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Oh Snap: ChatStyle in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Primaries

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Abstract

Based on Goffman's theories of self-presentation and framing, this exploratory investigation adapted Videostyle and Webstyle protocols to analyze the 2016 U.S. presidential primary candidates' Snapchat posts. This quantitative content analysis ($N = 871$) coded for the visual content, production techniques, nonverbal content, and frames used by the five candidates who used Snapchat as a strategic tool to engage voters throughout the course of the 2016 U.S. primary campaign. The results indicate Clinton (D) deviated from the other candidates in the visual and nonverbal content as well as the frames used in her snaps. The implications of these findings on gendered self-presentation theory as well as inferences about the campaigns' strategic social media motivations and effectiveness are also explored.

Keywords: Snapchat, social media campaign, political campaign, content analysis

Oh Snap: ChatStyle in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Primaries

The Internet was second only to television news as a source of information about the 2016 U.S. presidential primary campaign, with 44% of all U.S. citizens - and the vast majority of millennials - citing social media as important election information sources (Pew, 2016). The rapid adoption of social network sites among U.S. citizens not only provided users with another platform for sharing political information, opinions, and experiences, but also spurred contemporary U.S. presidential campaigns to execute a wide variety of online relationship-building strategies to achieve electoral goals. Although previous research analyzed political candidates' use of websites and blogs (Baker & Stromer-Galley, 2006; Kruikemeier, Aparaschivei, Boomgaarden, Van Noort, & Vliegenthart, 2015), Facebook (Sweetser & Lariscy, 2008; Williams & Gulati, 2012), Twitter (Adams & McCorkindale, 2013; Graham, Broersma, Hazelhoff, & van 't Haar, 2013; Kruikemeier, 2014), and YouTube (Lev-On, 2012), the 2016 U.S. presidential primary candidates were the first to use Snapchat in their online relationship-building strategies.

Developed in 2011, Snapchat's skyrocketing popularity resulted in more than 18% of all social media users and 41% of all millennial internet users regularly accessing the platform in 2016 (Pew, 2015; DMR, 2016). With more than 150 million daily users, Snapchat surpassed Twitter and Instagram to become second only to Facebook in overall usage (Frier, 2016a), and the number of video hours viewed on Snapchat exceeded that of Facebook in 2016 (Frier, 2016b; Hackett, 2016). Further, twice as many 18- to 24-year-olds watched the first Republican debate on Snapchat as did on television, and 11 candidates in the 2016 presidential primaries posted snaps, or images and short videos, to their public Snapchat accounts to engage users in their campaigns (Jamieson, 2016).

This investigation finds its place in the literature as one of the first studies to analyze political candidates' self-presentations on Snapchat as a component in their political marketing campaigns. Specifically, this exploratory inquiry adapts the quantitative protocols used to describe and compare political candidates' television advertising and online campaign communications to analyze the visual content, the production techniques, the nonverbal content, and the frames used in the candidates' snaps to make inferences about their motivations, strategies, and intended effects. Additionally, this study provides a systematic protocol and a baseline of results for use in future analyses of political candidates' use of Snapchat. Finally, this study reflects on the implications of its findings on both the use of self-presentation theory as an analytic framework for studying political social media content as well as the strategic, political practices of doing so.

Theoretical Framework

Erving Goffman (1959), the father of the self-presentation theory, describes people involved in interpersonal interactions as actors on a stage who carefully monitor and manage their performances to make specific impressions on others and achieve strategic goals. Arguing that people are similar to actors because they go to great lengths to manage their impressions and public images, Goffman claims that "when an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information already possessed" (p. 1). During this information acquisition process, "many sources of information become accessible and many carriers (or 'sign vehicles') become available" (p. 1). These sign vehicles include the individual's appearance, verbal and nonverbal behavior, as well as the setting and the symbols used in the presentation. Goffman's sign vehicles also served as the basis

for developing content categories used to analyze political candidates' self-presentations in televised political advertising.

Kaid and Davidson (1986) used Goffman's theory of self-presentation as the theoretical basis of VideoStyle, the first systematic protocol for analyzing candidate presentations in televised political advertising. These authors argue that the goal of the candidates' Videostyle is similar to interpersonal communicator: impression management and control of others' responses. Based on the verbal, nonverbal, and production techniques used in the television advertisement, candidates' VideoStyles are purposefully constructed to achieve specific cognitive, affective, and/or behavioral outcomes (Nesbitt, 1988). For instance, analyses of the candidates' verbal self-presentations in terms of the specific issues, character traits, and tone (candidate-positive or opponent-negative) in the ad were based on Goffman's theory that these topics and word choices were intentionally selected to influence viewers' impressions and behaviors in strategic ways. The results of these analyses indicate most U.S. presidential political ads were candidate-positive and focused on issues rather than character traits, but that there were significant differences among specific candidates (Kaid & Johnston, 2001). Similarly, Videostyle analyses also described and compared presidential candidates' use of nonverbal cues such as their facial expressions and attire. The results of this analysis indicate candidates appeared in formal dress with serious facial expressions in the majority of their television ads to visually frame themselves as presidential, significant differences among the candidates notwithstanding (Kaid & Davidson, 2001). Other variables analyzed in Videostyle research indicate candidates select particular settings, types of individuals to include in their images, production techniques, and frames for use in television advertising dependent on their particular, strategic electoral goals. Additionally, Banwart (2002) used VideoStyle constructs and categories to develop WebStyle in her analysis

of the verbal, nonverbal, production techniques, and interactivity in political candidates' online

communications. Over the years, Videostyle and Webstyle have provided fruitful frameworks for

analyzing the content in political television advertising and online campaign communications

(Kaid & Johnston, 2001; Bystrom, Robertson, Banwart, & Kaid, 2004; Gordon & Miller, 2005;

Johnston & Kaid, 2002; Kaid, 2002; 2009; Vesnic-Alujevic & Bauwel, 2014).

Political Social Media Marketing

Barack Obama's successful use of social media in 2008 and 2012 heralded a new era in

both political marketing practices and research. With the addition of these new, interactive,

online channels to the traditional political marketing techniques, contemporary presidential

campaigns have effectively used social network sites to build stronger relationships with

strategic publics (Sweetser, 2011). Since most of the early political candidates' uses of social

media marketing relied primarily on text-based communications, analyses of political

candidates' social media marketing tactics have largely focused on the verbal content in their

posts (Highfield & Leaver, 2015; Sweetser & Lariscy, 2008). Moreover, the relative ease with

which longitudinal Twitter data may be retrieved and the popularity of Facebook have led to an

abundance of research on political candidates' verbal presentations on these two social network

sites (Schill, 2012). With social network sites and their users shifting to more visual content,

however, researchers began calling for the development of frameworks for analyzing political

candidates' visual presentations (Schill, 2012).

In their analysis of the Syrian president's visual rhetoric on Instagram, Holiday, Lewis

and LaBaugh (2015) compared the thematic differences between the images strategically

targeting Arabic audiences to those targeting English-speaking audiences. The results of their

analysis indicated the themes of nationalism and patriotism appeared more frequently in images

targeting the English language audience, but that empathy was emphasized more frequently in images targeting Arabic audiences. Additionally, Filimonov, Russmann, and Svensson (2016) analyzed the Swedish political parties use of Instagram during the 2014 election and found that, significant differences among parties notwithstanding, overall usage of this visual social media platform was for broadcasting their message instead of mobilizing supporters. The results of this research also suggest that the parties attempted to decrease the psychological distance between themselves and the voters by personalizing their appeals and most frequently using images focused on their leading candidates.

Munoz and Towner (2017) also noted the neglect of visual analyses in the political communication research, arguing that overlooking political imagery ignores the "picture superiority effect," or the notion that "the power of even a single photograph has the ability to affect a viewers' judgments on a variety of candidate characteristics" to a greater extent than text (p. 3). Although previous researchers used Goffman's dramaturgical theory in analyses of political advertising, more recently researchers have adapted Goffman's (1974) framing analysis framework to supplement their analyses of politicians' self-presentations on social media. These researchers have used the framework Grabe and Bucy (2009) adapted from Goffman's (1974) framing analysis to describe and compare the visual frames in television coverage of presidential campaigns between 1992 and 2004. The results of this analysis indicated Democratic candidates were more frequently framed as populist campaigners, while Republicans were more commonly depicted as the ideal candidate on the news (Grabe & Bucy, 2009). Additionally, Goodnow (2013) used Grabe and Bucy's (2009) framework to conduct a semiotic analysis of Barack Obama and Mitt Romney's Facebook timeline images during the 2012 campaign. This investigation concluded that both candidates used the ideal and populist candidate visual frames,

but emphasized different subdimensions such as statesmanship and compassion. Similarly, Lee's (2016) comparative study analyzing Barack Obama and Lee Myung-bak's (South Korea) images on their respective presidential websites indicated the Myung-bak's images largely visually framed the South Korea president as an ideal leader, while Obama's images more frequently visually framed him as a populist leader. Finally, Munoz and Towner (2017) analyzed Instagram marketing tactics executed by the top seven candidates in the 2016 U.S. presidential primaries. The results of this research indicate the ideal leader visual frame appeared most frequently across the candidates' Instagram posts, but that there were significant differences in visual cues among candidates. Munoz and Towner (2017) made these qualitative and quantitative determinations based on the visual content in each image posted to the candidates' Instagram accounts. Specifically, the coders determined the candidates' attire and nonverbal behavior, the presence and type of other individuals and symbols appearing in each image, and the presence or absence of filters.

Snapchat Style

Similar to Instagram when it was first launched, Snapchat is only accessible as a smartphone application that allows users to share visual content with network connections or the platform's community at large. However, the three characteristics distinguishing Snapchat from other social network sites at the time of the 2016 election are that all snaps are original, user-generated images and short videos captured using the mobile device application, all snaps expire and are deleted from the platform within 24 hours, and all snap lengths are limited to 10 seconds (Rutenberg, 2016). While Snapchat's distinctive features and growing popularity make it a compelling medium to study, the purpose of the content posted on this site is similar to interpersonal communication both on- and off-line: it is strategically designed to express the

user's identity within the social network and to manage viewers' impressions (Donath & boyd, 2004; Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012; Seidman, 2013; Utz, Tanis, & Vermeulen, 2012; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008).

Since Snapchat only displays content captured using the mobile device application and its content expires and is automatically deleted from the platform in 24 hours, there is no archived user profile or timeline for self-presentation or to provide information for viewers to form impressions of other users. Additionally, this limitation means that no professional or high production value video files may be uploaded to the platform. While most previous analyses of political candidates' social marketing tactics focused on its verbal content, after viewing more than 40 hours of Snapchat content, we adapted exhaustive and mutually exclusive coding categories based on prior research (Kaid & Johnston, 2001). Based on this extensive viewing of the candidates' Snapchat content, we also determined that the verbal content in the snaps was extremely limited due to the platform's content restrictions. Specifically, Snapchat is a visual medium limiting its content to original images and 10-second, low-production-value videos captured using a smartphone. The oral verbal content in the snaps was also frequently inaudible due to the long or remote camera shots, the use of over-the-shoulder camera angles, background noise, and/or the smartphone's limited audio recording capabilities. Moreover, much of the snaps' verbal information was also visual since it was presented in written form in the images, videos, filters, and captions provided in the post. Finally, the authors also discovered that, similar to television advertising, many snaps did not include the candidates.

Not only is much of the verbal content in the candidates' snaps both secondary and visual (written), the Snapchat platform also limits users' abilities to manipulate video production techniques since all content must be recorded in the smartphone application. Further, most of the

video production techniques used in previous analyses were largely focused on the message's

visual components. For example, elements of the video production techniques used in analyses

of political television advertising and online campaign communications include camera angles

and shots, settings and contexts, and special effects. When adapted to Snapchat, however, the

visual content categories capture most of the information analyzed in the production technique

categories: the presence (or absence) of the candidate, the snap setting or context, and whether

the candidate appears alone or with others. The only platform-relevant production techniques

applicable to Snapchat are determining whether the snap is a video or photo, whether the camera

is stationary or moving in the videos, and the presence or absence of graphics such as filters and

captions in the images and videos posted. Thus, based on research indicating that different

candidates employ different strategies to emphasize different issues, character or image traits,

our first and second research questions ask:

>RQ 1: How did the 2016 presidential primary candidates present themselves in the visual
>content of their snaps?

>RQ 2: How did the 2016 presidential primary candidates use production techniques in
>their snaps?

In addition to analyzing the visual content and production techniques used in the 2016

presidential primary candidates' snaps, this investigation also adapts theoretical protocols to

describe the nonverbal content in previous political marketing research (Grabe & Bucy, 2009;

Kaid & Davidson, 1986; Kaid & Johnston, 2001; Munoz & Towner, 2017) This nonverbal

content includes the candidate's dress, body language, and facial expressions, since research

indicates that an individual's facial expressions and attire are influential cues stimulating strong

audience responses (Aguinas, Simonsen, & Pierce, 1998; Knapp, Hall, & Horgan, 2014). Thus, our third research question asks:

RQ 3: How did the candidates present themselves in the nonverbal content of their snaps?

Framing

Finally, this investigation also attempts to determine the frame, purpose, or central message the candidates wanted to communicate in their Snapchat content. Based on Goffman's (1959; 1974) and Grabe and Bucy's (2009) work, it was assumed that each snap had a specific purpose designed to control viewers' responses to the content in terms of building or bolstering specific aspects of the candidate's image. Indeed, research indicates campaign communications may powerfully influence viewers' images of the candidates in television advertising (West, 1994) and on social network sites (Dimitova & Bystrom, 2013).

Although viewers' perceptions of and attitudes toward political candidates' images are frequently conceptualized as resulting from exposure to information in the linear fashion of Shannon and Weaver's (1949) transmission model, Kaid and Johnston (2001) argue the development of candidate images occurs through a shared construction of reality between the voter and the candidate generated through the content of the message. Similarly, research indicates the political campaign's online marketing tactics may influence viewers' images of the candidates (Kim, Painter, & Miles, 2013), and that the candidates intentionally use these sites to shape viewers' responses to their candidacy (Levenshus, 2010). These campaigns' purposeful use of social network sites to influence viewers' affect toward the candidates suggests there is a specific motivation underlying the content posted in each online message that shapes the frame, or manner in which the content is presented to viewers (Grabe & Bucy, 2009). This line of analysis is important because research suggests highlighting some aspects of the information by

placing it in a certain context, or framing it, influences individuals' interpretations and decisions (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984). Specifically, analyses of the frames used in visual political propaganda have compared the ways in which competing groups and political candidates attempt to control their audiences' responses (Brantner, Lobinger, & Wetzstein, 2011), including the images posted on Twitter (Seo, 2014), Facebook (Goodnow, 2013), and Instagram (Holiday, Lewis, & LaBaugh, 2015; Munoz & Towner, 2017). Thus, our fourth research question asks:

RQ4: How did the candidates frame their snaps?

Method

Data

The sample consisted of all snaps posted by the presidential candidates between January 11, 2016, which was three weeks before the Iowa caucuses, and March 1, 2016, which was Super Tuesday. Since the presidential candidates' Snapchat profiles were public, their stories were available for 24 hours before they were automatically deleted. The authors first followed all the candidates with Snapchat accounts and then recorded their daily snaps every day at midnight. A total of 993 snaps from 11 candidates were recorded and analyzed. However, as shown in Table 1, only four candidates consistently used Snapchat: Bernie Sanders (N = 313, 32%), Hillary Clinton (N = 275, 28%), Marco Rubio (N = 147, 15%) and John Kasich (N = 136, 14%); while Ted Cruz (N = 27, 2.7%), Donald Trump (N = 6, 0.6%), Chris Christie (N = 37, 3.7%), Jeb Bush (N = 24, 2.4%), Martin O'Malley (N = 14, 1.4%), Carly Fiorina (N = 10, 1%) and Rand Paul (N = 4, 0.4%) failed to use the Snapchat platform regularly. Due to the differences in the number of snaps posted by these candidates and since most suspended their campaigns before Super Tuesday, only snaps from Sanders, Clinton, Rubio and Kasich were included in the analysis, lowering the number of snaps used in the analysis from 993 to 871. This reduction in the number

of candidates and snaps used in the analysis was also required due to statistical testing requirements since including the other candidates resulted in far too many empty cells in analyses of the visual, production techniques, nonverbal, and frame categories. Moreover, the entire universe of 993 snaps was analyzed to reach data saturation in the adaption and development of exhaustive and mutually exclusive coding categories. Finally, our sample of 871 snaps is 88% of the universe, which exceeds sample size requirements and is at least as large as other data sets used to analyze political self-presentations and framing on social media (Holiday, Lewis, & LeBaugh, 2015; Lee, 2016; Munoz & Towner, 2017).

Table 1 about here

Coding Protocol

Each individual candidate's snap was considered a unit of analysis. To code for the content in each snap, we adapted protocols developed to operationalize Goffman's (1959; 1974) conceptualizations of sign vehicles and frames (Grabe & Bucy, 2009; Kaid & Johnston, 2001; Munoz & Towner, 2017).

Visual content. In each snap, coding categories included: whether the candidate was present or absent and the appearance of others (supporters, family, staff, media personnel, politicians, or celebrities). In snaps that did not show the candidate, the coder identified the main subject of the snap. and in snaps centered on supporters, their visual portrayal was coded (cheering, listening, interacting with the candidates, or speaking on camera). Coders also determined the snap context (headshot, giving a speech at a campaign event, interacting with supporters at a campaign event, behind-the-scenes at a campaign event, media appearance, or doing regular activities).

Production Techniques. In each snap, the coders noted its format (photo or video); camera movement (still or moving); and the presence or absence of filters.

Nonverbal content. In each snap, the coders noted the candidates' attire (formal or non-formal) and facial expressions (smiling, serious, only showing back, or could not determine due to distance).

Frame. In analyzing the frame of the snap, the objective was to determine the main purpose behind each snap or, what messages the candidates wanted to send to their followers in their daily snapchat stories. Each snap was coded as including one of the following ten dominant frames based on the visual image, nonverbal behavior, and filters, graphics, or filters presented. First, candidate character was selected when candidates were shown interacting (talking or taking selfies) with their supporters or doing regular activities, such as spending time with family, going to church or playing sports. Second, the snap was coded as dominantly issue frame when the purpose of the snap was to showcase a specific issue presented in writing in the caption or orally by the main subject of the snap. Third, the attack frame was selected when the main objective of the snap was to attack another candidate. Fourth, the snap was coded as framed on supporters when the snap focused on supporters more than the candidate. Specifically, if the caption talks about the number of attendees to an event, or if the camera is panning to show the attendees at an event or if clapping and cheering are heard more than the voice of the candidate. Fifth, campaign event was selected when the main purpose of the snap was to showcase a campaign event to followers. These snaps usually included captions stating the candidate's location and what was happening in that moment. Sixth, media was selected when the main purpose of the snap was to show shots of media appearances. These snaps usually show the candidates in a television studio or being interviewed by reporters. Seventh, endorsements was

selected when the snap highlighted a celebrity or a politician endorsement. Eighth, the behind-the-scenes category was selected when the main objective was to give followers a behind-the-scenes glimpse of campaign related events. These snaps usually included scenes from the backstage of campaign events or debate walkthroughs. Ninth, the motivational frame category was selected when the main purpose was to motivate followers to do something. These included going to vote, visiting a specific website, using a specific hashtag, or buying something. Finally, other was selected if none of the above categories fit the content of the snap.

Inter-coder Reliability

Inter-coder reliability was used to test the consistency and relevance of the coding process. Ten percent of the sample was double coded. Using Holsti's (1969) formula, the inter-coder coefficient was 0.96, indicating high levels of agreement between the coders across all categories and confirming the reliability of the results.

Results

The first research question asked how the candidates presented themselves in the visual content of their snaps. As shown in Table 2, the results indicated the candidates appeared in 71% ($n = 615$) of the snaps. In terms of context, more than 60% of the snaps showed candidates with their supporters, while candidates appearing with the media ($n = 79$, 13%), alone ($n = 45$, 7%), with political and celebrity endorsers ($n = 34$, 6%), family ($N = 32$, 5%) and campaign staff ($n = 26$, 4%) followed, respectively. When examining the snaps' settings, the candidates were also mostly shown either giving a speech ($n = 269$, 43%) or interacting with supporters ($n = 129$, 21%). Other snaps showed the candidates at media appearances ($n = 82$, 13%), doing regular daily activities ($N = 73$, 12%), behind-the-scenes of campaign events ($n = 42$, 7%), or speaking directly on camera ($n = 14$, 2%).

Table 2 about here

To see how each candidate presented himself or herself differently, cross tabulations with

Pearson's chi-square coefficient were used to test the statistical significance of the differences

among the candidates in the visual content of their snaps. First, the results indicated there were

significant differences among candidates in whether they appeared or were absent in their snaps.

Specifically, Clinton (n = 121, 44%) was the only candidate present in less than half of her snaps,

with Sanders (n = 263, 84%), Rubio (n = 110, 75%), and Kasich (n = 121, 89%) appearing in the

vast majority of their snaps, (X^2 = (3, N = 871) = 144.33, p = .000, V = .414). Second, while

overall results indicated that the candidates were shown with their supporters in the majority of

the snaps, there were differences in the types of people with whom the candidates appeared in

their snaps other than their supporters, (X^2 = (18, N = 615) = 79.18, p = .000, V = .356). For

instance, other than appearing with their supporters, Sanders, Rubio, and Kasich most frequently

appeared alone, with media personnel, or with their campaign staff. Clinton, on the other hand,

most frequently appeared with her political and celebrity endorsers and family members,

appearing alone in only one snap and with media personnel in only five snaps. Third, there were

also differences in the setting of the candidates' snaps, (X^2 = (18, N = 615) = 79.19, p = .347).

Specifically, the most common setting for the snaps from Sanders (n = 119, 45%), Rubio (n = 55,

55%) and Kasich (n = 50, 41%) was while they were giving a speech at a campaign event. The

most common context for Clinton's snaps, however, was while she was interacting with her

supporters (n = 50, 41%).

The second research question asked: how did the 2016 presidential primary candidates

use production techniques in their snaps. As shown in Table 3, the results indicated that Sanders

was mostly shown in photo snaps (n = 158, 60%) rather than video snaps (n = 105, 40%), while

Clinton ($n = 171$, 62%), Rubio ($n = 95$, 65%), and Kasich ($n = 98$, 72%) used videos in the vast majority of their snaps, ($X^2 = (3, N = 871) = 59.847$, $p = .000$, $V = .308$). Additionally, while the overall results indicated the camera was not stationary, but was moving in the majority of the candidates' video snaps, Rubio (n = 51, 54%) used camera movement to a lesser extent than did Sanders ($n = 86$, 62%), Clinton ($n = 132$, 77%), or Kasich ($n = 76$, 78%), ($X^2 = (3, N = 502) = 21.89$, $p = .000$, $V = .263$). Finally, in terms of the use of captions and filters, only 20% ($n = 166$) percent of the snaps used a geo-location filter provided by Snapchat and 9% ($N = 75$) used the unique elections filters also provided by Snapchat. While the candidates did not use filters often, they did, however, provide captions in more than 70% of their snaps ($N = 613$).

Table 3 about here

The third research question asked: How did the candidates present themselves in the nonverbal content of their snaps? As shown in Table 4, overall results indicated the candidates were usually dressed formally ($n = 408$, 66%) rather than informally ($n = 207$, 34%). With regards to facial expressions, the candidates were mostly serious ($n = 286$, 57%), whereas they were smiling in only 30 percent of the snaps ($n = 29$). The rest of the snaps either showed the candidates' backs ($n = 103$, 17%) or it was hard to determine their facial expression due to camera distance or the low quality of snap ($n = 46$, 8%). When analyzing the differences among the candidates in the nonverbal content of their snaps, however, significant differences were observed in the formality of their attire, ($X^2 = (3, N = 615) = 259.429$, p $= .000$, $V = .649$). Specifically, the majority of snaps from Clinton ($n = 116$, 96%), Sanders ($n = 215$, 82%) and Rubio ($n = 67$, 70%) showed the candidates dressed formally, but Kasich dressed informally in more than 90% of his snaps ($n = 111$). There were also differences in the candidates' facial expressions ($X^2 = (9, N = 615) = 113.515$, $p = .000$, $V = .430$) since most of the snaps from

Sanders (n = 113, 43%), Rubio (n = 68, 62%) and Kasich (n = 63, 52%) showed the candidates

with a serious expression, but the majority of Clinton's snaps showed her smiling (n = 66, 55%).

Additionally, 30% of Sanders' snaps (n = 78) showed the candidate from the back (n = 103).

Table 4 about here

The fourth research question asked: How did the candidates frame their snaps? As shown

in Table 5, the most used frames in the snaps were showing supporters (N = 258, 30%) followed

by candidate character (N = 182, 21%), campaign event (N = 132, 15%), behind-the-scenes (N =

93, 11%) and media (N = 78, 9%). The attack (N = 31, 4%), promo (N = 31, 4%), endorsement

(N = 30, 3%) and issue (N = 27, 3%) frames were used the least, respectively. Cross tabulations

with Pearson's chi-square coefficient tests indicated significant statistical differences among the

candidates use of frames in their snaps over the course of the campaign, (X^2 = (27, N = 871) =

237.22, p = .628). The top three frames used by Sanders were supporters (n = 86, 28%) followed

by campaign event (n = 71, 23%) and candidate character (n = 57, 18%). Kasich had similar

results as his top three frames used were supporters (n= 45, 33%) followed by candidate

character (n = 34, 25%) and campaign event (n = 15, 11%). Rubio also used the supporters (n =

53, 36%) frame the most, but the media (n = 20, 14%) and behind-the-scenes (n = 20, 14%)

frames followed. For Clinton, the frames mostly used in her snaps were candidate character (n =

79, 29%) followed by supporters (n = 74, 27%) and behind-the-scenes (n = 34, 12%).

Additionally, Clinton posted 30 (97%) of the 31 attack-framed snaps.

Table 5 about here

Discussion

This exploratory study analyzed the visual content, production techniques, nonverbal

content, and frames used in the 2016 U.S. presidential primary candidates' snaps. The results

indicate many similarities as well as some interesting differences in the strategies employed by the candidates in their campaigns' Snapchat stories. First, when analyzing the visual content in the candidates' snaps, the effect sizes revealed by the Cramer's *V* statistic ranged from .35 to .41, indicating they were strong, accounting for more than a third of the variations in candidate presence (or absence), candidate context, and snap setting. Specifically, Clinton deviated from all the other candidates since she was more frequently absent than present in her snaps, while the other candidates appeared in the vast majority of their snaps. Although most candidates' snaps showed them with their supporters, the Clinton campaign's Snapchat strategy also distinguished her campaign from the others since she was much more frequently seen interacting with her supporters than giving a speech or making a campaign event appearance. These findings are largely in line with research results examining the differences between candidates' gendered self-presentations in their television ads and online content (see Bystrom, Robertson, Banwart, & Kaid,, 2004). That is, female candidates are less likely to be present or to appear alone, but more likely to present themselves interacting with their supporters, than are male candidates (Bystrom, 2014). Since the sample size of female candidates in this investigation is limited to one case, however, the more compelling explanation for these differences may be that the Clinton campaign's Snapchat strategy was focused on emphasizing different aspects of her image than the other candididates. Indeed, Sanders' Snapchat team explained that they were attempting to differentiate their candidate from Clinton and stay focused on specific issues in their snaps (Jamieson, 2016). Whereas Sanders, Rubio, and Kasich used Snapchat to generate wider name recognition and present themselves as credible leaders drawing large crowds or appearing with better-known media personalities, Clinton's name recognition was arguably greater than any contemporary U.S. presidential candidate after her tenure as Secretary of State, U.S. Senator, and

First Lady. Clinton's perceived lack of personal warmth, likeability, and interpersonal skills, however, were also nearly as widely discussed as her qualifications. Thus, it was clear the Clinton campaign's Snapchat team was focused on portraying their candidate as jovial, outgoing, and engaged with her supporters to a much greater extent than the other candidates.

When examining the differences in production techniques used in the candidates' snaps, the Cramer's *V* statistic indicated there were moderately strong effect sizes of 31% and 26% in the type and video techniques, respectively, used in the candidates' snaps. While the Sanders campaign was the only one to use more photos than video snaps in the analysis of the types of content posted to Snapchat, overall, the candidates used about 40% photos and 60% videos in their snaps. Similarly, analysis of the video techniques indicated that most (70%) of the candidates' snaps included camera movement, while only about 30% used still cameras, significant differences among the candidates notwithstanding. While interesting, these findings are probably more in line with the distribution of other Snapchat content since uploads to the platform must be made directly from the smartphone app, which generally translates into low-production-value images and videos snapped while the user is experiencing a sharable moment. That said, the Sanders campaign also claimed that they intentionally used consistent images of their candidate to effectively brand and reinforce their candidate's image on Snapchat while the other candidates' snaps were more fluid and dependent on the particular activities on the days they were posted (Jamieson, 2016).

In the analysis of the candidates' nonverbal behavior in their snaps, the effect sizes observed in the differences among the candidates indicated by the Cramer's *V* statistic were strong, accounting for about 65% of the differences in attire and 43% of the differences in facial expressions. Moreover, the analysis revealed that all the candidates except Kasich were generally

shown in formal attire, but that Clinton exhibited the extreme end of this spectrum since she was shown in casual dress in only 4% of her snaps. Once again, this finding is in line with prior research on gendered presentations in televised political advertising and online campaign content (Banwart, 2014). However, Clinton also deviated from the other candidates in terms of her facial expressions since she was shown smiling in most of her snaps, while the other candidates were more frequently shown with a serious demeanor. Although this finding is not consistent with prior research on the facial expressions of women candidates, it does support the previous argument that the Clinton Snapchat team was strategically attempting to portray the candidate as warm and socially engaging. The Sanders' snaps, on the other hand, much more frequently showed the candidate only from the back than did the other candidates in both his video and photo snaps to give the viewer the sense of the candidate's experience on the campaign trail (Jamieson, 2016).

Finally, in the analysis of the differences in framing among the candidates' snaps, the effect size revealed by the Cramer's V statistic was strong, accounting for about 65% of the variation. When looking at the individual candidates' snaps, Clinton once again deviated from the other candidates since hers were more frequently framed to highlight her character and to attack her opponents than the other candidates. These findings are both in line with our previous argument that the Clinton campaign strategically targeted their Snapchat content to promote positive impressions of Clinton's personal characteristics and to bolster her gendered image as a strong woman capable of standing up to the other candidates, who were all men. Moreover, the overall findings in the analysis of the frames in the candidates' snaps suggest this platform is not used to discuss issues, but is used to bolster impressions of and affect toward the candidates' image traits, including character, popularity, and credibility.

Implications

Theoretically, the results in this study are largely in line with previous research on political candidates' gendered self-presentations since Clinton appeared in her snaps less frequently than did the other candidates, and when she did appear, she was less likely to be alone, but more likely to be shown interacting with her supporters than were the male candidates (Bystrom, 2014). Moreover, these results support Goffman's (1959; 1974) self-presentation and framing theories since the candidates employed different strategies and tactics on Snapchat to intentionally include specific and intentionally different visual elements, production techniques, nonverbal behaviors, and frames in their snaps. Although this argument in regards to Clinton and Sanders was previously delineated, the analysis of the Kasich and Rubio snaps also provide clear theoretical connections. Specifically, in terms of visual content, Kasich both appeared and was shown with supporters more frequently than the other candidates. Moreover, Kasich more frequently used videos with camera movement showing the crowd in the production techniques of his snaps than did the other candidates. Most notably, in terms of the nonverbal content, Kasich not only appeared dressed informally more frequently than the other candidates, but he was formally dressed in only 8% of his snaps. Additionally, he was shown smiling more frequently than all the other candidates except Clinton, who had strategic reasons of her own for appearing friendly and engaging. Thus, when connecting these content categories to Grabe & Bucy's (2009) dichotomous visual frames or classifications of ideal and populist leader, it is clear that Kasich emphasized his populist image through the use of these specific tactics. Alternately, Rubio emphasized the ideal leader characteristics since he not only appeared in 75% of his snaps, but also he was shown giving speeches, appearing with media personalities, and making a serious facial expression to a greater extent than the other candidates. Finally, when

considered in terms of the leadership image dichotomy, Sanders and Clinton strategically used specific snaps to highlight particular images. For instance, Clinton's formal attire and use of the character and attack frames emphasized her ideal leader image while her smiling facial expression, supporter interactions and frames, and absence in most of her snaps accentuated her populist leader image. Similarly, Sanders' formal attire, serious facial expressions, presence in most of his snaps that showed him giving speeches and making media appearances emphasized his ideal leader image while the images shot from the back showing his supporters at campaign events and of him doing daily activities highlighted his populist image.

Overall, these results provide support for both the theoretical frameworks used to analyze political social media marketing and the current practices of online political relationship-building. In an era when U.S. presidential campaigns have more tools at their disposal to communicate directly with the voters without the news media filter than ever before, the strategic uses of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have been previously investigated. In 2016, however, 11 U.S. presidential primary candidates were the first to add Snapchat to their marketing platforms. This exploratory investigation of those candidates' self-presentations and frames not only allows us to draw inferences to support political social marketing theories about candidate branding and differentiation, but also a digital director from the Sanders campaign explained how they used particular tactics to emphasize specific messages and images to the voters (Jamieson, 2016). These results also provide political marketing practitioners with some guidelines for using Snapchat in their candidate campaigns in terms of the visual content, production techniques, nonverbal behavior, and frames presented in the first presidential campaign to use this platform.

Limitations

Although Snapchat is a relatively recent social network site, its innovative characteristics have made it an increasingly popular platform not only for individual online self-presentation and social interaction, but also for the application of strategic campaign tactics. However, the ephemeral, visual nature of the content posted on the platform make it a challenging platform to study. Thus, this exploratory study is clearly limited due to the relatively recent development and widespread adoption of Snapchat as a social network site as well as the attendant lack of prior research on the uses, content, and effects of information presented on this platform. Specifically, since only four candidates used Snapchat frequently and regularly enough for valid statistical analysis, the focus of the investigation was limited to these particular candidates. Nonetheless, previous research has analyzed fewer artifacts and fewer candidates to provide valuable insights into their theoretical and practical implications. Additionally, while Snapchat is a relatively new and distinctive social media platform, there are existing frameworks for analyzing the verbal, visual, and nonverbal content as well as the production techniques and frames used in other campaigns' mediated marketing practices may be adapted to explore both the content and effects of the information posted on the site.

Future Research

Future research analyzing the content of political candidates' uses of Snapchat as well as the influence the site's visual content on users' political cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors would enrich our understanding of this platform immensely. Specifically, qualitative content analyses that provide more nuanced findings about the images and frames in political candidates' snaps could help build more robust theoretical frameworks for analyzing visual social media posts. Additionally, experimental research analyzing the effects of exposure to political candidates' snaps on viewers' knowledge levels and attitudes toward the candidates as well as its

influence on viewers' efficacy, enthusiasm about participating in the upcoming election, and

trust in the political system may reveal compelling insights into the ways in which users interpret

the platform's visual information. Moreover, political marketing scholars may develop scales for

analyzing the influence of Snapchat on political organization-public relations outcomes such as

satisfaction, commitment, control mutual, and trust may provide practitioners with useful

guidelines in the development of their visual campaign content. Finally, the development of

indices for measuring visual authenticity may provide researchers with fruitful frameworks for

analyzing political candidates' visual social media content. Overall, this exploratory study is

merely the first step in our development of research on political candidates use of Snapchat, but

the results may provide future researchers with a baseline of results for comparisons in upcoming

election campaigns.

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Table 1

Candidate Snap Frequency

	Snaps	
	n	%
Sanders	313	32
Clinton	275	28
Rubio	147	15
Kasich	136	14
Christie	37	4
Cruz	27	3
Bush	24	2
O'Malley	14	1
Fiorina	10	1
Trump	6	1
Paul	4	0

Table 2

Visual Content in 2016 U.S. Presidential Primary Candidates' Snaps

	Total	Sanders	Clinton	Rubio	Kasich
	(*N* = 871)	(*n* = 313)	(*n* = 275)	(*n* =147)	(*n* = 136)
Candidate in Snap*					
Presence	71%	84%	44%	75%	89%
Absence	29%	16%	56%	25%	11%
Candidate Context*	(**N = 615**)	(*n* = 263)	(*n* = 121)	(*n* = 110)	(*n* = 121)
Alone	7%	10%	1%	6%	9%
With Supporters	63%	60%	65%	56%	74%
With Media	13%	16%	4%	20%	8%
With Endorsers	6%	4%	14%	5%	1%
With Family	5%	5%	12%	3%	1%
With Staff	4%	3%	3%	6%	7%
Other	2%	3%	0%	4%	1%
Snap Setting*	(**N = 615**)	(*n*= 263)	(*n* = 121)	(*n* = 110)	(*n* = 121)
Head On	2%	2%	0%	4%	5%
Giving Speech	44%	45%	37%	50%	42%
Supporter Interaction	21%	14%	41%	9%	26%
Campaign Event	7%	6%	7%	10%	7%
Media Appearance	13%	18%	6%	19%	7%
Daily Activities	12%	15%	9%	6%	13%
Other	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%

*Differences among candidates significant, $p < 0.01$

Table 3

Production Techniques in 2016 U.S. Presidential Primary Candidates' Snaps

	Total ($N = 871$)	Sanders ($n = 313$)	Clinton ($n = 275$)	Rubio ($n = 147$)	Kasich ($n = 136$)
Type*					
Photo	42%	56%	38%	35%	28%
Video	58%	44%	62%	65%	72%
Video Snap Technique*	(N = 502)	($n = 138$)	($n = 171$)	($n = 95$)	($n = 98$)
Still Shot	31%	38%	23%	46%	22%
Camera Movement	69%	62%	77%	54%	78%

*Differences among candidates significant, $p < 0.01$

Table 4

Nonverbal Content in 2016 U.S. Presidential Primary Candidates' Snaps

	Total (N = 615)	Sanders (n = 263)	Clinton (n = 121)	Rubio (n =110)	Kasich (n = 121)
Attire*					
Formal	66%	82%	96%	61%	8%
Informal	34%	18%	4%	39%	91%
Facial Expressions*					
Smiling	29%	16%	55%	24%	38%
Serious	47%	43%	35%	62%	52%
Only Back	17%	30%	7%	8%	6%
Too Far	8%	11%	3%	6%	4%

*Differences among candidates significant, $p < 0.01$

Table 5

Framing of the 2016 U.S. Presidential Primary Candidates' Snaps

	Total ($N = 871$)	Sanders ($n = 313$)	Clinton ($n = 275$)	Rubio ($n = 147$)	Kasich ($n = 136$)
Frames*					
Character	21%	18%	29%	8%	25%
Issue	3%	2%	1%	1%	12%
Attack	4%	0%	11%	1%	0%
Supporters	30%	28%	27%	36%	33%
Media	9%	14%	2%	14%	7%
Campaign Event	15%	23%	10%	13%	11%
Endorsement	3%	3%	6%	3%	1%
Behind the Scenes	11%	9%	12%	14%	9%
Promotion	4%	3%	2%	9%	3%
Other	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%

*Differences among candidates significant, $p < 0.01$