

DIALOGIC PRINCIPLES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A LONGITUDINAL
CONTENT ANALYSIS OF LAW SCHOOL INSTAGRAM USE

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DIALOGIC PRINCIPLES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A LONGITUDINAL
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Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This study explored if law schools are applying Kent and Taylor's principles of dialogic communication to Instagram. A content analysis was performed on 167 individual posts from 10 law schools. Posts were coded for whether or not they met each principle of dialogic communication, and the audience. Engagement between Instagram users was measured by followers, likes, and comments. It was found that law schools are employing Instagram in a dialogic way but that improvements could be made. This study presents a point of reference for other higher education institutions or law schools to consider when utilizing Instagram as a recruitment tool in their communication efforts.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

University websites in the U.S. prominently feature icons to one or more social media pages. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat are seen as a recruitment tool for higher education institutions since these platforms are frequently used by incoming undergraduate students (Villanti et al., 2017). However, few empirical studies have examined social media efforts and engagement. Like other higher education institutions, law schools utilize social media in an attempt to engage with audiences in a meaningful way. As today's college students move on to Juris Doctor (J.D.) and Master of Law (LL.M) programs across the country, law schools need to be mindful about what they are posting and how they are engaging with audiences, but they need the information and tools to do so. The Law School Admissions Council has previously reported that “about half of all law school applicants from 2011 to 2015 were between 22 and 24 years old” (Tomer, 2018, para. 3). And Instagram has been reported by the Pew Social Media Report (2019) to be the second most favored social media platform among American users and users 18-29 years old.

Over the last two academic years law schools have seen an increased number of law school applications. For the Fall 2019 entering class of law school students there was

a 3.3 percent increase in law school applicants per the Law School Admissions Council. Combined with last year's applicant increase that means "there's been an 11.6 percent increase over the last two years..." (Rubino, 2019, para. 1). Some in the legal community speculated that the 2017-2018 law school admissions cycle increase was due to what some called the "Trump bump" or the theory that "the president inspired more people to attend law school" (Ward, 2019, para. 3). Current projections suggest that for the 2020-2021 application cycle law school applications will continue to increase, although not as dramatically as in the last two years. This study examines law school Instagram account activity in October 2016 and October 2019 which occurred just before and after these application increases.

The current study seeks to explore the application of Kent and Taylor's (1998) public relation principles of dialogic communication (a framework for relationships formed via the internet or social media through dialogic loop, usefulness of information, generation of return visits, and conservation of visitors) on law school Instagram accounts through a longitudinal content analysis. In addition, this study explores the relationships between use of the dialogic features, engagement and potential audiences. With more people applying to law school it is important that law schools consider the content of their social media accounts as an influx of applicants means more users will be turning to social media to learn about a school. This study may also be extrapolated to gain a greater understanding of the impact of the dialogic principles in higher education social media marketing. The importance of this research is punctuated by the findings of Clark, Fine, and Scheuer (2011) that stakeholders (students) who follow a university on

more than one social media platform have an even higher perception of having a quality relationship with that university.

The results of this study will contribute to both theoretical and practical application of Kent and Taylor's (1998) dialogic principles to Instagram because there are only two existing studies on Instagram and the dialogic principles. This study would be the first time the dialogic principles were applied to law school Instagram accounts, or even higher education Instagram accounts. Wirtz and Zimbres (2018) noted existing research applies the dialogic principles to websites, blogs, and social media but that studies are overwhelmingly lacking practical advice for social media practitioners seeking to better develop use of the dialogic principles on their accounts. This study provides not only theoretical but practical implications for the use of dialogic principles in higher education Instagram accounts as social media practitioners as they navigate the most popular social media platform for their student demographic.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Marketing in Higher Education

With the rise of social media popularity, researchers studied how higher education institutions can effectively connect with students via different social media platforms. Clark, Fine, and Scheuer (2011) examined how social media engagement impacts the relationship between universities and stakeholders (students), and found a positive association between students following a university on social media and the perception of having a high-quality relationship with their university. This positive association incentivizes higher education institutions to develop better social media accounts.

A survey of twenty-eight U.S. colleges and universities examined the marketing habits of higher education institutions (Primary Research Group, 2016). The study found that private colleges had a higher regard for the use of Instagram than public institutions and that Instagram is more popular among colleges with an enrollment of less than 1,300. YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram were all seen as more effective platforms for college marketing than Facebook (Primary Research Group, 2016). The survey also found that Instagram was regarded the highest among research-oriented institutions and ranked as the third most popular social media platform as identified by all of the institutions.

According to a Pew Social Media Report (2019), Instagram is the second most favored social media platform among American users and is especially popular among users 18-29 years old. Due to its photo forward nature, studies on Instagram have often focused on its visual communication. Unlike Twitter and Facebook, text-only content cannot be created on Instagram. The rule of “image first, text second” on Instagram creates “strong visual-oriented culture with its enhanced photo-editing features” (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015, p. 552). In addition to the image/text relationship, Instagram is a mobile form of social media where posts can only be created from a mobile phone, although they can be accessed and viewed via the Web and shared through other social media platforms (Thornton, 2013). Instagram has been studied in a variety of contexts, one qualitative study explored how organizations can utilize social media sites, including Instagram, to maintain their external image and found that each Instagram post has the potential to be a way for organizations and audiences to interact (McNeely, 2012). Another study evaluated the motivations of Instagram users in Korea and found there are five primary motivations for using Instagram: social interaction, archiving, self-expression, escapism, and peeking (Lee et al., 2015). With so many motivations for using Instagram, it’s important to know more about the platform and who is utilizing it.

Framework of Dialogic Communication

Kent and Taylor (1998) were the first to propose a new framework for applying existing public relations principles to relationships and two-way communication using the internet. Kent and Taylor saw the internet as an opportunity to expand on previous public relation literature and research “to provide a procedural means whereby an organization

and its publics can communicate interactively” (Wirtz & Zimbres, 2018, p. 7). Through creating this procedural means, Kent and Taylor (1998) suggested that when public relations theory was applied to the world wide web, there were five new principles that could be utilized to study the relationships being formed dialogic loop, usefulness of information, generation of return visits, and conservation of visitors (see Table 1). Kent and Taylor (2002) hoped that a focus on dialogue and dialogic principles would be useful for revamping communication by bringing dialogue to the forefront of online communication systems.

Table 1

Definitions of the dialogic principles

Name of Principle	Description
Dialogic Loop	A feedback loop that allows organizations to create two-way communication between publics. Focuses on relationships.
Usefulness of Information	Measures how useful the information on websites was to any given public (now extended to blogs and social media)
Generation of Return Visits	The idea that content should contain features to encourage repeat visits. These features should go beyond information.
Ease of Interface	The idea that visitors should find the website easy to use. Often omitted from later studies on platforms that have built in ease of interface.
Conservation of Visitors	The idea that website visitors should be valued and encouraged to stay within the site and not want to explore other sites.

Kent and Taylor (1998) suggested that dialogic communication should be thought of as a product and not a process suggesting “that the theoretical imperative of dialogic communication is to represent the status of relationships rather than serving as a set of rules or procedures that should guide communication strategy” (Wirtz & Zimbres, 2018, p. 7). Dialogic communication is meant to be a product of social media use and not a process that provides organizations with a way to form relationships. Using technology and social media as a vector to facilitate relationships is important because social media provides organizations an ideal way to communicate with and form relationships with stakeholders without disrupting their everyday lives (Mahoney and Tang, 2017).

The use of dialogic communication has also been tied to marketing in higher education. McAllister and Taylor (2007) applied dialogic public relations principles to community college websites. This study was of particular note because Taylor was one of the founding theorists of the dialogic theory. A content analysis was conducted of the websites of nineteen Community Colleges in New Jersey. Results indicated mixed findings. Most community colleges scored high in utilization of the usefulness of information and ease of interface principle, but the majority underutilized conservation of visitors and dialogic loop. Due to the under-utilization of the dialogic loop, researchers noted that the websites were “not much different than a printed brochure” because they did not allow for a two-way exchange of information that would allow for the community colleges to build relationships with their stakeholders (McAllister & Taylor, 2007, p. 232). This study by McAllister and Taylor (2007) echoes some of the concerns researchers of the dialogic principles and social media have continued to identify in later studies.

As social media sites became more popular, organizations started extending their content from their websites to social media. Therefore, it's no surprise that Kent and Taylor's dialogic principles were extended from websites to social media sites as users turned from websites to social media to form and manage relationships. Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) were among the first to extend the dialogic principles to the microblogging site Twitter.

Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) extended the dialogic principles to social media because they saw social networking sites such as Twitter as having the tools to provide an organization with the platform and ability to engage their stakeholders in dialogic communication. Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) conducted a content analysis of the tweets of Fortune 500 companies. The content analysis found the dialogic principles were used, but not to their full potential which was consistent with the findings of previous studies examining the utilization of dialogic principles on websites and Facebook pages (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). Due to Twitter's increasing popularity at the time of Rybalko and Seltzer's (2010) study, the researchers' stated that the theoretical and practical implications of their study pointed towards social media being beneficial for organizations. However, they found it was most beneficial when the personnel responsible were able to utilize the existing features of Twitter to promote dialogic communication with stakeholders.

The dialogic principles have been applied on social media in many other varying contexts. Other researchers also applied the dialogic principles to study professional athletes' tweets and found that nearly half of the tweets in the sample were coded as dialogic in nature (Watkins & Lewis, 2014). A cross-platform study conducted on

environmental group websites and a variety of Facebook and Twitter accounts found that the dialogic principles were most likely to be employed on organization websites. Also noted were positive correlations between the specific website and Twitter in the dialogic principles of the dialogic loop and the usefulness of information to the public (Kim, Chun, Kwak, & Nam, 2014). Similarly, Watkins (2017) studied the Twitter accounts of professional athletes and found that the usefulness of information principle had a significant influence on engagement and attitude towards the athlete. Overall, researchers have discovered that organizations are utilizing four of the dialogic principles either intentionally or unintentionally, but not yet to their fullest potential. Researchers applying the dialogic principles to social media frequently omitted ease of interface from their because ease of interface is already factored into the design of the platform and not a variable that can be edited or manipulated by the organization.

One study focused on categorizing other communication research on the dialogic principles. In 2018, Wirtz and Zimbres conducted a meta-analysis of the existing peer reviewed research that applied the principles of dialogic communication to organizational websites, blogs, and social media. The goal of Wirtz and Zimbres was to provide implications for the theory of dialogic communication and practice since a similar analysis had not been conducted in over ten years. Wirtz and Zimbres (2018) note that when Kent and Taylor first introduced the idea of the dialogic principles they acknowledged that, “the relationship management potential of websites had been misunderstood by researchers and underutilized by practitioners, and this motivated them to present “dialogic communication as a theoretical framework to guide” (p. 7). Like with other studies discussed later, Wirtz and Zimbres focused on websites, blogs, Facebook,

and Twitter rather than Instagram. However, implications from their analysis are still important.

Wirtz and Zimbres (2018) found that content analysis was the most popular research method for studies on the dialogic principles at a rate of 80% . It was also determined that from this pool of peer-reviewed articles, researchers were far more likely to offer implications for practice than implications for theory. In fact, “less than 10% of the studies explicitly addressed how the results supported, challenged, extended, etc., dialogic theory or dialogic communication theory” (Wirtz & Zimbres, 2018, p. 21). However, when researchers provided practical implications they did not provide concrete examples of ways for practitioners to translate their suggestions into actionable items. Another important implication of this study is that Wirtz and Zimbres (2018) note that practitioners are applying the dialogic principles to social media but not questioning how differences between websites and social media or the rise in the use of mobile technology may affect the application of the dialogic principles (Wirtz & Zimbres, 2018, p. 25).

Dialogic Communication in Higher Education Social Media

Higher education, social media, and the dialogic principles have been studied together in a variety of contexts. Linvill, McGee, and Hicks (2012) applied dialogic public relations principles to university Twitter accounts and found that universities were unsuccessful at applying the dialogic communication principles to their Twitter accounts in a manner similar to how universities were unsuccessfully applying the dialogic principles to their websites as was discovered by McAllister and Taylor (2007). In order to conduct their research, Linvill, McGee, and Hicks (2012) created a coding scheme that

operationalized both Kent and Taylor's (2002) and Rybalko and Seltzer's (2010), work on the dialogic principles. All tweets were coded for the target audience and each dialogic principle was coded as present or not present. Results indicated that the colleges and universities in the study "primarily employed Twitter as an institutional news feed to a general population" and struggled to effectively implement dialogic principles (Linville, McGee & Hicks, 2012, pp. 638). With only 29.5% of the tweets in this study meeting the researcher's definition of dialogic loop and those tweets primarily through retweets of others, Linville, McGee, and Hicks concluded that the universities were not using the dialogic principles of Twitter to their full effect. This study was one of the first that applied the dialogic principles to social media but concluded similar findings to McAllister and Taylor (2007) which found that universities were utilizing their websites in a manner that was more similar to their printed recruiting materials rather than in a way that allowed for the dialogic principles to be fully utilized.

In some cases, researchers have found that using social media to create an institutional newsfeed can be a beneficial social media foundation for a college or university. Jeyoung, Yonghwan, and Bumsoo (2017) studied how college students' interactions with university social media pages influenced their relational satisfaction to the university. In this study, interaction was defined as sharing, reposting, posting, and liking college and university related social media messages. This study also accounted for a university's desire to utilize current students to recruit new students because prospective students "consider information from peers more trustworthy than information from other sources" (Jeyoung, Yonghwan, & Bumsoo, 2017, pp. 2). Overall, the researchers concluded that useful information shared by the university on social media

had a positive impact on the discussions the stakeholders had with their ingroup members and allowed students to increase their organizational identification with the university through positive interaction on social media. However, as noted by Mahoney and Tang (2017), dialogic loop is one of the “most important features that social media users are beginning to expect from organizations” (p. 119). Providing an institutional newsfeed that delivers inclusiveness among stakeholders is not a substitute for being able to “exchange messages with the source of the organization.” (Mahoney & Tang, 2017, p. 119).

Dialogic Principles and Instagram

Despite being a popular social media platform in America, the dialogic principles have not been frequently applied to Instagram in communication research and the two studies involving the dialogic principles and Instagram were even left out of Wirtz and Zimbres (2018) analysis of peer reviewed journal articles focusing on one or more principles of dialogic communication.

Morton (2016) examined Instagram and the dialogic principles. The research centered on Chef Jamie Oliver’s food campaign through an Instagram account and found generation of return visits to be the strongest dialogic principle utilized. This finding was contrary to previous research conducted through different forms of social media (Morton, 2016). Dialogic loop was found to be the weakest of the dialogic principles and that idea was supported by previous research which had been conducted on Twitter and Facebook. (Morton, 2016). The researcher found that all five of the dialogic principles can be

utilized on Instagram and suggested that future research was possible (Morton, 2016, pp. 86). Due to the differences between Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram it is not necessarily surprising that the findings of this first study linking the dialogic principles and Instagram differs from other social media platforms.

In 2019, Al-Kandari, Gaither, Alfahad, Dashti, and Alsaber studied how Kuwaiti banks use Instagram as a function of public relations. The mixed-research method study focused on the Instagram accounts of eight Kuwaiti individuals. Instagram was selected as the social media platform because it is the most popular social media platform in Kuwait. A content analysis was conducted to code the function of each banks' Instagram accounts and then a survey was conducted regarding the perceptions of communication practitioners. The researchers concluded that dialogic loop was not being employed to its full effect by the Kuwaiti banks, with the variable "interactive engagement" making up only 8% of coded posts. Al-Kandari, et al. (2019) determined that their research was consistent with other research focused on the dialogic principles and social media, including research from other countries. The Kuwaiti banks were using their Instagram account as a feed for promoting their brand but not for building a community.

As the only two existing studies connecting Instagram and the dialogic principles during the time of this writing, there are similarities and differences between Morton (2016) and Al-Kandari et al.'s (2019) studies. Both studied Instagram and Kent and Taylor's (1998) dialogic principles but both studies focused on a different pool of Instagram users. Morton's (2016) study focused on a specific campaign run by a celebrity while Al-Kandari et al. (2019) focused on banks in Kuwait. In both studies it is unclear

who, or how many people, were running the social media accounts or what, if any, formal training these account managers had on the dialogic principles.

Longitudinal Content Analysis

Longitudinal studies have been frequently used to study communication phenomena, including studies that focus on social media because such studies give researchers the ability to compare sets of data from a variety of time points. In longitudinal studies there are no stipulations on the length of time or the amount of data that must be collected. Some longitudinal studies focus on data collected over a period of weeks or years, whereas other longitudinal studies focus on data collected at separate times over months or years.

In a unique social media context, Carpenter and Amaravadi (2016) conducted a multi-week longitudinal study assessing the impact of a person's social network presence on their self-reporting of exercise. Rather than conduct a survey, Carpenter and Amaravadi relied on data from the social network site EveryMove, which allows users to add "friends" and post status updates that consist of self-reported exercises they have completed including the type and duration of the exercise. This data covered a one and a half year period and included daily reports of user exercise and the exercise of a user's social circle. The amount of detailed data utilized for this study is rare in a longitudinal study. Additionally, by pulling the data directly from EveryMove, researchers were able to conduct a longitudinal test on a larger scale of the social norm theory than had been previously studied. By conducting a longitudinal study on such a large scale, researchers were able to show that "week-to-week changes in the norm variables were associated

with week-to-week changes in the behavior variable” (Carpenter & Amaravadi, 2016, p. 245). However, researchers note that big data longitudinal studies have their limitations, such as the number of missing data points is unknown, the data is of unknown validity, and the self-selected group presents biases.

Compared to Carpenter and Amaravadi (2016), Chae (2018) conducted a longitudinal study with significantly less data points over a shorter period of time. Chae’s (2018) study focused on the effects of social media comparison on happiness. Chae’s (2018) study was one of the first of its kind because, in addition to the longitudinal study, it included a cross platform study focusing on a variety of social media platforms in addition to Facebook. The participants, Korean women between the ages of 20 and 39, were surveyed about social media use, social comparison, and personal happiness in two waves. Respondents from the first survey were issued the same survey a second time one month later, creating a sample of 782 women who participated in both survey waves. Although the longitudinal nature of this survey was based on two time points very close in time, the study was able to derive significant findings by comparing the participant’s happiness through social comparison at two different points of time. The first survey negatively predicted relative happiness but did not predict overall happiness as measured by the second survey issued a month later.

One longitudinal study focused on dialogic principles in public radio websites. In 2015, Bentley and Barnes used the theories of dialogue and relationship building to analyze the contents of public radio websites in 2011 and 2014. One goal of the study was to establish if Kent and Taylor’s theory of dialogue was being utilized effectively on public radio websites. Although Kent and Taylor’s theory of dialogue had been

frequently applied to websites, Bentley and Barnes (2015) noted that this theory had not been previously applied to public radio websites or used in longitudinal research.

A sample of 200 public radio websites were randomly selected, and of those, 145 of them were analyzed using the same research instrument in both 2011 and 2014. Researchers concluded that most public radio websites utilized Kent and Taylor's dialogic principles, with Ease of Use being the most prevalent principle. This principle is generally eliminated from studies involving the dialogic principles and social media due to ease of interface being built into social media by platform developers and not social media practitioners unlike websites where organizations have more control over the features incorporated on their specific website. Additionally, Bentley and Barnes (2015) calculated the change in each dialogic principle on public radio websites between 2011 and 2014, while accounting for the probability that the change may not have been deliberate.

As public radio websites were updated between 2011 and 2014, their likelihood to utilize Kent and Taylor's dialogic principles increased for all five principles based on the variables measured by Bentley and Barnes (2015). Because this was the first longitudinal study to examine dialogue theory, the theoretical and practical implications are significant and pave the way for the current longitudinal study. The Bentley and Barnes (2015) study is the most similar in context to the current study and the most similar in terms of duration since the current study focuses on two specific years and not data points collected over a consecutive period of time such as Carpenter and Amaravadi's study of EveryMove (2016).

The following research questions are proposed:

RQ1: What is the current landscape of law school Instagram use?

RQ2: How are law schools applying the principles of dialogic communication on Instagram?

RQ3: Is there a difference in how law schools applied the principles of dialogic communication on Instagram between 2016 and 2019?

RQ4: What is the relationship between utilizing dialogic communication and audience engagement on law schools' Instagram pages?

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Content Analysis

A content analysis of 10 law school Instagram accounts was conducted. The 2017 and 2020 Top 100 U.S. News and World Report law school lists were compared to establish the law schools that were on both lists. These law schools were determined to be among the top 100 law schools by U.S. News and World Report based on peer assessment; assessment by lawyers and judges; median LSAT and UGPA scores; career placement success; and faculty resources (Law School Rankings & Lists, 2017 and 2020). Once the comparison was completed there were ninety-three law schools. The U.S. News and World Report Top 100 Law School rankings are based on the previous year's data so these years were chosen to correlate with the Instagram content from 2016 and 2019. Therefore, it was important that each law school have an Instagram account in both 2016 and 2019. Of the ninety-three law schools on both Top 100 lists, each law school's Instagram account was located to establish if the law school had an Instagram account in both October 2016 and October 2019 with at least one post in each of those time frames. Of the remaining ninety-three law schools, four schools did not maintain an

Instagram account, eighteen did not post in October 2016, and six did not post in October 2019. These schools were removed from the list.

In order to create a stratified sample, the remaining sixty-nine schools were listed in rank order per the 2020 top 100 U.S. News and World Report law school list and then divided into five groups, as evenly as possible, but without separating any schools tied in the rankings. There were thirteen schools in the first group, fourteen schools in the second group, fifteen schools in the third group, fifteen schools in the fourth group, and twelve schools in the fifth group. Each list of schools was fed into a random generator then the top two schools listed were selected creating a sample of ten law schools. The law schools in the sample represented a range of public and private law schools as well as schools with large and small enrollment numbers as reported in each school's publicly available ABA Standard 509 Disclosures (2016 & 2019).

The ten most recent Instagram posts from October 2016 and October 2019 were selected from each law school's official Instagram page, starting with October 1st of each year. Only Instagram posts posted by the official Instagram page for each law school were used in this study. The researcher acknowledges that each page may be run by one or more people but assumes for purposes of this study that each Instagram page represents the message and brand of its respective law school. The Instagram accounts of the ten law schools in the sample were accessed again from a desktop computer and screenshots were taken of the first 10 posts from October 2016 and October 2019. If there were comments that extended beyond the initial screenshot of the post screenshots were taken until all comments and reply comments were captured. The screenshots were then uploaded into a Google Photo album to create the sample. There were 167 posts in total.

At the time the screenshots were taken, the number of posts and followers on each Instagram account was logged.

October was chosen as the month to examine in both 2016 and 2019 because it is the most popular month for law school recruiting events and fall semester is already in full swing. Due to the high number of admissions events as well as the content that would be generated from regular events at the law school it was thought that this month would display high amounts of posts in both years as well as a variety of content.

Sample Description

The ten law schools in the sample were from a wide variety of locations, were a mix of both public and private law schools, and had a range of enrollment sizes from approximately 250 students to 1,050 students. The schools also had a large difference in the amount of followers on their Instagram accounts ranging from less than 900 to less than 21,000. The number of posts each law school had on their Instagram account also varied from 155 to 752 (See Table 2).

Table 2

Sample Law School Demographics

Name	Enrollment	Funding	Location	Number of Followers	Number of Posts
Law School 1	Less than 600	Private	West	Less than 21,000	434
Law School 2	Less than 1,050	Public	Midwest	Less than 6,300	777
Law School 3	Less than 550	Public	West	Less than 1,600	428

Law School 4	Less than 750	Private	Midwest	Less than 1,600	155
Law School 5	Less than 700	Private	South	Less than 1,600	362
Law School 6	Less than 300	Public	West	Less than 1,800	663
Law School 7	Less than 250	Public	Midwest	Less than 1,200	752
Law School 8	Less than 650	Private	East	Less than 1,110	303
Law School 9	Less than 550	Private	East	Less than 2,300	455
Law School 10	Less than 450	Public	Midwest	Less than 900	864

Procedure

A coding scheme was developed to operationalize Kent and Taylor’s (2002) principles based on the work of Linvill, McGee, and Hicks (2012) and Morton (2016). Guided by previous research, ease of interface was omitted from the analysis features of the study as the features of Instagram are the same across each profile and are designed for simplicity.

Each post was coded for 13 key variables: (1) number of Instagram posts by the official Instagram account; (2) number of followers of the official Instagram account; (3) the year of the post (2016 or 2019); (4) the number of posts in each year (up to ten); (5) the number of 2016 law school applicants; (6) the number of 2019 law school applicants.

Based on the work of Linvill, McGee, and Hicks (2012) posts were also coded for (7) the audience for the post (prospective student, current students, faculty, alumni, or general). The coding for “parents” as the target audience was removed for this study, because law students are no longer minors and while parents may have some involvement the journey of law school is largely student driven and therefore the law schools are

primarily targeting the four other audiences. Individual posts could be coded for multiple audiences. If a target audience was not identified the audience was coded as General. Additionally, the posts were coded for (8) the dialogic principles: conservation of visitors; generation of return visits; providing useful information to a variety of publics; and maintaining dialogic loop based on the definitions crafted by Morton (2016). The only new elements added were human interest stories to conservation of return visitors in place of Morton's child-centered content and contests to generation of return visits in place of petitions. Each dialogic principle was coded as either present or not present. (Linvill, McGee & Hicks, 2012).

Lastly, (9) The number of likes on each individual post was noted as well as evidence of (10) tagging, (11) comments, (12) reply comments, and (13) hashtags. If tagging, comments, reply comments, or hashtags were present the number of each was also noted. All coding categories were based on previous literature (Dulek & Naidoo, 2017; Hicks et al., 2012; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010).

Intercoder Reliability

Two coders were trained using the coding sheet (see Appendix A) and performed an intercoder reliability test. Both coders possess a law degree and are practicing attorneys, had familiarity with law schools/higher education, and a familiarity with social media platforms.

Coders were trained using a preliminary subset of law school Instagram posts from schools outside of the Top 100, but still on the *U.S. News and World Report* Best Law School list. Twenty-five screenshots were added to a Google album. The researcher

explained the introduction section of the codebook (see Appendix B) and then gave the coders the opportunity to review the codebook, which contained examples of the various coding categories as well as definitions of each variable. The coders spent eighteen minutes reviewing the code book and then had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the materials. Both declined to ask questions.

After the coders reviewed the codebook on their own, the researcher and coders verbally reviewed five Instagram posts in the training album. The researcher and coders reviewed each post individually and then discussed the coding sheet starting with the audience variable for each post and ending with the usage of hashtags. Coders had the opportunity to ask questions and to discuss their thoughts regarding all portions that required coders to make a judgment call. This process took twenty minutes. Coders then examined each of the remaining posts individually and filled out the coding sheet prior to discussing their answers with the researcher. Any discrepancies were discussed to make sure the coders understood the codebook. This process continued for twenty-seven minutes until the coders had coded five additional posts utilizing the coding sheets. At that time both coders indicated they were comfortable using the various coding categories and the coding sheet.

Approximately 20% of the total sample (33 posts) were randomly selected for intercoder reliability, including Instagram posts from both public/private law schools and law schools of a variety of enrollment sizes. To build the sample for intercoder reliability every 5th post from the sample of 167 posts was removed from the main Google album and placed in a separate Google album for intercoder reliability. Coders conducted their coding individually over a seven day period.

An intercoder reliability check using Cohen's Kappa was run on all variables. The measurement of agreement was 40.1% for generation of return visits; 49.7% for usefulness of information; 67.2% for conservation of visitors; 94.7% for maintaining dialogic loop; 83% for audience; and 91.1% for number of comments. All other variables achieved a reliability of 100%. The measure of agreement for maintaining dialogic loop, audience, number of comments, and all other variables indicated a high level of reliability on the coding instrument and among the coders.

Since agreement was not reached on the variables Generation of Return Visits, Usefulness of Information, and Conservation of Visitors, a second training session was conducted three weeks after the first training session. The definitions originally based on Morton's 2016 study for the variables of Generation of Return Visits and Usefulness of Information were not substantially different, so the definitions were modified to make them mutually exclusive. Campaign information was moved to exclusively Generation of Return Visits and News & Updates was moved exclusively to Usefulness of Information. The definition for Conservation of Visitors remained the same. Coders were provided with the new coding sheet, updated definitions, and the photos for retraining two days in advance of the training. Coders returned their new coding sheets after ten days. Intercoder reliability was coded using Cohen's Kappa. The measure of agreement was 73.5% for generation of return visits; 92.7% for usefulness of information; and 74.4% for conservation of visitors which indicated a substantial level of agreement among the coders.

Once intercoder reliability was reached the researcher conducted a content analysis of the remaining samples two weeks after the final intercoder reliability check.

The posts which had already been downloaded into a Google photos album were coded over a period of two days.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore law school Instagram use and if law schools utilize the principles of dialogic communication on their Instagram accounts. A total of 167 Instagram posts from 10 law schools were coded to examine posting and content trends. This study also considered if there was any correlation between the use, or lack of use, of the dialogic principles and application numbers in 2016 and 2019.

Current Landscape of Law School Instagrams

Research Question 1 asked what is the current landscape of law school Instagram use? Overall, this study found that law schools were engaging with a general audience in 52% of the total posts. There was little difference between 2016 and 2019 when it came to the audience law schools were directing posts towards. The law schools were engaging with the other listed audiences as follows, Prospective Students (18%), Current Students (13.8%), Faculty/Staff (6%), and Alumni (9.6%).

The minimum number of likes on a post was 3 and the maximum number of likes was 593. Individual posts averaged a total of 104.59 likes. Seven posts were videos where the likes can only be viewed by the account holder so those values were not

counted in the totals. There were 67 comments left by other users on posts created by law schools with over 30% of those posts having one or two comments. Reply comments from law schools were unlikely and law school accounts generated 3 reply comments at a rate of 1.8%. These results show that while law schools are becoming more skilled at utilizing generation of return visitors, they are still not utilizing techniques that would increase conservation of visitors, usefulness of information, or dialogic loop.

Dialogic Principles

Research Question 2 asked how law schools are applying the principles of dialogic communication on Instagram. The law schools are applying the dialogic principles in varying ways with dialogic loop being the most used principle and generation of return visits the least used (see Table 3).

Table 3

Rate of Use of the Dialogic Principles

Dialogic Principle	Rate of Use
Conservation of Visitors	71.3%
Generation of Return Visits	27.5%
Usefulness of Information	71.3%
Dialogic Loop	71.9%

Hashtags were one of the most popular ways for law schools to engage in dialogic loop, at a rate of 64.1%. The most hashtags on a post was 15 and the majority of posts that included hashtags had four or fewer. 19.2% of the posts had one hashtag, 9% had

two hashtags, and 12% had three or four hashtags. Tagging one or more other Instagram accounts was another way for law schools to engage in dialogic loop, which they did at a rate of 21%. The most other tagged accounts on a post was 12 and the posts that included tagging were most likely to have one other tagged account. 13.2% of the posts with other tagged accounts had one account tagged, 3% had two accounts tagged, and 1.2% had three, four, or five other accounts tagged.

Research Question 3 asked if there is a difference in how law schools applied the principles of dialogic communication on Instagram between 2016 and 2019. A Chi Square test was conducted to examine the change in the use of the dialogic principles between 2016 and 2019. Law schools were found to have significantly increased their use of generation of return visits from 2016 to 2019, $\chi^2(1,167) = 7.42, p < .01$. There were no other significant increases in the use of the dialogic principles between 2016 and 2019. These results show that while law schools are becoming more skilled at utilizing generation of return visitors, they are still not utilizing techniques that would increase conservation of visitors, usefulness of information, or dialogic loop.

Research Question 4 asked what is the relationship between utilizing dialogic communication and audience engagement on law schools' Instagram pages. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine dialogic principles in order to predict the number of likes on an individual post. Results indicated that two factors significantly predicted the number of likes generated by an Instagram post. The absence of conservation of visitors significantly predicted the likes on an individual post, $F(5, 159) = -49.646, p < .05$. The presence of dialogic loop also significantly predicted the likes on an individual post $F(5, 159) = 6.24, p < .01$. These results show that while law schools are

utilizing conservation of visitors it is having a negative effect on the number of likes they are receiving whereas dialogic loop is positively influencing engagement (see Table 4.)

Table 4

Summary of multiple regression analysis for variables predicting the number of likes on an individual law school Instagram post

Predictors	Likes Per Individual Post, β
Type of Audience	.116
Conservation of Visitors	-.186*
Generation of Return Visits	.011
Usefulness of Information	-.093
Dialogic Loop	.237**

a. N = 159

b. * = $p < .05$

c. ** = $p < .01$

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study is one of the first to examine the dialogic principles and Instagram and the first to exclusively study the dialogic principles as applied to Instagram in a higher education setting. The results offer support for future studies on the dialogic principles, Instagram, and engagement. Results revealed that law schools are utilizing the principles of dialogic communication but are not taking full advantage of all of the Instagram features that allow them to engage with users or create a dialogic communication loop. Most notably, law schools were unlikely to reply to comments on their Instagram posts. The results also demonstrated a relationship between Instagram engagement and dialogic loop as well as engagement and the absence of conservation of visitors.

The law schools in the study replied to comments at a rate of 1.8%. This result was one of the most surprising of the study. By responding to user comments law schools would be opening the door for the user to create a dialogue with the account, in turn creating a dialogic loop which is the heart of the dialogic principles. Creating a dialogic loop encourages users to come back to your account time and time again. Imagine how gratifying it would be for a school to respond to a user comment/inquiry and how disappointing it could be for that same comment/inquiry to go unanswered. While

conclusions cannot be drawn as to if not replying to comments has any negative effect, comments are a crucial part of all social media platforms and a built-in feature of Instagram that allows for easy dialogic loop. However, the lack of reply comments is consistent with the findings of the studies conducted by Morton (2016) and Al-Kandari et al. (2019) which revealed that accounts were working on building their personal brand and not utilizing Instagram to build relationships with other users.

The law schools were most likely to use dialogic loop, a feedback loop that allows organizations to create two-way communication, which was inconsistent with the research and previous findings from Morton (2016) and Al-Kandari et al. (2019) who both found dialogic loop to be the least employed dialogic principle. The difference between the strongest dialogic principle in this study and other Instagram research could be due to the lack of similar studies on the dialogic principles and Instagram. Law schools may also have different social media strategies than the accounts in the other two studies. By employing the use of hashtags, tagging, and in few cases reply comments, law schools are encouraging social media users to come back to their accounts and to be part of a conversation. Students have hundreds of choices when it comes to law schools and inviting them to participate in a social media exchange could increase their perception of the law school.

The law schools were found to have an increased use of generation of return visits, the idea that content should contain features to encourage repeat visits, between 2016 and 2019 but did not increase the use of any other dialogic principles. Generation of return visits was the least used dialogic principle overall at a rate of 27.5% in this study, despite the fact that Morton (2016) found generation of return visits to be the most used

of the four dialogic principles. The differences in utilization of generation of return visits by law schools on Instagram could be due to unknown differences in strategic social media goals between a chef run account, Kuwaiti banks, and law schools. However, the difference between the law schools' use of generation of return visits and the other dialogic principles was at least 43.8% which represents a missed opportunity for law schools to employ some of the factors that would lead to a higher utilization of generation of return visits.

The only dialogic principle the law schools increased using between 2016 and 2019 was generation of return visits, which indicates an attempt (purposeful or accidental) to improve at utilizing the techniques that would increase their use of generation of return visits. The results of this study also indicate that there is room for an increase of use for the three other dialogic principles. While it may not be possible, or align with specific strategic social media goals, to use all four dialogic principles in every Instagram post there are opportunities to increase the utilization of dialogic loop, conservation of visitors, and usefulness of information in addition to generation of return visits. While the results of this study cannot answer the question as to why law schools are not utilizing the dialogic principles to their fullest extent it can certainly provide practical implications for social media practitioners, particularly those in higher education.

The results indicate a positive relationship between the use of dialogic loop and likes on an individual post which is consistent with the idea of dialogic loop being utilized to create a two-way relationship between users and Instagram accounts. However, the negative relationship between conservation of visitors and likes on an

individual post was surprising since conservation of visitors, the idea that users should be valued and encouraged to stay within the account and not want to explore other profiles, should encourage users to stay on the account and interact with the post but the opposite was found to be true in this study. Posts were coded as containing conservation of visitors for the following reasons: multiple photos (14 posts), inspirational quotes (3), and updates about student organizations or law school departments (65 posts), and human interest stories (46 posts). It is unknown why posts containing conservation of visitors would generate less likes on individual posts but perhaps updates about student organizations, academic departments, and human-interest stories are not of interest to the generalized audience law schools are posting for on Instagram. These results were surprising since dialogic loop was the most underutilized principle in other studies and because the content of conservation of visitors suggests that it should be of interest to the general Instagram audience law schools are attempting to reach. Perhaps law schools should be trying to target their utilization of conservation of visitors to specific audiences in order for it to have a more positive effect on social media users. Or maybe these posts are coming across as staged and disingenuous (which likely is not the intent) which is decreasing user engagement with posts containing conservation of visitors.

Practical Implications

The results of this study could have lasting implications on the practical application of the dialogic principles in law school or higher education Instagram accounts. One possibility for the lack of practical application is that these accounts are not being run by marketing specialists, but rather, by someone with another job in

addition to social media who has received little or no social media training. These principles, however, are not a technique that takes years of training to implement, and if law schools are more conscious in the content they are sharing on Instagram it would be easy for them to improve their use of the dialogic principles.

Overall, law schools were utilizing their accounts to try to appeal to a general audience but appealing to a specific audience in each post may allow for more effective application of the dialogic principles. Another easy way to effectively apply the dialogic principles would be for law schools to reply to comments on their posts. Replying to comments creates a two-way communication with another user and is the backbone of dialogic communication. Based on the results of research question 4, law schools seeking more engagement on their post should think about how and why they are sharing posts with conservation of visitors since those had a negative effect on engagement. In addition to these changes, law schools have already increased their use of generation of return visits between 2016 and 2019, but by adding additional structured campaigns to their Instagram accounts they can strengthen the use of this principle.

Table 5

How to translate these findings into actionable items.

Name of Principle	Actionable Item to Increase Use
Dialogic Loop	The easiest way for law schools to increase their use of dialogic loop would be to respond to comments.
Usefulness of Information	Share more facts and figures directed to a specific audience rather than to a general audience. The use of different audiences needs to be well rounded so as not to

	alienate one or more by only communicating with specific groups.
Generation of Return Visits	Use campaign specific hashtags to tie related posts together. Law schools could also increase the use of generation of return visits by running more contests.
Conservation of Visitors	Make sure content that features conservation of visitors (collages; inspirational quotes; updates about student organizations/departments; and human interest stories) are meaningful to their user base so that they do not see a decrease in post engagement as was indicated in this study.

Limitations and Discussions for Future Research

Despite several meaningful findings, the current study is not free of limitations. About two weeks after the researcher saved the posts for this study in a Google album Instagram began hiding likes on some pages in a pilot program which removes the public likes tally for some accounts. Rather than seeing a total number of likes a user will see “account likes this and others”. Only the account owner will be able to see the total number of likes from their account. A representative from Facebook, the owner of Instagram, stated “We understand that the number of likes is an important metric for many creators, and while this test is in exploratory stages, we are thinking through ways for creators to communicate value to their partners” (Yurieff, para. 9, 2019). At the time of writing, this pilot program had not yet been determined to be a permanent change for all Instagram users across the world.

Because of the study’s limited sample size, other studies should be done to generalize the research findings to other higher education programs and other forms of

social media. Additional studies could also focus on a more in-depth multi-year comparison of the correlation between the dialogic principles and engagement. This study does present a point of reference for other higher education institutions or law schools to consider when utilizing Instagram in their communication efforts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE CODING SHEET

1. Coder ID _____

2. Law School Name _____

3. Case Number _____

Please complete the school information once per school per year then leave this section blank.

School Information:

4. Number of Posts _____

5. Number of Followers _____

6. Year 2016 2019 How many posts were coded? _____

7A. Number of 2016 Law School Applicants _____

7B. Number of 2019 Law School Applicants _____

Post Information:

8. Audience for the Post:

1 = Prospective Students (typically include current students sharing their personal experiences to interest other students or some call to action about applying or attending an event.)	2 = Current Students (include information that only applies to current students, things like class scheduling and graduation tracking, as well as specific events that are geared
--	---

	towards current students.)
3 = Faculty/Staff (highlight the accomplishments and share human interest stories about current or past faculty members.)	4 = Alumni (will be for alumni events, a call to action for alumni volunteers, or a call for donations.)
5 = General (a post can be categorized in more than one way and should only be coded as general if an audience cannot be identified)	6 = Other, please specify _____ (if the post does not fit into one of the other identified categories, please select other and specify the audience).

Dialogic Principles:

- | | | | | |
|-----|--|-------------|----|-----------------|
| 9. | Conservation of Visitors | 1 = Present | or | 2 = Not Present |
| 10. | Generation of Return Visits | 1 = Present | or | 2 = Not Present |
| 11. | Providing Useful Information to a Variety of Publics | 1 = Present | or | 2 = Not Present |
| 12. | Maintaining Dialogic Loop | 1 = Present | or | 2 = Not Present |

13. Number of Post Likes _____

14. Tagging 1 = Yes or 2 = No Number of Tagged Accounts _____

15. Comments 1 = Yes or 2 = No Number of Comments _____

16. Reply Comments 1 = Yes or 2 = No Number of Reply Comments _____

17. Hashtags 1 = Yes or 2 = No Number of Hashtags _____

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE CODING BOOK

Instagram Coding Book

Coders will be evaluating Instagram posts from October, 2016 and October, 2019 from the Top 100 Law Schools as identified by U.S. News & World Report in both the 2017 and 2020 reports, published in March, 2016 and March, 2019, respectively. The photo will always be to the left side of the post, there must be a photo in order for each post to be created. The caption will always be to the right side of the post, the caption area can be left blank, filled with text, or filled with an emoji only. Coders will use both parts of the post for coding purposes.

1. Coder I.D.: The coder ID will be identified as C1, C2, or C3 dependent upon which coder collected data.
2. Case number: a case number will be assigned to each Instagram post (1-200).
3. Law School Name: The law school name from the U.S. News World Report Top 100 List will be filled in on each coding sheet.

School Information:

Please complete the school information once per school per year then leave this section blank.

4. Number of posts: the number of posts a page has can be found at the top of the Instagram profile. A post is any picture that has been created by and posted to the law school Instagram account.



Above is an example image of where one can find the number of posts of an Instagram page.

This page has 383 posts.

5. Number of followers: the number of followers a page has can be found at the top of the Instagram profile. Following a page allows users to continually view content from a user on their homepage.



Above is an example image of where one can find the number of followers of an Instagram page.

This page has 660 followers

6. Coders will need to note the year for each post (2019 or 2016). Coders will also need to indicate the total number of posts coded per year.

7A. Number of 2016 Law School Applicants this information can be found on the ABA website under [Standard 509 Disclosures](#).

7B. Number of 2019 Law School Applicants this information can be found on the ABA website under [Standard 509 Disclosures](#).

Statistical Profile of the Class of 2020

- 2938 applicants
- 240 new offers
- 203 new offers accepted
- 85% yield on new offers
- 246 net admits¹
- 205 matriculated
- 83% yield on net admits
- 53% women
- 48% students of color
- 21% first generation professionals
- 9% first generation college students
- 25 average age
- 32 states represented
- 16% directly from undergrad
- 38% 1-2 years out
- 46% 3+ years out

An example of the applicant data collected from a law school website. In this case, there were 2938 applicants to this particular law school in 2017.

GPA and LSAT Scores (calendar year ^{**})			
	Total	Full-Time	Part-Time
# of apps	1,224	768	456
# of offers	588	400	188
# of matriculants	158	123	35
75th Percentile GPA	3.54	3.54	3.47
50th Percentile GPA	3.33	3.34	3.21
25th Percentile GPA	3.02	3.06	2.95
# not incl. in GPA percentile calc.	3.00	2.00	1.00
75th Percentile LSAT	154	154	154
50th Percentile LSAT	152	152	151
25 Percentile LSAT	149	149	149
# not incl. in LSAT percentile calc.	0	-1	1

An example from a standard 509 report -- this school had 1,224 applicants.

Post Information:

8. The audience of each post is measured by the following scale: **1= prospective students, 2 = current students, 3 = faculty/staff, 4 = alumni, 5 = general** (a post can be categorized in more than one way and should only be coded as general if an audience cannot be identified), **6 = other**, please specify (if the post does not fit into one of the above identified categories, please select other and specify the audience).

Posts geared to prospective students typically include current students sharing

their personal experiences to interest other students or some call to action about applying or attending an event.



An example of a post geared towards prospective students, containing a current student with his personal story.

Posts geared to current students include information that only applies to current students, things like class scheduling and graduation tracking, as well as specific events that are geared towards current students.



An example of a post geared at current students, graduation tracking is something

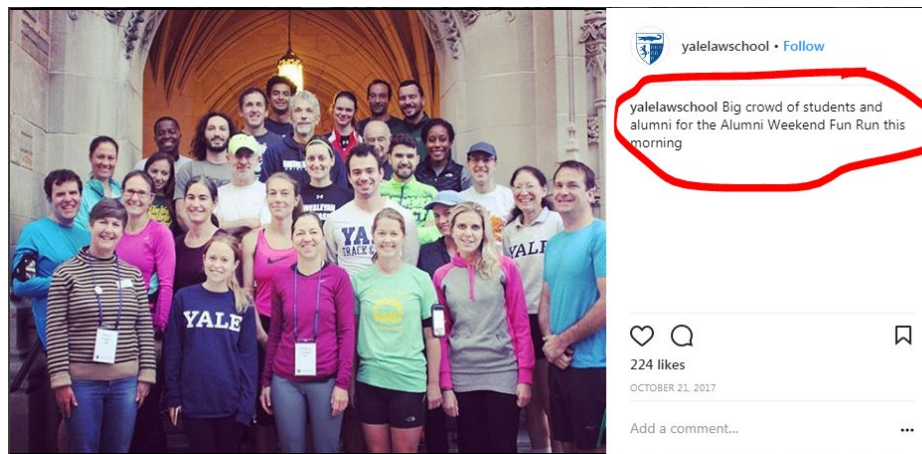
that would only apply to current students.

Posts for faculty members highlight the accomplishments and share human interest stories about of current or past faculty members.



An example of an Instagram post directed at faculty members.

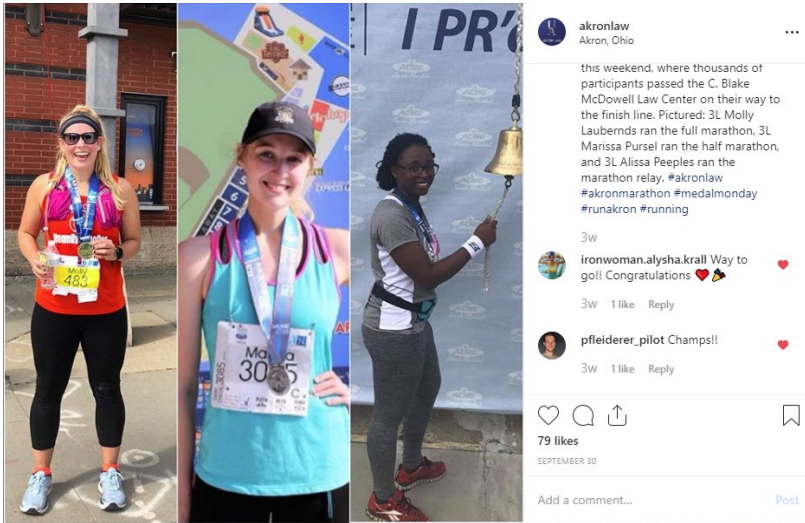
Posts for alumni will be for alumni events, a call to action for alumni volunteers, or a call for donations.



An example of a post involving alumni – this post is highlighting alumni week events.

- 9. Conservation of Visitors:** Deals with the law school being mindful of the content posted, taking care to ensure that the public’s interest is valued. **Does the post contain: Collages (multiple photos in one post); Inspirational Quotes; Updates about Student Organizations or Law School Departments; Human Interest**

Stories (a feature of a faculty/student/alumni that presents their problems, concerns, or achievements). If the post contains one or more of these things, conservation of visitors is present.



One example of a collage post -- a post with multiple photos in one post.



Another example of a collage post -- the circled dots indicate multiple photos that a user can scroll through.



An example of a post with an inspirational quote -- quotes may also be contained in the text portion of a post.



An example of a post containing a student organization update.



One example of a post containing a human interest story -- a story about students or faculty that presents achievements in an interesting way.

10. Generation of Return Visits: Does the content being posted encourage users to return to the Instagram account on more than one occasion? **Does the post contain: Campaign Information? Campaign Support? Contests? Prompts for Comments?** If the post contains one or more of these things, generation of return visits is present.



A post that appears to be part of a series of posts designed to generate a response -- campaign information.



An example of campaign support -- this post is about one of many events for the #HLS200 campaign.



An example of a contest -- contests may be internal or external. This required incoming students to utilize a certain hashtag.



This post is an example of a prompt for comment -- it asks users a direct question. The question may also appear in the photo and not the text portion of the post.

11. **Usefulness of Information:** Deals with ensuring that the content of the post is of general value to the Instagram users accessing the page. **Does the post contain: Educational Information; Facts and Figures; or News and Updates (update: to bring up to date by adding new information, corrections, or a new statement or status related to the law school, including but not limited to its students, alumni, faculty, staff, administration, departments, student organizations, and other activities. If yes to any, usefulness of information is present.**



A post that appears to be part of a series of posts designed to generate a response -- campaign information.



This post contains some educational information -- think about this like a fun fact.



This post contains facts and figures -- information about the school that is numerical in nature. Other examples would include dates of specific events (XYZ law was founded in 1902).

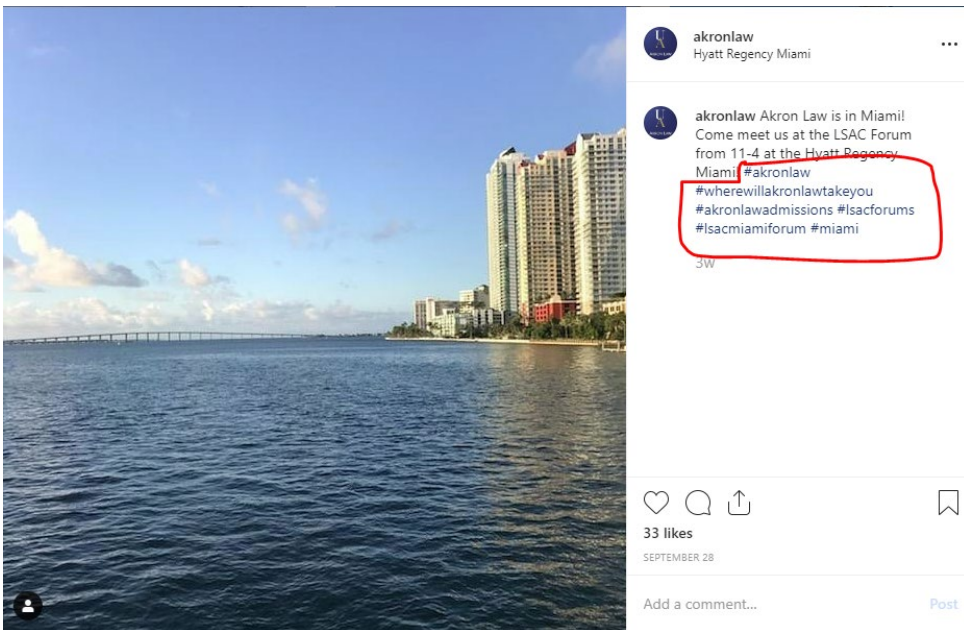


An example of a post containing news and updates -- this post lets users know that applications to apply are now open.



Another example of a post containing news and updates -- this post lets users know that an event is happening.

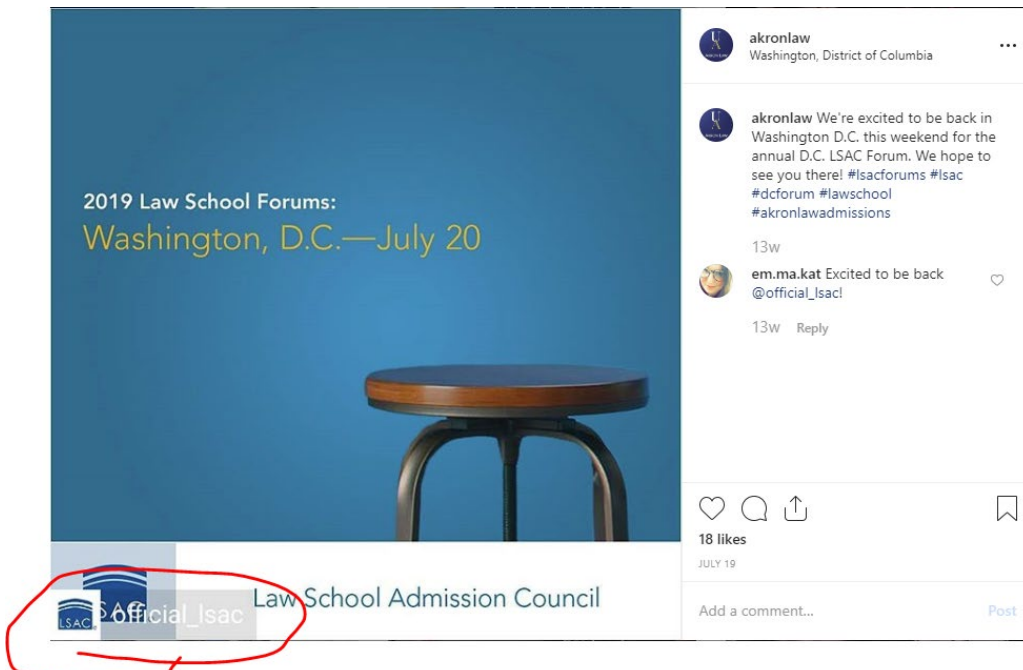
12. **Dialogic Loop:** Dialogic loop occurs when the law school account is engaging in discussion with other users **Does the post contain any of the following: Hashtags; Prompts; Regrams from other users; Tagging of Other Users; or Reply Comments? If yes, dialogic loop is present.**



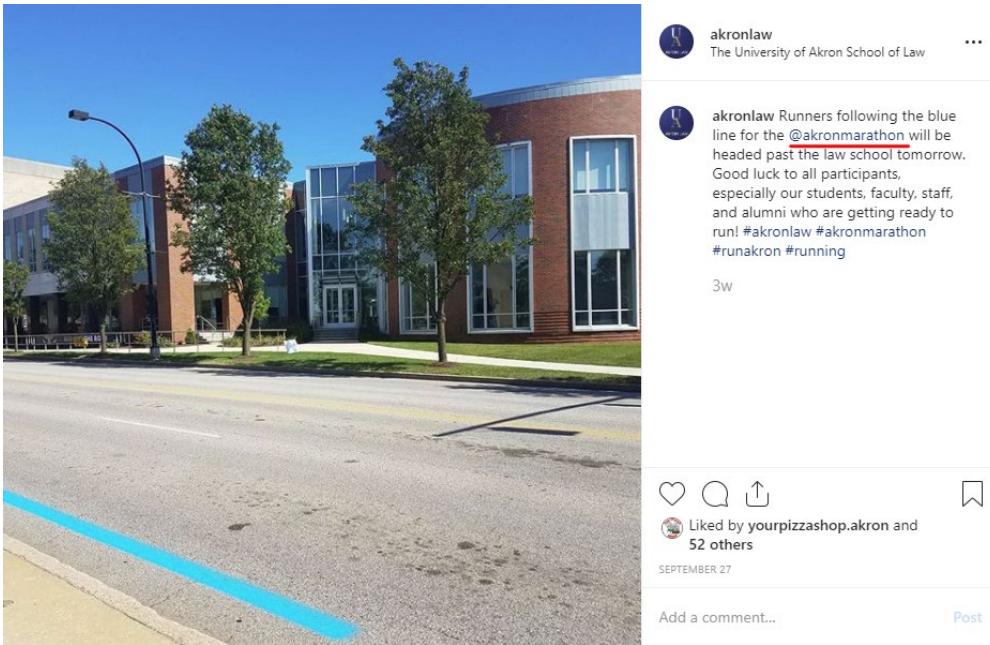
Hashtags allow users to find other posts of similar interest -- please note if a post has hashtags and how many are used. The example includes six hashtags.



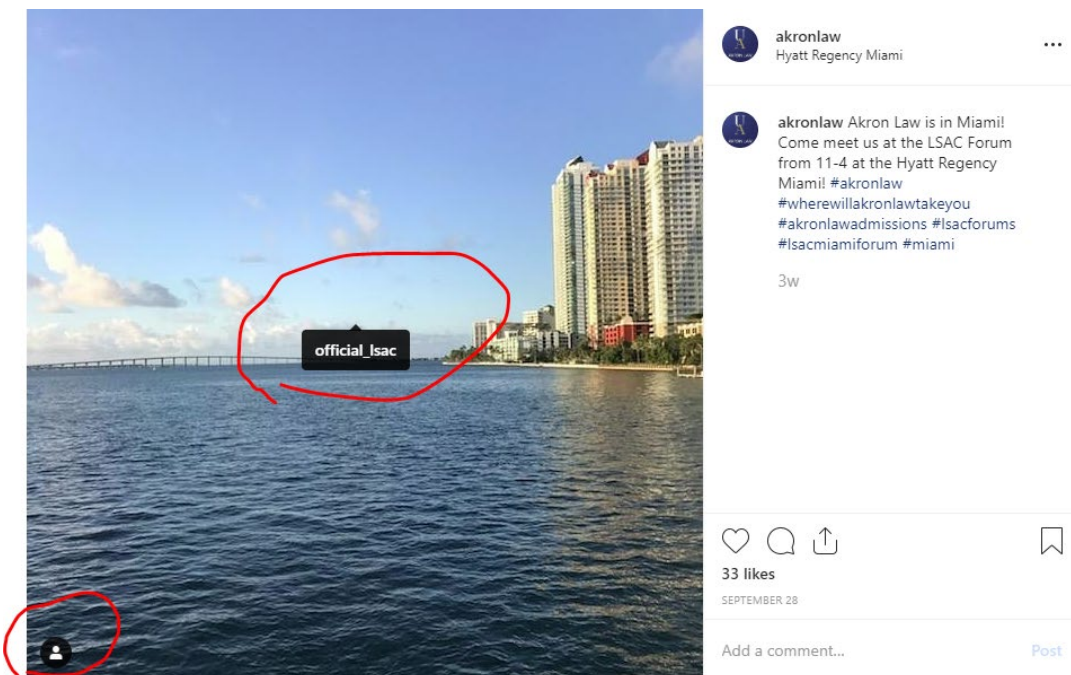
This post is an example of a prompt for comment -- it asks users a direct question. The question may also appear in the photo and not the text portion of the post.



Accounts can use an outside app to share the posts of another user. The regram is indicated here by the first account's logo in the bottom left corner.

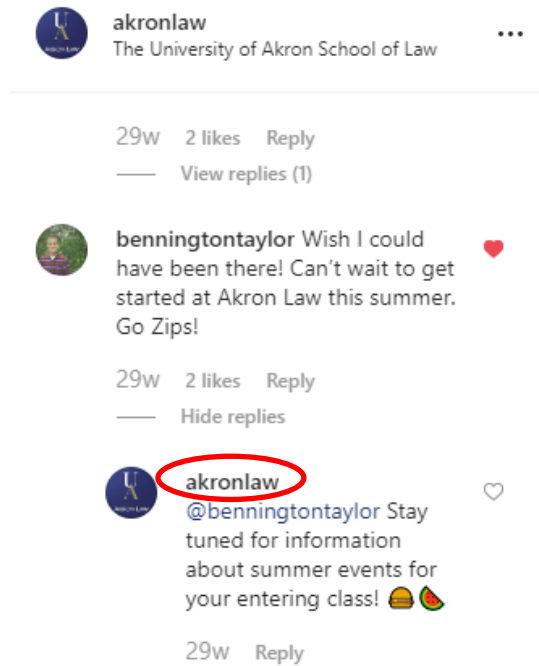


Users can be tagged in two ways -- one is by use of the @ symbol. This post includes one tag. Please note the number of tags for each post



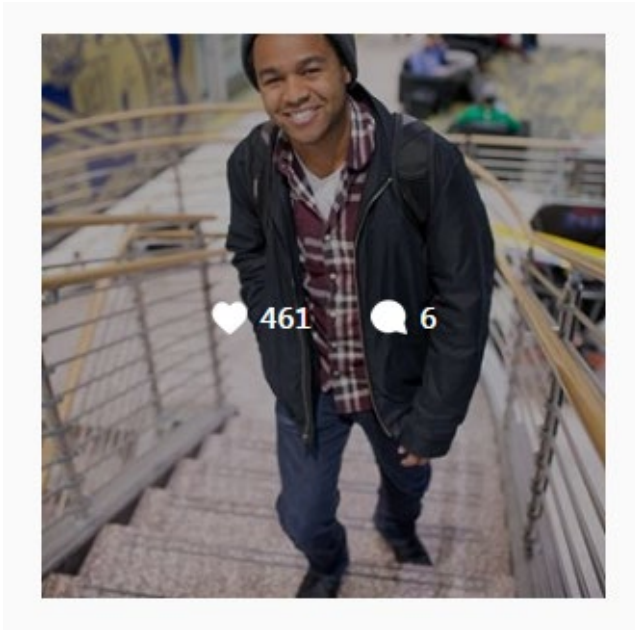
Users can also be tagged directly in the photo -- this is indicated by the person symbol in

the bottom left corner. Clicking on the photo will show how many users have been tagged in a post.



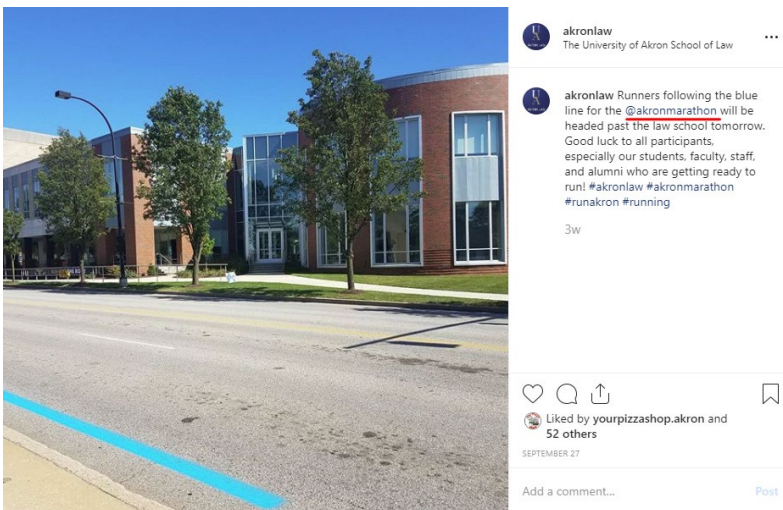
Reply comments will be indicated by the existence of a comment that the law school has responded to. The reply comment will be nested under the initial comment. The above example shows a post with one reply comment.

13. Number of Instagram post **likes** (outline of a heart): the number of likes an Instagram post has can be seen by hovering over the Instagram post from the accounts page.

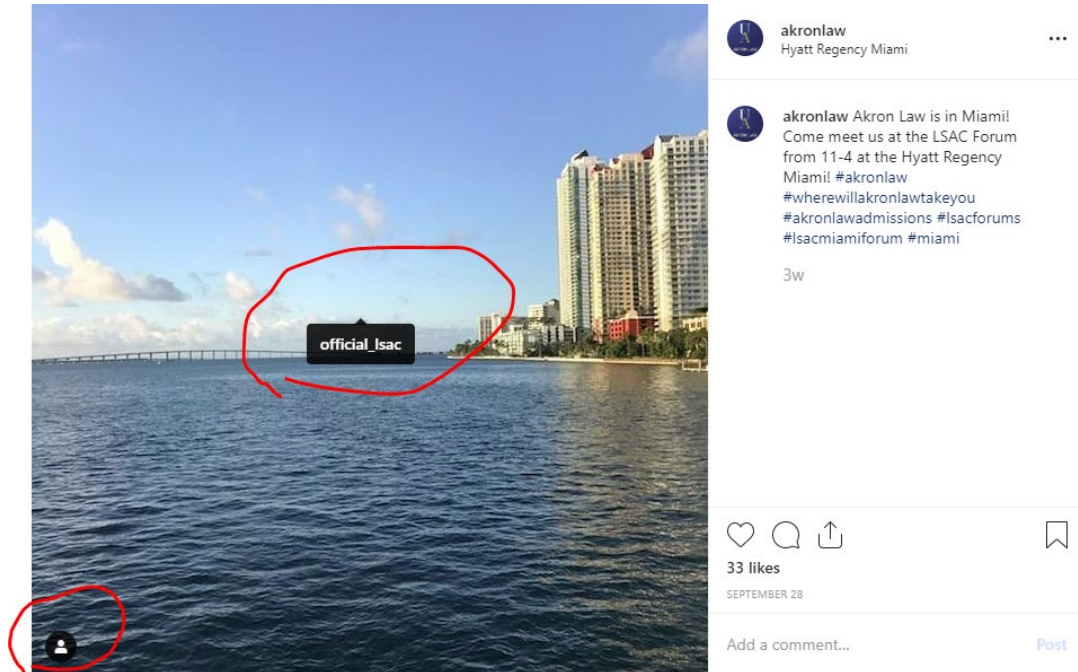


An example image of the likes of an Instagram post. This post has 461 likes.

14. **Tagging** of users is indicated by the “@” symbol followed by an Instagram handle. Coders will indicate yes or no as to if tagging has been used in the written portion of the post. Coders will also indicate how many accounts have been tagged.

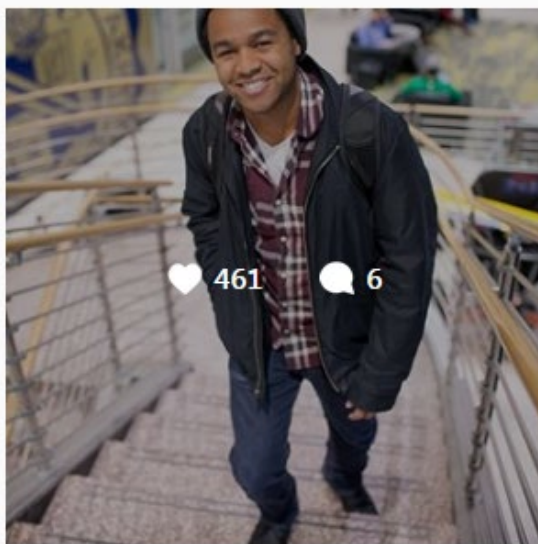


An example of tagging. Users can be tagged in two ways -- one is by use of the @ symbol. This post includes one tag. Please note the number of tags for each post



Another example of tagging. Users can also be tagged directly in the photo -- this is indicated by the person symbol in the bottom left corner. Clicking on the photo will show how many users have been tagged in a post.

15. **Comments** (thought bubble): the number of comments an Instagram post has can be seen by hovering over the Instagram post from the account's page. If there are comments, the coder should circle "yes" on the coding sheet. If yes, the coder should also indicate the number of comments.



An example image of the comments on an Instagram post. This post has 6 comments

16. **Reply Comments:** the number of reply comments can be noted by looking at the caption of each post. Reply comments will show up with every other comment, but with the commenter handle of the law school account. Coders will need to indicate yes or no if there are or are not reply comments. If yes, coders will need to indicate the number of reply comments.



An example of a reply comment from a University Instagram account. This post was created by the handle @uakron, and the comment highlighted in yellow is from @uakron. There is one reply comment on this post.

17. **Hashtags (#):** the number of hashtags on an Instagram post can be seen by viewing the caption from each individual post. Coders will need to indicate the existence of hashtags by marking yes or no on their coding sheet. Coders will also need to indicate how many hashtags appear on each post.



An example image using a hashtag. This post has one hashtag -- #MyOhioState