Deciphering the Social Media Content to Identify Common Branding Themes of Bellwether Management Institutions of India

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Abstract

Social media has become an integral part of people's lives. Extant research is full of ample evidence on the impact of social media on the brand image and purchase intentions of consumers. Educational institutions have started using social media for passing information and influencing the attitudes of prospective students. There is a dearth of research on the type of content that can be used on social media to build the desired brand image as well as influence the attitude of prospective students. This study has an objective of identifying the common themes of social media content that are used by the leading IIMs, that is, IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Bangalore and IIM Calcutta. Additionally, another aim is to find the themes that drive maximum engagement. Data was extracted from Facebook and Instagram posts of IIM Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Calcutta for a period of 8 months (i.e., January 2022 to August 2022). The posts were categorized on the basis of commonality and were given a common theme for analysis. Simple descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data. Frequency and mean were used to identify the most popular themes and correlation was used to find the relationship between the number of posts and engagement. Text analysis was also done using word cloud. On the basis of the post content and most frequently used words on all three platforms, word cloud was built for the three institutions. It was

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found that the most engaging themes on Facebook were achievements, webinars, festival celebrations, public talks by experts and appreciation posts. Similarly, the most engaging themes on Instagram were university infrastructure, webinars, achievements, cultural events and festival celebrations, Furthermore, the most engaging themes on LinkedIn were farewell, inauguration, festival celebration, social events and virtual meetings. The results of this study will contribute to the extant literature on what branding themes can be used by educational institutions on social media platforms to maximize engagement.

Introduction

As technology has evolved, human beings have started preferring virtual environments for interaction rather than face-to-face interactions (del Rocío Bonilla et al., 2020). This phenomenon has affected the way service industries build relationships with their stakeholders. The omnipresent nature of social media has made it possible in portraying multiple roles. These include social media as a marketing and recruitment tool, network facilitator, teaching and learning tool and collaboration (Benson & Morgan, 2018). Social media marketing has received increased attention, especially in the marketing of higher education (Lee et al., 2020). The current generation is very aggressive when it comes to the use of social media as they spend a substantial amount of time in surfing. Universities take this as an opportunity for brand building and student recruitment (Motta & Barbosa, 2018). Most of the universities, especially in the Western world and more recently even in Asian countries have social media pages and are active on many social media platforms (Brech et al., 2017). Recent work in higher education marketing has evidence with regard to the effect of social media marketing on the brand equity of higher education institutions (Perera et al., 2022). Universities invest in paid advertisements for marketing but more so on user-generated content to influence decisions and brand perceptions among prospective students (Chen et al., 2011). Extant literature has shown that about 40% of information prospective students source is from social media (Lee & Lam, 2016). However, there are challenges with respect to getting the desired level of engagement on social media platforms. Notwithstanding the merits of social media, dealing with an elusive user merits substantial scrutiny. Being a public platform, higher education institutions should post the appropriate content to drive user engagement (Goh et al., 2013). Previous research supports the importance of social media marketing but lacks a framework on what can drive engagement on social media platforms (Perera et al., 2022). Oliveira and Figueira (2015) in their

study on social media content analysis for higher education have emphasized on the lack of research studies in this area. Similarly, Qi and Mackie (2014) echoed a similar sentiment in their study on utilizing social media technology in higher education. This research is done with an aim to identify the themes that engage the users (viz, students) the most on popular social networking sites, that is, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Among the several research questions that this article attempts to address, the most pertinent ones are as follows: What should universities post on their social media platforms to effectively engage with users? Whether there is a relationship between the number of posts on social media platforms and engagement. What are the most frequently used themes utilized by IIM Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Calcutta for posting on their social media platforms? The results of this study will contribute immensely to this rapidly growing area of social media content analysis, especially in the field of higher education. Additionally, it will help practising social media managers and content strategists on themes that can drive traffic on their social media platforms.

Literature Review

Social Media Marketing in Higher Education

When marketers use social media to fulfil their goals, it is often referred to as social media marketing (Brech et al., 2017). Marketers of all sizes try to use social media for their marketing but not all of them are equally successful (Vernuccio, 2014). Similarly, universities and institutions of higher education have also tried social media marketing but again not all of them have been able to drive success on social media (Greenwood, 2012). Over the last two decades competition has flared up in the higher education market worldwide, it is therefore imperative for higher education institutions to market themselves well with a clear-cut marketing and branding strategy (Whisman, 2011). Universities are widely using social media platforms for marketing and branding (Galan et al., 2015). At the same time, universities are also investing largely in marketing to make their position competitive worldwide (Whisman, 2011). Scholars have posited that universities are using social media platforms for building a student community where information can be posted about campus life, student activities and strengthening students' interaction and engagement (Davis et al., 2012). Tuten (2008) posits that as social media is a platform that drives active engagement, it is pivotal in building the desired brand image for universities. Extant literature states that for a university to be successful, it has to maintain strong relations with three key stakeholders, that is, current students, future students and alumni. The quality of these relations determines long-term loyalty towards the university (McAlexander & Koenig, 2001). Social media can aid in maintaining relations with its users due to its interactive nature. Literature with respect to the use of Social Media Marketing (SMM) by Higher Education Institution (HEIs) is limited; however, there is ample evidence on the successful utilization of SMM by universities and institutions in the United States (Barnes & Mattson, 2009). A recent study by Mai To et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of social media presence for marketing and branding purposes. In their study, they highlighted the key social media branding themes

used by Canadian universities. Some researchers have highlighted the use of social media sites by prospective students for searching and choosing universities (Shields & Peruta, 2018; Le et al., 2019). Prospective students mostly look for information related to student life by reading information posted by students. They are also interested in searching for various job and career opportunities they might get from a university. A university can benefit by posting these snippets of information on its social media platforms (Galan et al., 2015). According to Salgado and Vela (2019), it is possible for universities to increase student loyalty by posting positive student experiences on social media platforms and websites. María Bonilla et al. (2019) posited that social media platforms have inherent advantages over traditional media for universities due to their interactive nature.

Indian Education Institutions on Social Networking Sites

There are a large number of social networking sites that are utilized by students for social networking, however, in context of India, the most popular ones are Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn. These are relatively more popular and are also utilized by universities for their branding initiatives (Paladan, 2018). As per a leading social media portal, Facebook is the leading social media platform with the highest traffic at 58%, followed by Instagram with a traffic of 26.44%. LinkedIn is far from Facebook and Instagram but its traffic is increasing steadily with .33% (Statista, 2022). There are nearly 239.65 million users of Facebook in India, making it the country with the highest number of Facebook users. Instagram, a free application was launched in October 2010, is a hot favourite among the university-going audience of India, it has 230.25 million users in India, which is very close to Facebook. It is a social platform that allows users to post pictures with/without filters and run hashtag campaigns to increase the visibility of their posts among the social media community (Carah & Shaul, 2015; Hu et al., 2014). LinkedIn is a professional networking site, which has close to 87 million users in India (Statista, 2022). Majority of the Indian universities are active on social media platforms and have an account/page on all three popular social media platforms, that is, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn (Paladan, 2018). The top management institutions, that is, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore and Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, popularly known as IIM (A, B and C) are very active on each of the above social media platforms. IIMA has 5.61 lakh followers on its Facebook page, 89k followers on Instagram and 262,237 followers on LinkedIn. IIMB has 41205 followers on Facebook, 57,500 followers on Instagram and 267,795 followers on LinkedIn, similarly, IIMC has 127,249 followers on Facebook, 29,200 followers on Instagram and 138,741 followers on LinkedIn.

Increasing Student Engagement on Social Media Platforms

Driving user engagement is one of the major goals as well as challenges that social media managers face. There are several studies in extant literature that highlight

the factors/characteristics that can drive engagement on social media platforms. Some of them include vivid postings with pictures and calls for interaction. These kinds of posts drive the highest number of 'likes' (De Vries et al., 2012; Rauschnabel et al., 2011). Similarly, Ashley and Tuten (2015) highlighted the importance of frequent updates and incentives for user participation as crucial factors for engagement. Likewise, experiential, exclusive and image-related messages also drive user engagement. Social media can also be used to build the symbolic image of a university by posting authentic insightful stories of students and university achievements. Researchers have found that users follow university social media pages as an act of self-expression and identification. They validate this feeling of self-expression by liking pages of universities they relate to (Batra et al., 2012; Holmberg & Strannegård, 2015). Besides self-expression, other motivations of following social media pages do exist. Information seeking and entertainment are other reasons for users to follow social media pages (Baldus et al., 2015). Many universities tend to fulfil the informational needs of their users by providing regular updates on their activities. Apart from self-expression and identification, prior research has highlighted that users express love for brands that they feel suit their actual/desired self-identity. Similarly, users on social media tend to follow/display a higher level of engagement with pages that match their self-identity. For example, Hollenbeck and Kaikati (2012) have posited that users follow Facebook brand pages to convey their self/desired identity among their social media community. It is therefore the cult/heritage university brands that have a higher number of followers. Another aspect that has often been talked about with respect to engagement is frequency of posting. It has been posited that social media pages with very few postings often are found to be boring and drive low level of engagement, similarly posting very frequently tends to be annoying and over-stimulating. The challenge is to keep the number of postings optimal. It has been found that intermediate posting drives maximum interaction and engagement (Brech et al., 2017). Evaluating the success and effectiveness of posts on social networks is one of the greatest challenges that marketers face (Maria Bonilla et al., 2019). As per Barger and Labrecque (2013), post engagement in the form of shares, likes and comments are considered to be manifestations of the success of a social media post, likes, shares and comments in the case of Instagram and Facebook; retweets and replies in the case of twitter (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). There are several types of analytics tools available on social media platforms that measure the level of audience engagement.

What is missing in the literature is the common themes that can drive student engagement on social media platforms.

Methodology

We chose to utilize secondary data, that is, social media posts on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn of the top three management institutions of India, that is, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore and Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, popularly known as IIM (A, B and C). The design of this study is exploratory in nature. The research

population was social media posts of IIM (A, B and C) on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. The sampling frame was from January 2022 to August 2022 (8 months). The sample size of Facebook posts was 502, Instagram was 438 and LinkedIn was 717. The total sample size taking all three social networking sites was 1,657 posts. The sampling technique was non-probability purposive sampling, as the researcher chose the most recent posts. The posts were categorized on the basis of commonality and were given a common theme for analysis. Simple descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data. Frequency and mean were used to identify the most popular themes and correlation was used to find the relationship between number of posts and engagement. A text analysis was also done using word cloud. Descriptive analysis was done using Microsoft Excel and word cloud was generated using 'freewordcloudgenerator' an open-source platform. Correlation analysis was performed using IBM SPSS. Text was extracted from the social media posts of IIM (A, B and C) on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. On the basis of the post content and most frequently used words on all three platforms, word cloud was built for the three institutions.

Results

Social Media Post Analysis Using Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

Facebook Content Analysis

On analysing the Facebook page content of IIMA, it was found that posts related to webinar (197), achievement (168), appreciation (156), infrastructure (147) and seminar (135) were found to attract the maximum number of likes. The appreciation-related posts were few (5) in number (Table 1), but they drove a considerable number of likes (156). IIM Ahmedabad has 561,000 followers on its Facebook page, which it created on 11 August 2011. Similarly for IIM Bangalore, it was found that posts related to festival celebration (150), public talks (132), infrastructure (125), achievements (116) and book launch (94) were found to attract the maximum number of likes. The appreciation and achievement-related posts were few (9) in number (Table 2), but they drove a considerable number of likes (116 and 94). IIM Bangalore had 41,205 followers on its Facebook page, which it created on 6 August 2013. Similarly, in the case of Facebook content of IIM Calcutta, it was found that posts related to public talks (161), appreciation (158), webinar (144), achievements (137) and festival celebrations (131) were found to attract the maximum number of likes. The appreciation- and achievement-related posts were few (6 and 5) in number (Table 3), but they drove a considerable number of likes (158 and 137). IIM Calcutta had 127,249 followers on its Facebook page, which it created on 27 February 2010. For all the three institutions, achievements and appreciation posts drove the maximum number of likes.

Instagram Content Analysis

On analysing the Instagram content of IIMA, it was found that posts related to webinars (2,998), infrastructure (2,651), application updates (2,356),

Table 1. Facebook Content Analysis of IIMA.

Theme	Likes	No. of Posts	Avg No. of Likes per Post	Rank
Webinar related	4,531	23	197	1
Seminar related	1,620	12	135	5
Convocation related	1,425	15	95	8
Infrastructure related	2,940	20	147	4
Festival celebration related	1,806	14	129	6
Appreciation related	780	5	156	3
Achievement related	3,192	19	168	2
Book launch related	602	7	86	9
Public talks/podcasts/alumni talks/ panel discussion related	2,310	22	105	7
Total	19,206	137	1,218	
Followers			561,000	
Year of establishment of institute			1961	
Year of establishment of page			11 AUGUST 2012	
Rank			1	

Table 2. Facebook Content Analysis of IIM Bangalore.

Theme	Likes	No. of Posts	Avg No. of Likes per Post	Rank
Webinar	3,290	47	70	8
Seminar	2,296	28	82	6
Convocation	1,045	19	55	9
Infrastructure	3,375	27	125	3
Festival celebration	3,000	20	150	1
Appreciation	975	13	75	7
Achievement	1,044	9	116	4
Book launch	846	9	94	5
Public talks/podcasts/ alumni talks/panel discussion	1,980	15	132	2
Total	17,851	187	899	
Followers			41,205	
Year of establishment of institute			1973	
Year of establishment of page			6 AUGUST 2013	
Rank			2	

achievements (2,031) and appreciation (1,758) were found to attract the maximum number of likes. The application updates, webinar and achievements-related posts were few (1, 3 and 3) in number (Table 4), but they drove a considerable number of likes (2,356, 2,998 and 2,031). IIM Ahmedabad has 89,000 followers on its Instagram page. Similarly, the Instagram content of IIMB was analysed, it was

Table 3. Facebook Content Analysis of IIMC.

Theme	Likes	No. of Posts	Avg No. of Likes per Post	Rank
Webinar	4,608	32	144	3
Seminar	2,025	27	75	7
Convocation	966	14	69	8
Infrastructure	4,896	48	102	6
Festival celebration	2,489	19	131	5
Appreciation	948	6	158	2
Achievement	685	5	137	4
Book launch	260	4	65	9
Public talks/podcasts/alumni talks/ panel discussion	3,703	23	161	1
Total	20,580	178	1,042	
Followers		127,249		
Year of establishment of institute		1961		
Year of establishment of page		27 February 2010		
Rank		3		

Table 4. Instagram Content Analysis of IIMA.

Content	Likes	Comments	No. of Posts	Avg No. of Likes per Post	Rank
Social events	11,202	14	12	934	12
Infrastructure	127,241	358	48	2,651	2
Convocation ceremony	11,557	42	8	1,445	9
Virtual meetings	1,374	4	4	344	19
Welcome events	10,590	21	7	1,513	8
Inauguration and orientation	6,961	10	5	1,392	10
Festival celebration	19,447	12	12	1,621	7
Farewell/valedictory	6,353	9	9	706	13
Academic appreciation	15,825	18	9	1,758	5
Diversity	842	5	2	421	18
Application updates	2,536	1	1	2,536	3
Cultural events	3,448	5	3	1,149	11
Sports celebration	3,258	17	2	1,629	6
Public talks/podcasts/alumni talk	6,130	6	10	613	16
Seminars	1,302	1	2	651	15
Webinars	8,994	7	3	2,998	1
Workshops	1,074	3	2	537	17
Books and research papers	1,314	3	2	657	14
Achievements	6,093	0	3	2,031	4
Total	245,541	536	144	25,585	
Followers			89,000		
Year of establishment of inst.			1961		
Rank			1		

Table 5. Instagram Content Analysis of IIMB.

Content	Likes	Comments	No. of Posts	Avg No. of Likes per Post	Rank
Social events	12,805	53	13	985	13
Infrastructure	206,103	363	69	2,987	1
Convocation ceremony	9,666	32	9	1,074	9
Virtual meetings	5,121	10	7	732	14
Welcome events	11,367	7	9	1,263	7
Inauguration and orientation	3,084	2	3	1,028	10
Festival celebration	10,560	46	8	1,320	6
Farewell/valedictory	2,656	1	4	664	16
Academic appreciation	15,950	25	11	1,450	4
Application updates	962	9	1	962	12
Cultural events	3,904	69	2	1,952	3
Sports celebration	5,412	45	4	1,353	5
Public talks/podcasts/ alumni talk	9,156	39	14	654	17
Seminars	4,324	8	4	1,081	11
Webinars	3,648	46	3	1,216	8
Workshops	698	3	1	698	15
Books and research papers	354	1	1	354	18
Achievements	6,165	95	3	2,055	2
Total	311,935	854	166	21,828	
Followers			57,500		
Year of establishment of inst.			1973		
Rank			2		

found that posts related to infrastructure (2,987), achievements (2,055), cultural events (1,952), academic appreciation (1,450) and sports celebration (1,353) were found to attract the maximum number of likes. The achievements, cultural events and sports celebration-related posts were few (3, 2 and 4) in number (Table 5), but they drove a considerable number of likes (2,055, 1,952 and 1,353). IIM Bangalore has 57,500 followers on its Instagram page. Furthermore, on analysing the Instagram content of IIMC, it was found that posts related to festival celebrations (1,583), cultural events (1,512), infrastructure (1,423), inauguration and orientation (1,321) and virtual meetings (1,301) were found to attract the maximum number of likes. The festival celebration, cultural events and inauguration and orientation-related posts were few (7, 6 and 2) in number (Table 6) but they drove a considerable number of likes (1,583, 1,512 and 1,321). IIM Calcutta has 29,200 followers on its Instagram page.

LinkedIn Content Analysis

On analysing the LinkedIn page content of IIMA, it was found that posts related to farewell (202), article/report (198), inauguration (192), workshop (190) and festival

Table 6. Instagram Content Analysis of IIMC.

Content	Likes	Comments	No. of Posts	Avg No. of Likes Per Post	Rank
Social events	6,360	14	10	636	14
Infrastructure	52,651	228	37	1,423	3
Convocation ceremony	7,092	21	9	788	11
Virtual meetings	2,602	17	2	1,301	5
Welcome events	5,166	5	6	861	9
Inauguration and orientation	2,642	3	2	1,321	4
Festival celebration	11,081	20	7	1,583	1
Farewell/valedictory	1,746	6	2	873	8
Academic appreciation	8,256	23	8	1,032	6
Application updates	621	1	1	621	15
Cultural events	9,072	24	6	1,512	2
Sports celebration	3,195	20	5	639	13
Public talks/podcasts/alumni talk	5,472	15	15	365	17
Seminars	840	9	1	840	10
Webinars	1,980	24	2	990	7
Workshops	1,130	1	2	565	16
Books and research papers	651	0	3	217	18
Achievements	7,750	32	10	775	12
Total	128,307	463	128	16341.8	
Followers			29,200		
Year of establishment of inst.			1961		
Rank			3		

celebration (168) were found to attract the maximum number of likes. The workshop and farewell-related posts were few (5 and 6) in number (Table 7), but they drove a considerable number of likes (954 and 1,212). IIM Ahmedabad had 262,237 followers on its LinkedIn page. Similarly, on analysing the LinkedIn page content of IIMB, it was found that posts related to welcoming event (279), farewell (240), inauguration (218), charity (187) and public talks (163) were found to attract the maximum number of likes. The welcoming, farewell, inauguration and charity related posts were few (3, 3, 6 and 3) in number (Table 8), but they drove a considerable number of likes (279, 240, 218 and 187). IIM Bangalore had 267,975 followers on its LinkedIn page. Furthermore, on analysing the LinkedIn page content of IIMC, it was found that posts related to virtual meetings/online programmes (256), workshops (237), appreciation (227), social events (216) and celebrations (205) were found to attract the maximum number of likes. The workshop achievement and inauguration-related posts were few (8, 4 and 9) in number (Table 9), but they drove a considerable number of likes (237, 187 and 178). IIM Calcutta had 138,741 followers on its LinkedIn page.

Table 7. LinkedIn Content Analysis of IIMA.

Theme	Likes	Comments	Shares	No. of Posts	Avg No. of Likes per Post	Rank
Webinar	4,091	70	56	66	62	17
Public talks/ panel discussion/ conferences/	2,660	51	24	26	102	12
Achievement	4,764	86	85	31	154	7
Academic event	340	4	5	3	113	10
Application updates	291	16	3	8	36	18
Seminar	1,874	31	14	22	85	14
Inauguration	3,841	24	25	20	192	3
Festival celebration	2,849	8	17	17	168	5
Celebration	4,728	24	31	32	148	8
Workshop	954	22	9	5	190	4
Book launch	785	47	15	11	71	15
Virtual meeting/online programmes	2,614	61	4	24	109	11
Report/article	2,578	53	22	13	198	2
Appreciation	1,348	14	8	15	90	13
Welcoming event	1,084	34	13	17	64	16
Social event	632	54	6	4	158	6
Convocation	389	22	0	3	130	9
Farewell	1,212	28	2	6	202	1
Total	37,034	649	339	323	2,272	
Followers			262,237			
Year of establishment of inst.			1961			
Rank			1			

Table 8. LinkedIn Content Analysis of IIMB.

Themes	Likes	Comments	Shares	No. of Posts	Avg No. of Likes per Post	Rank
Webinar	3,865	45	21	37	104	12
Public talks/panel discussion/conferences/ Podcasts	5,210	41	8	32	163	5
Achievement	3,645	36	2	29	126	8
Academic event	1,985	23	1	14	142	6
Application updates	766	17	0	12	64	17
Seminar	1,054	36	20	15	70	16
Inauguration	654	9	8	6	218	3
Festive celebration	1,784	22	6	15	119	9
Celebration	1,138	29	3	11	103	13
Workshop	234	35	3	3	78	15

(Table 8 continued)

(Table 8 continued)

Themes	Likes	Comments	Shares	No. of Posts	Avg No. of Likes per Post	Rank
Virtual meeting/online programmes	1,204	32	14	11	109	10
Appreciation	1,098	24	22	13	84	14
Welcoming event	836	16	18	3	279	1
Social event	968	14	11	9	108	11
Convocation	668	25	0	5	134	7
Charity	561	16	0	3	187	4
Information	346	36	0	10	35	18
Farewell	719	28	5	3	240	2
Total	26,735	484	142	231	2,363	
Followers				267,975		
Year of establishment of inst.				1973		
Rank				2		

Table 9. LinkedIn Content Analysis of IIMC.

Themes	Likes	Comments	Shares	No. of Posts	Avg No. of Likes per Post	Rank
Webinar	4,308	36	2	23	187	9
Public talks/panel discussion/conferences/ Podcasts	1,987	25	0	16	124	11
Achievement	1,684	21	6	9	187	10
Academic event	308	5	9	6	51	15
Application updates	226	8	13	3	75	14
Seminar	958	36	5	8	120	12
Inauguration	3,207	22	18	4	178	10
Festive celebration	1,762	18	2	9	196	8
Celebration	3,487	13	0	17	205	5
Workshop	1,895	10	1	8	237	2
Virtual meeting/online programmes	4,861	29	3	19	256	1
Appreciation	3,398	23	5	15	227	3
Welcoming event	327	18	8	3	109	13
Social event	3,247	0	6	15	216	4
Convocation	984	0	0	5	197	7
Farewell	603	28	19	3	201	6
Total	33,242	292	97	163	2,766	
Followers				138,741		
Year of establishment of inst.				1961		
Rank				3		

Maximum Engagement on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn

It was found that IIM Bangalore was able to drive maximum engagement on its Facebook page and Instagram page in comparison to IIM Ahmedabad and Calcutta. During the period of January 2022 to August 2022, it shared 187 posts on its Facebook page and 166 posts on its Instagram page, which attracted 17,851 likes and 311,935 likes, respectively. The engagement rate on the Facebook posts was 43.32% and Instagram was 542.49% (Tables 10 and 11). Similarly, it was found that that IIM Calcutta was able to drive maximum engagement on its LinkedIn page. During the period of January 2022 to August 2022, it shared 163 posts on its LinkedIn page, which attracted 138,741 likes with an engagement* of 23.95% (Table 12). The formula used for calculation of engagement was taken from Trunfio and Rossi (2021): (Engagement = likes/followers × 100).

Correlation between Posts and Engagement on Facebook

It was found that there was a significant positive correlation between the number of posts and engagement on Facebook, r (185) = 0.614, $p < .05$, Instagram, r (176) = 0.324, $p < .05$ and LinkedIn, r (135) = 0.499, $p < .01$ (Table 13).

Table 10. Percentage Engagement of all IIMs on Facebook.

Percentage Engagement Indicating Strength of Content (March 2021–March 2022)					
Institute	Followers	Posts	Likes	Engagement	Rank
IIMB	41,205	187	17851	43.32241233	1
IIMC	127,249	178	20580	16.17301511	2
IIMA	561,000	137	19206	3.423529412	3

Table 11. Percentage Engagement of all IIMs on Instagram.

Percentage Engagement (March 2021–March 2022)					
Institute	Followers	Posts	Likes	Engagement	Rank
IIMB	57500	166	311935	542.4956522	1
IIMC	29200	128	128307	439.4075342	2
IIMA	89000	144	245541	275.888764	3

Table 12. Percentage Engagement of all IIMs on LinkedIn.

Percentage Engagement (March 2021–March 2022)					
Institute	Followers	Posts	Likes*	Engagement	Rank
IIMC	138,741	163	33,242	23.95975234	1
IIMA	262,237	323	37,034	14.12233972	2
IIMB	267,975	231	26,735	9.976676929	3

Note: *Only likes have been considered, other options like love, insightful, celebrate and funny have not been considered.

Most Engaging Themes on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn

It was found that the top five engaging themes for promotion on Facebook were achievements (421 likes per post), webinars (421 likes per post), festival celebrations (410 likes per post), public talks by experts (398 likes per post) and appreciation (389 likes per post). Similarly, the top five engaging themes for promotion on Instagram were infrastructure (7,061 likes per post), webinars (5,204 likes per post), achievements (4,861 likes per post), cultural events (4,613 likes per post) and festival celebrations (4,524 likes per post). Furthermore, the top five engaging themes for promotion on LinkedIn were farewell (643 likes per post), inauguration (588 likes per post), festival celebration (483 likes per post), social events (482 likes per post) and virtual/online meetings (474 likes per post) (Tables 14–17).

Text Analysis of Facebook Posts Using Word Cloud

Text analysis of IIMA posts revealed that the most commonly used words by IIM Ahmedabad on its Facebook posts were leadership, research, Ashank Desai centre

Table 13. Correlation between Number of Posts and Engagement on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Relationship	R	P-Value
Correlation between number of posts and engagement on Facebook	0.614**	.001
Correlation between number of posts and engagement on Facebook	0.324**	.016
Correlation between number of posts and engagement on Facebook	0.499**	.000

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 14. Most Engaging Themes for Promotion on Facebook.

	Average No. of Likes per Post				
Theme	IIMA	IIMB	IIMC	Average Likes	Rank
Webinar	197	70	144	411	2
Achievements	168	116	137	421	1
Appreciation	156	75	158	389	5
Infrastructure	147	125	102	374	
Seminars	135	82	75	292	
Public talk by experts	105	132	161	398	4
Festival celebrations	129	150	131	410	3
Book launch	86	94	65	245	
Convocation	95	55	69	219	
Followers	561,000	41,205	127,249		

Table 15. Most Engaging Themes for Promotion on Instagram.

Theme	Average Number of Likes per Post			Total Average Likes	Rank
	IIMA	IIMB	IIMC		
Workshops	537	698	565	1,800	
Webinars	2,998	1,216	990	5,204	2
Infrastructure	2,651	2,987	1,423	7,061	1
Application updates	2,536	962	621	4,119	
Achievements	2,031	2,055	775	4,861	3
Academic appreciation	1,758	1,450	1,032	4,240	
Sports celebration	1,629	1,353	639	3,621	
Festival celebration	1,621	1,320	1,583	4,524	5
Welcome events	1,513	1,263	861	3,637	
Convocation ceremony	1,445	1,074	788	3,307	
Inauguration and orientation	1,392	1,028	1,321	3,741	
Cultural events	1,149	1,952	1,512	4,613	4
Virtual meetings	344	732	1,301	2,377	
Farewell/valedictory	706	664	873	2,243	
Seminars	651	1,081	840	2,572	
Followers	89,000	57,500	29,200		

Table 16. Most Engaging Themes for Promotion on LinkedIn.

Theme	Average Number of Likes per Post			Average Likes	Rank
	IIMA	IIMB	IIMC		
Achievement	154	126	187	467	
Academic event	113	142	51	306	
Inauguration	192	218	178	588	2
Festival celebration	168	119	196	483	3
Workshop	190	78	237	505	
Virtual/online meeting	109	109	256	474	5
Social event	158	108	216	482	4
Convocation	130	134	197	461	
Farewell	202	240	201	643	1
Public talks	102	163	124	389	
Followers	262,237	267,975	138,741		

for leadership, strategy, AI, alumni, data, economy, on-campus courses, digital, webinar, international, marketing, executive education and the like. Majority of the posts highlighted research, leadership and executive education as salient differentiators and USPs of IIMA. IIM Bangalore Facebook posts revealed the multidimensional positioning that it intended to create using non-academic themes like har ghar tiranga, climate change concerns, amrit mahotsav and vista (the annual business summit that includes academic and cultural competitions)

(Figures 1–3). Apart from non-academic themes, the institute had an equal focus on academic themes like research, data analytics, entrepreneurship, faculty achievements (book launches), leadership, entrepreneurship summit and NRCEL (incubation centre for startups). Additionally, there was emphasis on women-oriented themes and eradicating inequality. Text analysis of IIM Calcutta revealed its focus on industry interface through its focus on management development programs, leadership, awards, CEO series and executive education. Other frequently used words were vision, national, global, research, data, pride, growth,

Figure 1. Word Cloud of Facebook Content of IIM Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Calcutta.
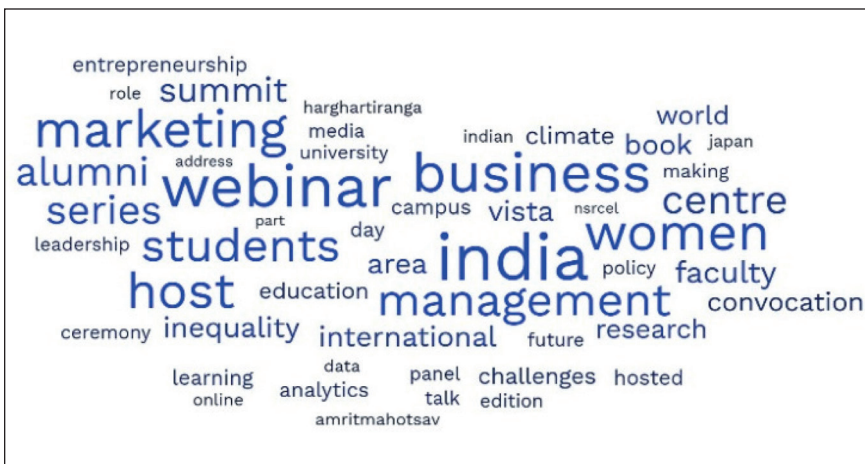

Figure 2. Word Cloud of Facebook Content of IIM Bangalore.

Figure 3. Word Cloud of Facebook Content of IIM Calcutta.

CEO and so on. There was emphasis on convocation, alumnus, marketing, global, national and growth. The positioning of IIM Calcutta was very similar to IIMA in terms of post content and themes.

Text Analysis of Instagram Posts Using Word Cloud

It was found that the most repeatedly used words by IIMA on its Instagram posts were leadership, research, webinar, science, development, analytics, artificial intelligence, Vikram Sarabhai, Louis Kahn Plaza, Ashank Desai centre for leadership development and community. It was evident that IIMA used the above words more often in its post highlighting a more rational and educational focused positioning but Instagram being a more image-oriented platform, words/themes like memories, LGBTQ, alumni, red, welcome, club, on-campus experiences, convocation and such light-hearted and nostalgia invoking themes have also found way in the body copy of the posts (Figures 4–6).

Most repeatedly used words by IIMB on its Instagram posts were campus, startup, alumni, fest celebrations, experience, startup, competitions, executive program, faculty, the place to be, eximius (entrepreneurship summit) and winners. It was clear that IIMB used the above words more often in its post highlighting a more youth-oriented positioning. Other words that found their way into the body copy of their Instagram posts were happy, journey, fest, celebrations and vista (cultural fest), journey, congratulations and performance. IIM Bangalore was very clear in its lively, vivid and colourful positioning it wanted to create on Instagram.

The most commonly used words by IIMC on its Instagram posts were MDP, leaders, research, industry executive program, convocation, global, data, international collaboration, analytics, alumni, success and so on. These words

Figure 4. Word Cloud of Instagram Content of IIM Ahmedabad.

Figure 5. Word Cloud of Instagram Content of IIM Bangalore.

were well in sync with the posts on Facebook, whereby it wants to position itself as a more rational, academic oriented and traditional institute. Some other words that found way into the body copy of its Instagram posts were pride, love, congratulate, Joka, etc. These words/themes were utilized to appeal to give the institute a youthful appeal along with a more corporate-oriented theme.

Text Analysis of LinkedIn Posts Using Word Cloud

It was found that the most commonly used words by IIMA on its LinkedIn posts were leadership, business, development, marketing, research, science, analytics, alumni, webinar, executive development, Ashank Desai centre for leadership

Figure 6. Word Cloud of Instagram Content of IIM Calcutta.

Figure 7. Word Cloud of LinkedIn Content of IIM Ahmedabad.

development, workshop and centre for logistics and transportation. Other words highlighted in the body copy of its LinkedIn page were data, transportation, alumni, strategy, economy and digital. Unlike the Instagram posts of IIM Ahmedabad, light-hearted themes did not find way in the LinkedIn posts of IIM Ahmedabad. LinkedIn being a platform for professionals, the posts reflected its academic and professional-oriented positioning. Similarly, the most commonly used words by IIMB on its LinkedIn posts were innovation, leadership, business, conference, learning, research, data and doctoral. Other words highlighted in the body copy of its LinkedIn page were alumni, innovation, competition, women, technology, international, alumni and marketing. IIMB had a sharp contrast in the

Figure 8. Word Cloud of LinkedIn Content of IIM Bangalore.

Figure 9. Word Cloud of LinkedIn Content of IIM Calcutta.

positioning of its LinkedIn page in comparison to its Facebook and Instagram page, The body copy, design and colours of the posts on LinkedIn reflected its academic and innovation-based positioning. Furthermore, frequently used words by IIM Calcutta on its LinkedIn posts were management, business, alumnus, management development program, global, leaders, award, executive programs, digital, winners, CEO, development, success, strategic and so on. Other words highlighted in the body copy were congratulate, convocation, well-deserved, team and government. IIM Calcutta continued its focus on corporate interface and connect by highlighting its global approach, MBA executive and management development programs. The positioning of IIM Calcutta was similar to IIMA both being the oldest management institutes of India (Figures 7–9).

Table 17. Comparison of Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn Pages of IIM (A, B and C).

Social Media Platform	Maximum Engagement	No. of Posts	Likes	Engagement	Correlation between Posts and Engagement	Top Themes
Facebook	IIMB	187	17,851	43.32%	0.84 (positive)	Achievements, webinars, festival celebrations, public talks by experts and appreciation.
Instagram	IIMB	166	311,935	542.49%	0.47 (positive)	Infrastructure, webinars, achievements, cultural events and festival celebrations.
LinkedIn	IIMC	163	138,741	23.95%	−0.62 (negative)	Farewell, inauguration, festival celebration, social events and virtual/online meetings.

Discussion

Social media is here to stay, youngsters are glued to this medium for information, entertainment and networking. Penetration of internet and data is on an all-time high in developing countries. Considering this in the background education institutions have been active on social media platforms. What is lacking is a common framework, themes of what should be shared to maximize engagement on social media platforms. This study was been done with an intention to fill this gap. The purpose of this study was to identify the most engaging themes on social media platforms taking cues from the posts of IIM Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Calcutta, and second, to identify which IIM out of the three selected in this study has the maximum engagement on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. Third, to investigate the correlation between posts and engagement. The study illustrates that the most engaging themes for promotion on social media were achievements of students, faculty and institutions, webinars on trending topics like AI, data analytics and digital transformation, festival celebrations, public talks by experts about entrepreneurship journey, network modelling, design thinking, financial inclusion, case-based pedagogy, data science, alumni journeys at IIMs, appreciation posts for placed students, infrastructure, cultural events, festival celebrations, farewell, inauguration, social events and virtual/online meetings. These results concur with the findings of Figueira (2018), whose study on data mining of the social media posts of top 5 higher education

institutions in the world, concluded that celebration, happy, award, congratulations, prize, pride, etc., were the words that were frequently used on their social media platforms. Furthermore, the study illustrates that IIM Bangalore was able to drive maximum engagement on Facebook and Instagram through its vivid, vibrant and diverse content. in the other IIMs, that is, IIM Ahmedabad and IIM Calcutta posted content that was more academic in orientation. This was reflected in the engagement on LinkedIn, where IIM Calcutta was able to drive maximum engagement due to its content that was more industry focussed. It was also found that there was a positive correlation between number of posts and engagement in the case of Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. These results concur with the findings of Ashley and Tuten (2015) who posit that frequent updates on social media platforms are essential for user engagement. Furthermore, this result is in contrast to a study by Figueira (2018), where it was found that notwithstanding a smaller number of posts, Stanford University had a higher level of engagement in comparison to Harvard and MIT. This contrast in results can be attributed to the difference in culture between the countries where the research is conducted.

Implications of the Study

This article makes several contributions both to academia and industry. There are less descriptive studies about use of social media in higher education. This article extends theoretical knowledge on which social media themes can be used on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn to maximize engagement with stakeholders in higher education. Several branding themes frequently used by IIM Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Calcutta were identified. These themes will be useful for practicing social media managers to increase engagement and traffic on their social media platforms. Findings of this study add to the body of knowledge; themes that could maximize engagement for HEIs social media platforms. Findings of the study also highlighted frequent posting on social media platforms to maintain visibility. Additionally, this study highlights the need for social media managers to focus on the content for platforms like LinkedIn where the audience is different in comparison to Facebook and Instagram. LinkedIn demands content that is rational and appeals to the rational needs of the users.

Limitations and Future Research

The current study has considered the social media posts of only three management institutions, that is, IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Bangalore and IIM Calcutta. The results of content analysis cannot be generalized for a diverse set of institutions. The sampling duration considered in this study was 8 months, further studies can extend the duration for a longer period. Furthermore, the current study takes into consideration only three social media platforms, that is, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, further studies can include other platforms like Twitter, Pinterest and YouTube. Future studies can take into consideration education institutions from diverse disciplines to dig deeper insights in content and analytics. More advanced statistical tests can be used for further analysis in future studies.

Conclusion

The present study attempted to identify social media branding themes used by IIM Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Calcutta. The findings from the study show that higher education institutions can post on themes related to achievements, webinars, festival celebrations, public talks by experts, appreciation posts, infrastructure, cultural events, festival celebrations, farewells, inaugurations, social events and virtual/online meetings on their social media platforms to maximize engagement with users. Additionally, it was found that there was a positive correlation between number of posts and engagement. Accordingly, universities must actively post on their social media platforms. Replication of this study with higher education institutions of varied disciplines is recommended for validating the responses across different institutions.

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