

A LIWC Analysis of Instagram Comments on Edited and Unedited Posts

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Introduction

- Instagram use makes body image issues **worse** for **one in three** teenage girls
- Young women are **more likely** to **imitate** other peers who receive **high numbers** of likes and positive **appearance-related comments** on platforms such as Instagram
- Past studies did not **differentiate** between **edited and unedited** images or **explore** how comment tone might vary between the two

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether commenters respond differently to edited vs. unedited Instagram posts, in terms of comment tone and engagement.

Methods

Design

- This was a **LIWC** study conducted on Instagram

Subjects

This study analyzed the **top 5 comments** under 20 Instagram posts that fit the inclusion criteria under the hashtags **"uneditedselfie"** **"facetune"** **"editedselfie"**.

Post Inclusion Criteria:

- From the past 5 years
- The first 10 posts under **#editedselfie** and **#facetune**
- The first 10 posts under **#uneditedselfie**

Comment Inclusion criteria:

- Comment has 5 words or more
- Language is English
- Not a reply

Data Collection

Firstly, **10 edited posts** and **10 unedited posts** were found that fit under the post criteria. The **top 5 comments** were then selected from each post which fit under the comment criteria.

Measures

Variable (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC))	Examples
Positive Emotion	Love, nice, sweet
Negative Emotion	Hurt, ugly, nasty
Body	Cheek, hands, spit
Sadness	Crying, grief, sad
Affective Processes	Happy, cried
Comparisons	Greater, best, after

- Demographics (Like Count, Comment Count, Date)

Analysis

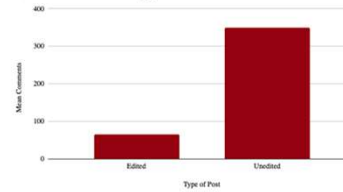
This study compared the **frequency** of each of the LIWC variables. Engagement of posts was also measured through the **amount** of likes and comments.

Results

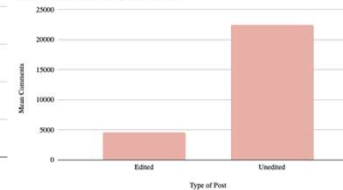
Subject Information

- The sample size contained a total of **100** comments

Comment Amount Per Type of Post



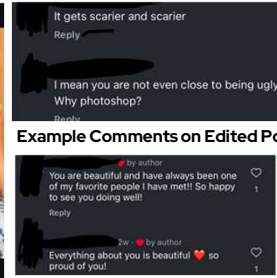
Likes Amount Per Type of Post



Example Unedited Post

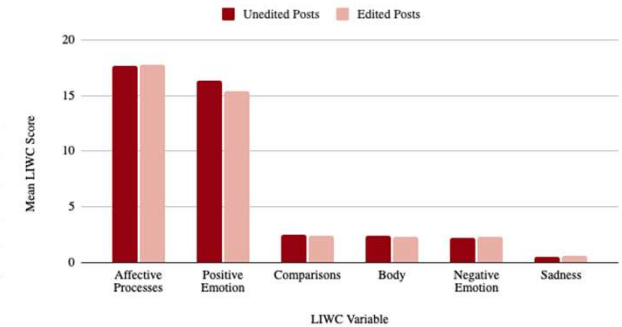


Example Edited Post



Example Comments on Edited Post

Instagram Posts LIWC Scores



Main Ideas

- The LIWC scores revealed that **unedited posts** received slightly **more positive emotional language** in the comments
- Overall, the LIWC scores for **both** edited and unedited posts were very **similar**, with only slight differences across categories
- Unedited posts received **more likes and comments** than edited posts, with over **4 times** the likes and more than **5 times** the comments on average

Conclusions

Key findings

- Unedited posts had much higher **engagement**, with more likes and comments. This could suggest that people **prefer** more genuine, unfiltered content on Instagram
- **Positive emotion** words appeared slightly more in the comments on unedited posts, which could mean viewers respond more warmly to natural images, possibly due to the **authentic feel**
- LIWC scores across all variables were very **similar between edited and unedited posts**, this suggests that editing alone does not drastically change how people comment, but could play into the type of **interaction** the post will receive

Limitations

- One **limitation** to my study is that **only 20 Instagram posts** were analyzed, which **may not represent** how people respond to edited and unedited posts across all of Instagram, therefore the top posts might have some **bias** within them (who posted the post, the caption, popularity of the account) that causes the results to **not apply to all users**

Implications

- Public health campaigns could **encourage** unedited posts as the findings suggest they **promote positive responses** and higher engagement, leading to **healthier** online habits
- Schools and mental health programs could use this insight to **teach teens about the value of online authenticity**, helping **reduce** body image issues and **improve** self esteem

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