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Comparing Pre- and Post- Pandemic Viewer Responses to Eating Disorder Testimonials

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Eating Disorders During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Comparing Pre- and Post- Pandemic Viewer Responses to Eating Disorder Testimonials



Summer Scholars and Artists Program 2022
 Celia Woodruff
 Faculty Mentor: Amber Simpson, Ph.D.

BACKGROUND: Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate among all mental illnesses. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic came a significant spike in hospitalizations for eating disorders among adolescents. We sought to investigate whether a change in sentiment regarding eating disorders had taken place since the onset of the pandemic, and to track subsequent rhetorical trends.

METHODS

1. Compiled comments and transcripts from YouTube eating disorder video testimonials.
2. Processed sentiment strengths for comments and testimonial transcripts using SentiStrength. Developed a thematic codebook for further language analysis. (Figure 1)
3. Evaluated and summarized the pre- and post-pandemic datasets. Established whether there was a statistically significant difference. Established inter-rater reliability for our codebook and began applying comments and transcripts.

Code Name	Defined	Examples
Gratitude for Sharing Story	Thanks uploader or another commenter for sharing their ED story	"This is such a good video" "Thanks for sharing" "You're doing so much good by sharing your story"
Gratitude for Support	Thanks uploader or another commenter for support	"Thanks for your advice"
Gratitude	General gratitude outside of thanking someone for support or for sharing their ED story	"Thank you so much" "Thanks" "Thank you" "Wow thank you"
Religious Support	Offers advice or support related to religion; offers finding support through religion or God	"I would recommend telling a church leader" "You should reach out to your church" "Our bodies are temples..." "May God bless you"
Encouragement	General encouragement to another commenter or the uploader	"You got this!" "I believe in you" "You're so strong (an inspiration) so brave/beautiful" "I love you" "Sending love" "Much love" "You're a beautiful soul" "I'm so proud of you" "You show so much strength/bravery" "I'm inspired by you"

An example of a code name with sub-categories

- Inspiration
- Strength
- Pride
- Love
- Brave
- Beautiful

Use of these words are more specific subcategories of encouragements.

Figure 1

The pre-pandemic and post-pandemic data demonstrated a predominantly neutral sentiment analysis. (Figure 2)

Count		Sentiment					
Time	Uploader	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1
1	0	1	67	209	484	772	1031
	1	0	4	28	82	174	443
Total		1	71	237	566	946	1474
Total	0	1	67	209	484	772	1031
	1	0	4	28	82	174	443
Total		1	71	237	566	946	1474

Count		Sentiment			Total
Time	Uploader	2	3	4	
1	0	944	165	9	3682
	1	241	26	1	999
Total		1185	191	10	4681
Total	0	944	165	9	3682
	1	241	26	1	999
Total		1185	191	10	4681

Figure 2

However, there is evidence that there is a **statistically significant difference between these datasets**, as evidenced by the Mann Whitney U-test the Chi-Square test, and the Mood's Median test.

This difference could be explained by the **post-pandemic YouTube comments being slightly more positive compared to the pre-pandemic comments**.

You can see this difference most clearly in the mean and standard deviation analysis. (Figure 3 & Figure 4)

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Overall, the sentiment analysis showed no significantly positive or negative trends in either dataset. However, there was a statistically significant difference between the datasets. This may be attributed to the average sentiment strength of the post-pandemic data being more positive than the pre-pandemic data. (Figure 3) Further research comparing the thematic trends in our pre- and post-pandemic data may illustrate what changes in rhetoric accompanied these sentiment changes or could have caused them.

Pre-Pandemic:	Mean ☀️	Standard Deviation	Variance (s*2)
	0.45201707	s=1.4516455	s*2= 2.1072746
Post-Pandemic:	Mean ☀️	Standard Deviation	Variance (s*2)
	0.6832444	s=1.3130702	s*2= 1.7241534

Figure 4

See my Source Project literature review "Emotional Impacts of the Eating Disorder Treatment Process on Caregivers" with descriptive statistics here!



References:

Muzi, et al., Vuillier, et al., Spear, McCombie, et al., Pereira, et al., Nutley, et al., Feldhedge, et al., Chou, et al., Yue, et al., Yadav and Vishwakarma, Oksanen, et al., Lai and Ming To

Pre-Pandemic (t=0)	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0.00%	0.22%	3.32%	7.20%	12.74%	24.80%	24.92%	22.59%	3.79%	0.43%	0.00%
Post-Pandemic (t=1)	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0.00%	0.02%	1.52%	5.06%	12.08%	20.26%	31.48%	25.29%	4.08%	0.21%	0.00%

Figure 3