



College Admissions Videos on Instagram: A Sentiment Analysis of Comments on "Reaction" and "Advice" Videos

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INTRODUCTION

- College admissions play an **important role in many adolescents' stress** and have become **increasingly important** as acceptance rates to major universities have decreased
- Adolescents are increasingly at **risk of mental health disorders and problems**, and this change may be linked to the **rise of social media use** among adolescents
- Social media has been **increasingly used** by admissions officers, high school students and college students throughout the search and admissions process to share information about colleges and their application processes
- The potential for college admissions-related posts on social media to **negatively affect the mental health of adolescents** is important to understand as the college admissions process becomes increasingly competitive and, possibly, stressful for adolescents.
- The sentiment of comments on **academic related social media posts** is unknown. Thus, the current study will **fill the gap in the literature** by examining the **extent to which anxiety, anger, sadness, negative emotion, positive emotion, comparison and achievement language** is used in comments of college admission Instagram Reels and whether there are differences by admission reaction videos and admission advice videos.

The purpose of this study was to understand the frequency of emotional language expressed within comments on Instagram Reels related to college admissions and compare the frequency of this emotion between advice and reaction videos.

METHODS

This was a content analysis study of **Instagram Reel comments** on college admissions reaction and advice videos using Language Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC)

- Hashtags used:** #collegeadmissions, #acceptanceday, #acceptancereaction, #ivyleagueadmission, #commonappapplication (2 reaction videos and 2 advice videos from each)
- Analyzed 200 comments from 20 posts
 - Each video was coded as **an advice video or a reaction video**
 - Advice video (expert, recommendation, information) or reaction video (list of accepted colleges, grades, AP scores, extracurriculars, student)
 - 20 most liked comments** on each post were selected and recorded with

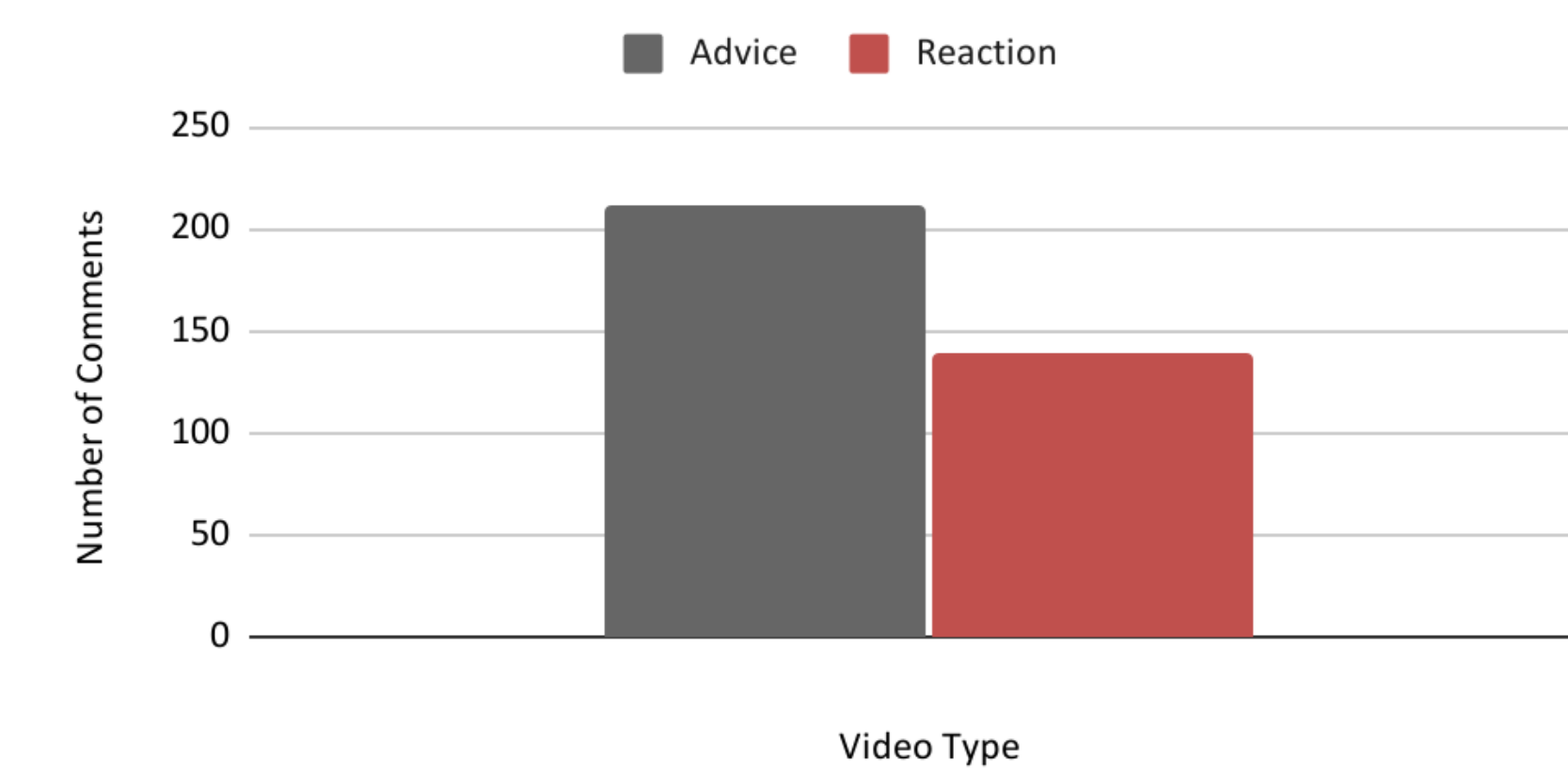
LIWC Variables	Definitions
Anxiety	Positive result for "anxiety" with LIWC coding (worried, fearful)
References	
Anger	Positive result for "anger" with LIWC coding (hate, kill, annoyed)
References	
Sadness	Positive result for "sadness" with LIWC coding (crying, grief, sad)
References	
Negative Emotion	Positive result for "negative emotion" with LIWC coding (hurt, ugly, nasty)
References	
Positive Emotion	Positive result for "positive emotion" with LIWC coding (love, nice, sweet)
References	
Comparison	Positive result for "comparison" with LIWC coding (greater, best, after)
Language	
Achievement	Positive result for "achievement" with LIWC coding (win, success, better)
Language	

Demographic Data and Analyses:

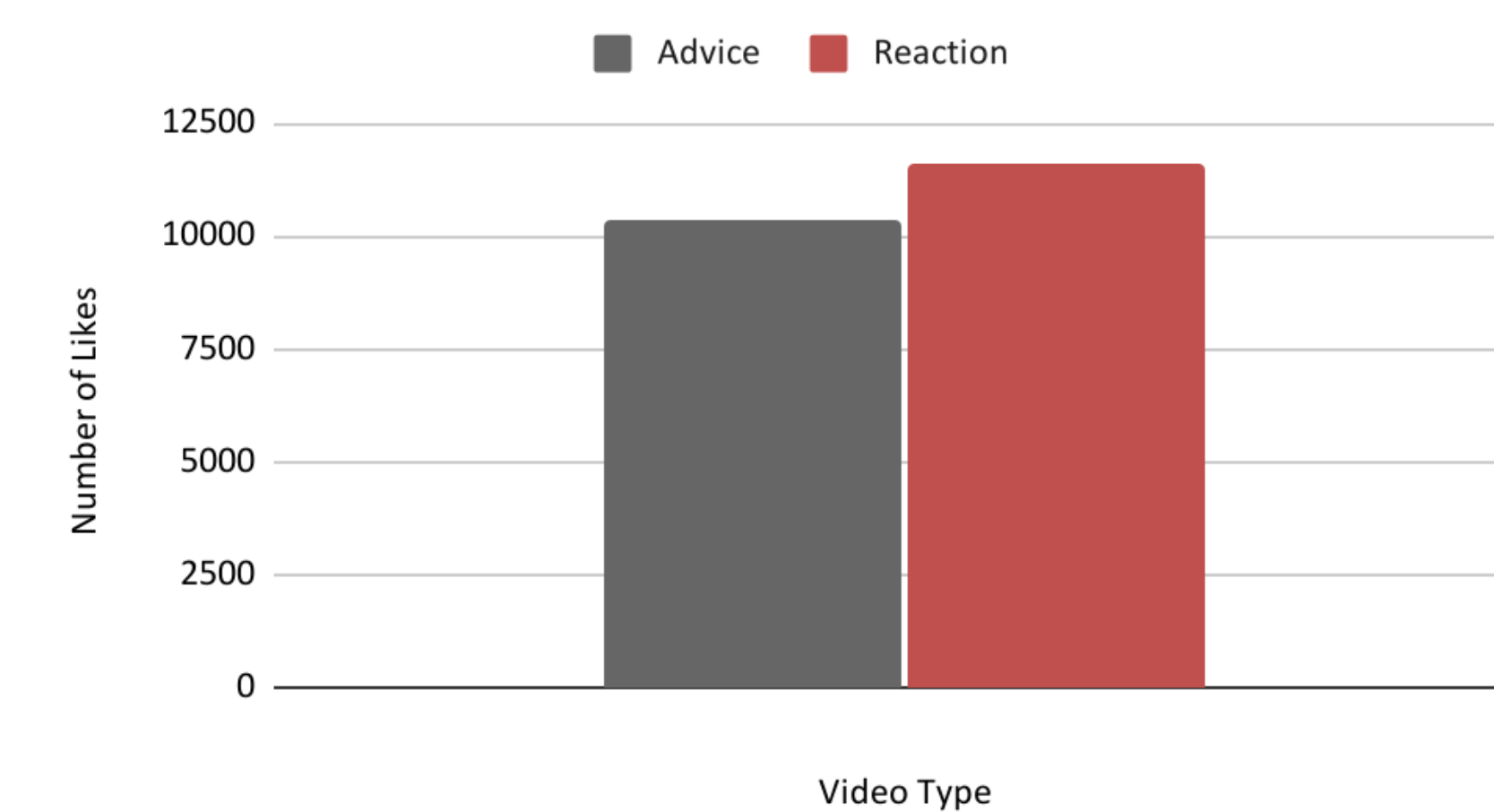
- Social media demographics, including likes and comments, were collected
- Percentage of language expressing anger, anxiety, sadness, negative emotion, positive emotion, comparison and achievement in each comment
- Independent T-test comparisons of the frequency of language pertaining to each LIWC variable for comments posted on Instagram Reels related to college admissions between advice and reaction videos

RESULTS

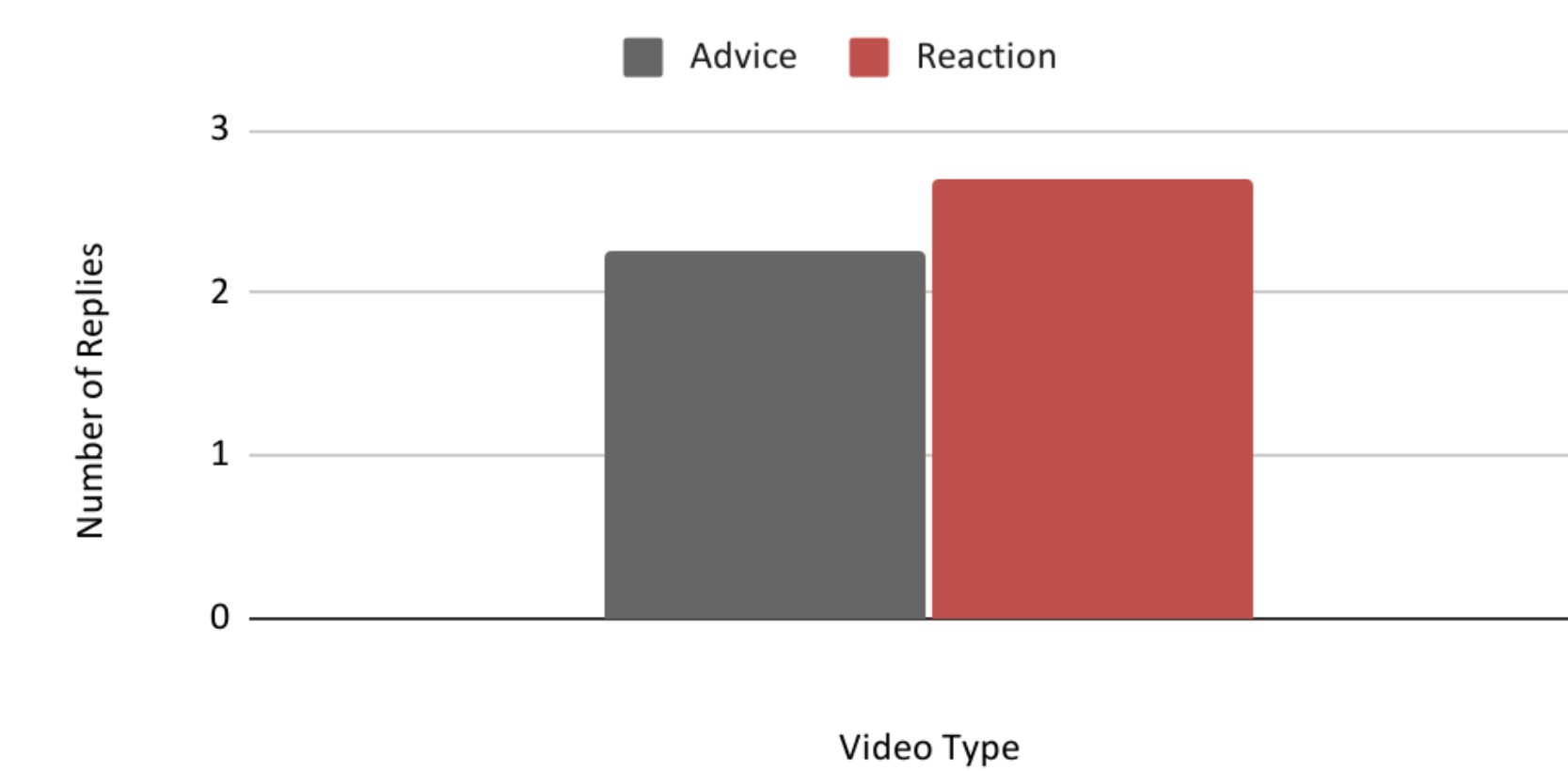
Number of Comments on Advice Videos and Reaction Videos



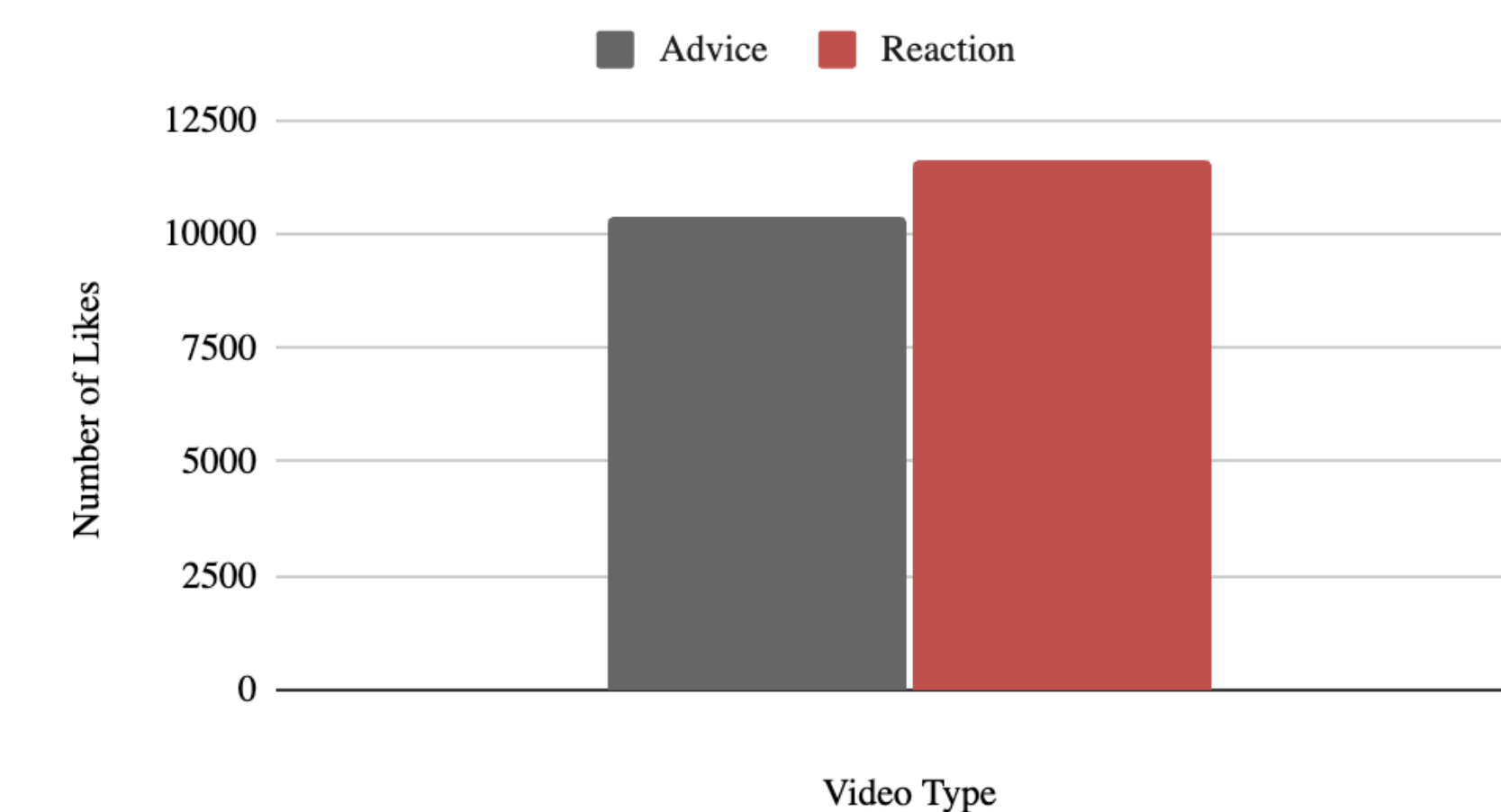
Number of Likes on Advice Videos and Reaction Videos



Number of Replies on Advice Comments and Reaction Comments



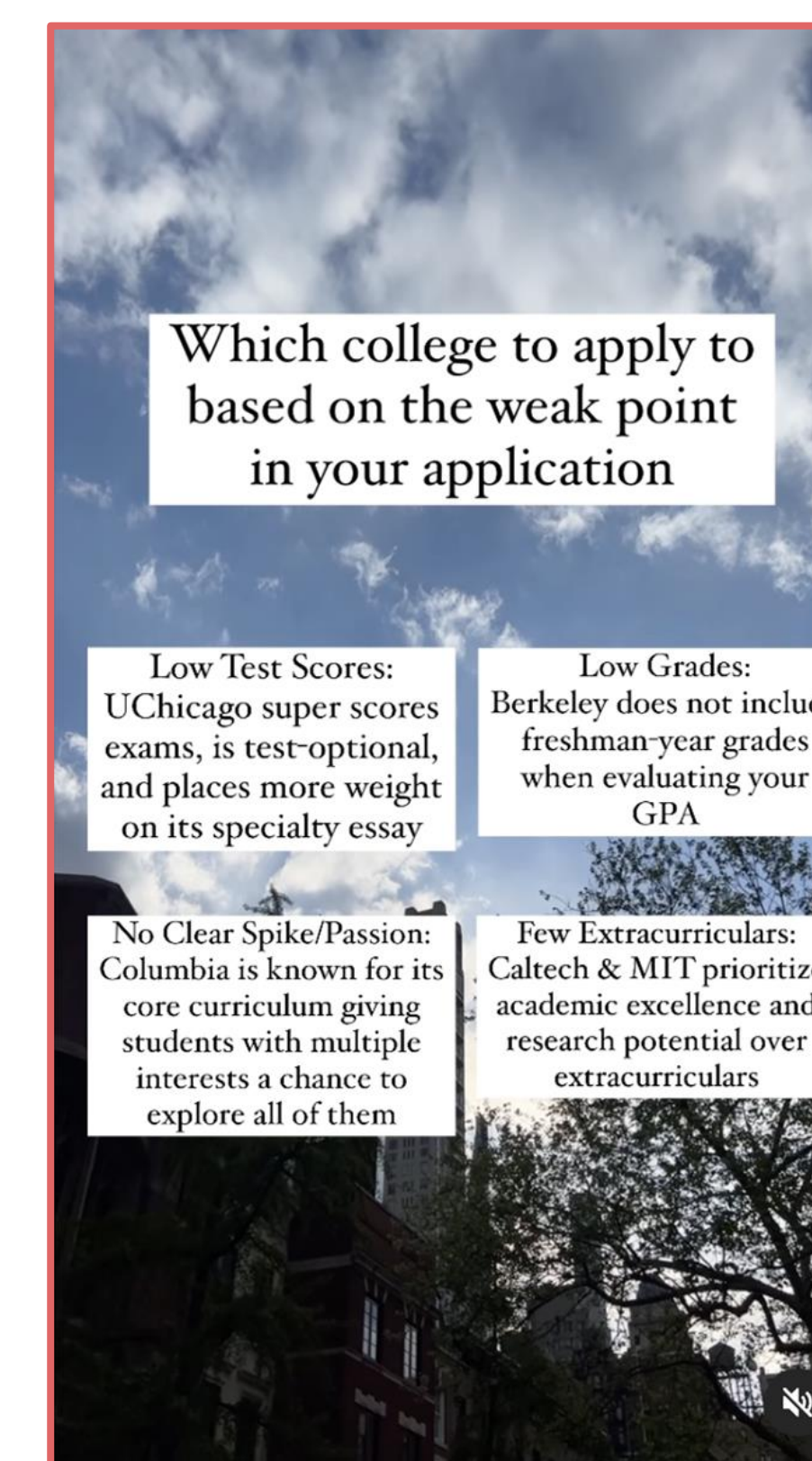
Number of Likes on Advice Videos and Reaction Videos



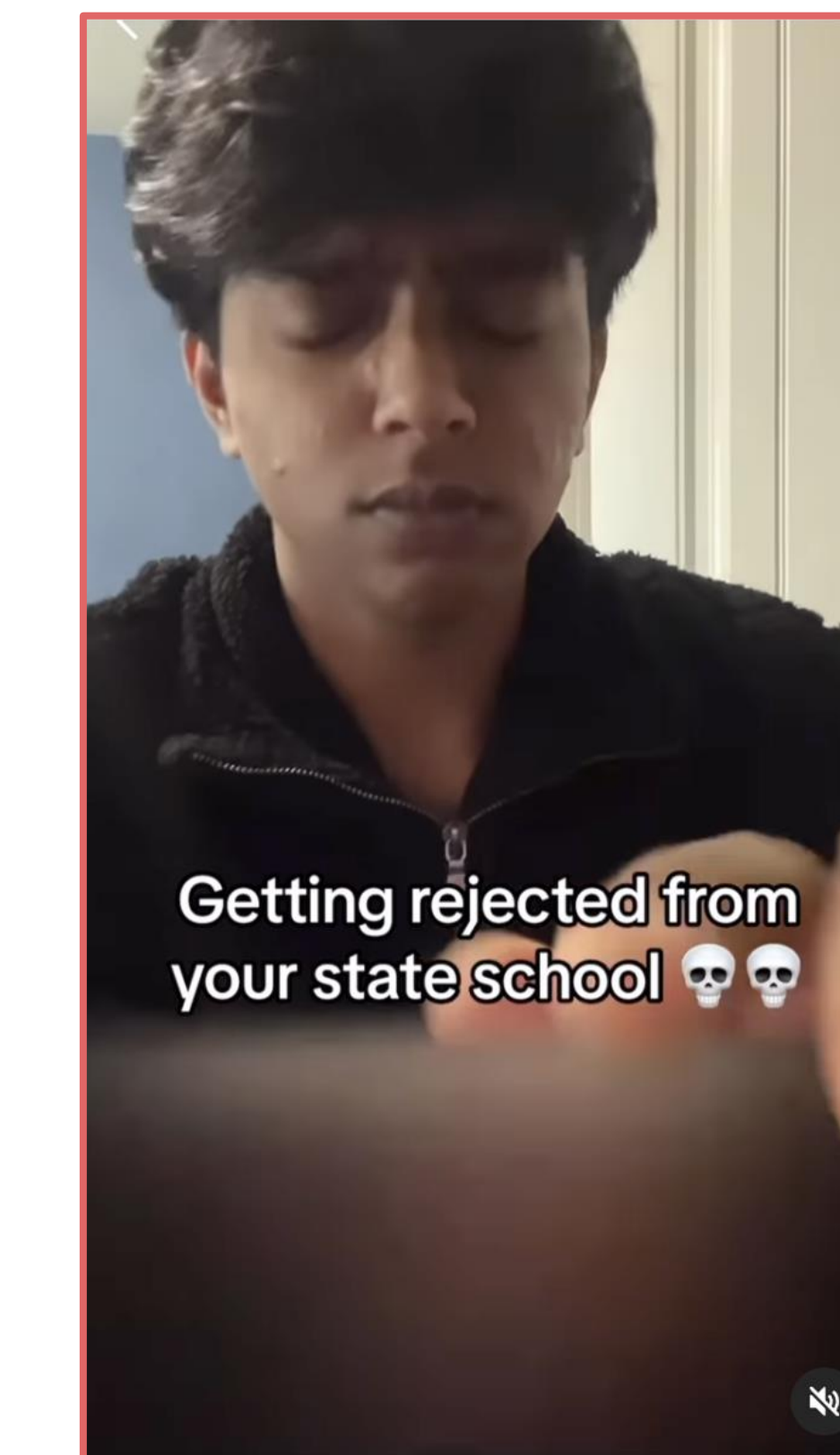
	Advice Video	Reaction Video
Reel Date	1/19/2023-7/1/2023	3/21/2023-7/6/2023

Examples of Comments Expressing LIWC Analysis Variables		
LIWC Analysis Variable	Comment Text	Percent age
Anxiety	i doubt MIT prioritizes academic excellence and research potential. Too many people with those characteristics apply and they need something to differentiate. You practically need to sell your soul to get in	3.12
Anger	oh hell nah i'll rather go to community college at this point	8.33
Sadness	i'm sorry these schools are hard	16.67
Negative Emotion	Are there any other schools for low(er) test scores but super high passion for a certain topic?	5.56
Positive Emotion	NHS is legit, NSHSS isn't	20.00
Comparison	Crazy because I'm having the same issue. I just enrolled to Morehouse, but Howard just sent my an acceptance letter....so I gotta see who has the best aid, and imma withdraw and go there	5.71
Achievement	Guess safety school is my plan	16.67

Advice Video Example



Reaction Video Example



Variable	M (SD) Advice	M (SD) Reaction	t(df) = t-test statistic, p value Independent T-test
Anxiety	0.03 (0.31)	0.01 (0.10)	t(198) = 0.65, p = .52
Anger	0.05 (0.26)	0.08 (0.83)	t(198) = -0.43 p = .67
Sadness	0.31 (1.82)	0.77 (2.83)	t(198) = -1.40 p < .16
Negative Emotion	0.57 (0.21)	1.01 (0.31)	t(198) = -1.19 p < .24
Positive Emotion	8.74 (16.95)	9.47 (13.63)	t(198) = -0.34 p < .74
Comparison	1.20 (0.35)	1.76 (0.46)	t(198) = -0.96 p < .34
Achievement	2.16 (0.52)	2.46 (0.80)	t(198) = 0.31 p < .75

CONCLUSIONS

Main Points:

- Advice videos received more comments than reaction videos; however, reaction videos received more likes, and reaction comments received more likes and replies than advice videos and advice comments, respectively
- There were no significant differences in the average frequency of words related to anxiety, anger, sadness, negative emotion, positive emotion, comparison and achievement between comments on advice videos and reaction videos

Implications:

- In general, advice videos may have received more comments on average than reaction videos because more users felt that they could personally connect with the advice videos and comment on the video more easily
- Advice video comments and reaction video comments may have had similar LIWC analysis results for all emotion-based categories because users express similar emotions in response to videos related to college admissions.
- Comparison language and achievement language may have been expressed in similar frequencies in advice and reaction video comments because users compared or expressed achievement in similar ways regardless of the content of the video

Area for Further Research:

- Emotional college admissions-related comment frequency on TikTok, Twitter and Snapchat
- Adolescent opinions on college admissions videos on social media using surveys
- Effects of college admissions related social media posts on mental health of adolescents

This could be of use to social media researchers, doctors and therapists with an interest in adolescent health.

Limitations:

- A limited data set of 200 comments may have restricted the potential for differences between reaction and advice video comments

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