be interested in this type of study are adolescents, therapists, and people that have mental health illnesses.
- A future researcher could explore whether the reactions to a post regarding a certain mental health issue differ from another post regarding a different mental health issue.

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