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Efficacy and Impact of Neuro-linguistic Approaches in Social Media Post Designing

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Abstract: Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a communication-oriented approach; however, its effectiveness in influencing consumer behavior remains uncertain. Social media is all-powerful in the present times and has the ability to mobilize public support and alter their opinions. NLP and social media are more or less similar to one another, where the latter can be used to design effective social media posts. NLP techniques can be used by social media marketers to encourage consumers to buy their products, along with highlighting the qualities of the product through their systematic posts. Text, content, and background are essential rudiments in social media post design, which can be manipulated by marketers and advertisers through different NLP approaches. The study aims to investigate the relationship between NLP and social media content design and production. The study explores participants' self-reported preferences and perceived attention patterns without claiming behavioral influence. Twenty purposively selected participants completed an online paired-design survey. Responses were summarized descriptively using frequencies and percentages; therefore, the findings should be interpreted as preliminary and non-causal.

Keywords: NLP Approaches; WhatsApp; Neuro-Linguistic Approach; Social Media Post Designing

1. Introduction

Social media can be referred to as websites or applications that are developed and designed to share content in real-time, along with sharing photos, viewpoints, and the latest happenings all across the world with their friends, peers, and family members. These interactive computer-mediated technologies allow participants to create and share content and ideas to different virtual networks and communities and have transformed the way we live, buy and sell products, and interact with a diverse set of people around us [1]. The increasing use of social media in disseminating, discussing, and producing news information highlights how this dynamic medium has affected the efficacy as well as dominance of the traditional media outlets, including television, newspaper and radio. The dichotomy practiced among the social media participants and producers has blurred over the course of time, where the latter has taken the leading role in creating content, reviewing its performance and disseminating its usefulness to others as well [2]. Studies reveal that human events, processes and even news websites have shifted from the traditional news cycle to a much intricate information cycle, where the general public plays a vital role in construing and constructing the news

information as well [3]. Social media is also dominating the marketplace, and is a consumer hub for marketers, entrepreneurs and small businesses. Social media marketing allows marketers and business owners to use social media platforms to endorse their products, build brand rapport, increase sales connect and interact with their current and prospective consumers, increase traffic to their website and engage their followers [4]. Neuro-linguistic programming or NLP can be defined as a communication practice that helps in changing the thought-process of an individual as well as their behavior in order to help them reaching and understanding the desired outcomes [5,6]. It is a pseudoscientific approach that was proposed by John Grinder and Richard Bandler in 1970. The idea behind this approach was to explore the association between behaviors, neurological processes, language and programming experiences, along with investigating how they alter the goals and objectives of an individual. NLP uses a wide array of communication, behavioral, and perceptual practices and techniques that allow them to alter the actions and behaviors of individuals to that of the visible behavioral patterns of successful and famous people, along with coming up with ways to teach them to excel in the life as well. NLP is a popular approach in the present times and has been used in treating phobias, improving workplace performance, training and treating anxiety disorders [7]. The principal components of NLP are summarized in Figure 1.

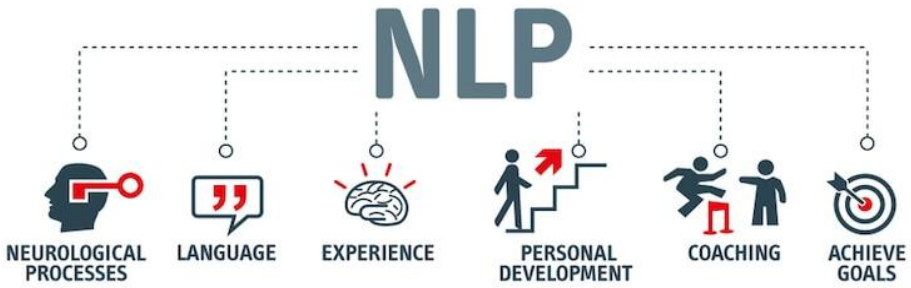


Figure 1. NLP process

The implementation of NLP techniques in social media is a new arena of research and has garnered considerable attention in the last decade or so. Media practitioners, professors, and researchers have been exploring the impact and effect of NLP techniques in designing social media posts, along with improving their overall efficacy in terms of influencing the social media participants. During the last four decades, the use of NLP in different domains of the media highlights how these thinking and behavioral processes and techniques have shaped up the ever-changing and evolving world of media. Richard Bandler and John Grinder, the fathers of the NLP technique also discussed its impact on marketing, sales, product development and design and consumer psychology. Social media has the power to mobilize public support and alter their opinions as well. NLP is quite similar to the social media as well, however, it is not manipulative and can allow businesses to encourage consumers to understand the true potential and qualities of a product through Facebook posts and tweets, helping them to make much informed decisions [8].

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of NLP in designing and producing content for social media. The aim of the study is to explore the efficacy and impact of neuro-linguistic approaches in designing posts for the social media and how these techniques are used by the content creators in influencing the attitude and behaviour of the social media participants.

Objectives of Study:

The objectives of the study include:

- To explore the relationship between NLP and social media.
- To investigate the efficacy and impact of NLP approaches on designing content for social media.
- To investigate the impact of NLP in influencing and altering the attitude and behaviour of social media user.
- To explore the increasing role of NLP approaches in different domains of social media.
- To investigate how NLP can increase the efficacy of social media posts in comparison to the traditional or conventional approaches for the designing posts.

In this study, NLP-informed design refers to the combined use of text readability, color, logo or product prominence, object placement, and background clarity to guide perceived attention. These features are not exclusive to NLP; the study's contribution lies in jointly examining preference and reported attention sequence through paired social media designs.

Hypothesis:

H1: Participants show a significantly higher preference for NLP-informed designs than for conventional designs

H0: Participants' preferences do not differ significantly between NLP-informed and conventional designs.

2. Literature review

NLP allows to organize and understand the subjective structure of a particular human experience and deals with how an individual processes information, but not with the exact content of that particular piece of information. Information is usually sorted out using three different modes, including audio, visual and kinesthetic [9]. NLP is a psychological technique that uses a variety of strategies and practices employed by famous or successful individuals in reaching or accomplishing their life goals. These strategies are than employed to help other individuals in attaining their life goals and is related to changes in their thought process, behaviour and language. These experiences that they derive from people around them helps them in attaining specific outcomes in life [10]. Different techniques are used by NLP trainers, including anchoring where sensory experiences are used to trigger different emotional conditions, rapport in which behavior of an individual is altered to improvise communication along with allowing them to show empathy through their responses, swish pattern in which behavior and thought process patterns are altered to achieve a desired outcome and visual or kinesthetic dissociation in which negative ideas and thoughts linked with a prior event are altered [11,12]. The relationship among the neuro, linguistic, and programming components is illustrated in Figure 2.

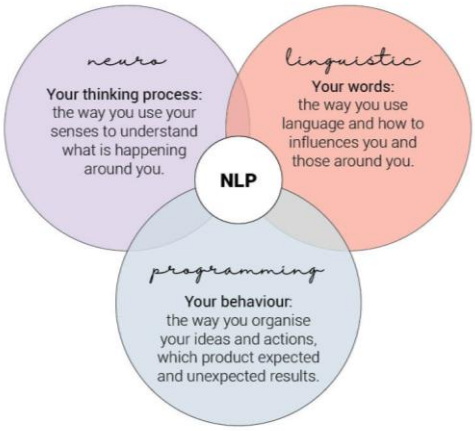


Figure 2. Core components of Neuro-Linguistic Programming

NLP was developed by Richard Bandler and John Grinder to demonstrate how technology can be used to model or engender change. From this study they explored how modelling can allow subjects to explore and identify the different structural elements of another individual's behaviour by following a specific pattern. They used these modelling techniques to teach the defined structure to a third person [13]. While modeling the third person, the modeler sets aside their own beliefs or orientations and follows the physiology, beliefs, language and strategies employed by the individual that is being modeled. After the modeler succeeds in reinforcing the same set of behavioral patterns or outcome of the person that was being modeled, another process takes place where the modeler alters or readopts their specific belief system, amalgamating it with the beliefs of the modeled person [14,15]]. This experiment allowed Bandler and Grinder to find out how skills can be transferred from one person to another, particularly the ones that are interested to learn them, along with codifying the structural patterns that enables the modification [16]. The researchers in [17] played a vital role

in laying down the foundation of the NLP theory. He indicated the four levels of learning during the entire process. The first level is the content and majority of people spend their entire lives on this level. The second level is context that allows them to understand the procedures that can be followed to learn. People operating at this level are capable of drawing new content and moves through the entire learning process in an efficient manner. The third level is one of the rarest level and is related to logic or how people learn about the context of a particular situation. People operating at this level recognize the contextual pattern or structure of a particular subjective experience. This is the level at which modeling is practiced by the modeler. The fourth level of learning is for the successful masters like Yogi's or Zen gurus and can be reached with training and extreme persistence only. The input–processing–output interpretation of NLP is presented in Figure 3.

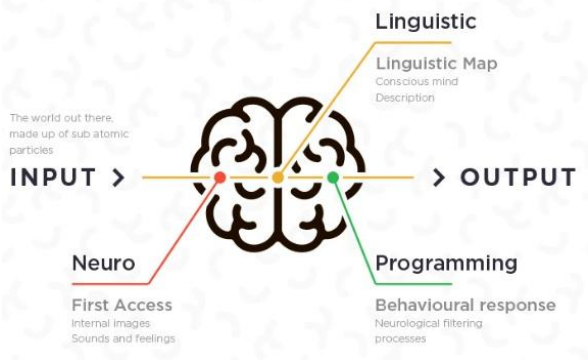


Figure 3. Input–processing–output representation of Neuro-Linguistic Programming

In [18], Yapko (1981) conducted one of the most sought-after NLP research projects. In his study, he examined 30 graduate-level students who were induced into the hypnotic trance for three times. Each time they entered the trance, the examiner focused on a different figurative structure or system. These inductions by the examiners were recorded, and the depth of each trance was evaluated through electromyographic recordings of muscle relaxation. Also, between each trance, the subject was asked to express his/her subjective experience related to relaxation. The results of Yapok's study revealed that matching figurative or representational systems can play a vital role in enhancing rapport. Subjects who were measured physiologically and subjectively succeeded in reaching higher levels of relaxation when each induction was presented by the examiner; however, context constraints had a negative impact on the true interpretation of the research study. Social media has transformed interpersonal communication over the last two decades or so. Research on language analysis highlights how social media has influenced our everyday lives, both professionally and on a personal level. Natural language processing is a new avenue of research to understand how social media experts and marketers use NLP tools to attract prospective and existing consumers. Powerful tools and algorithms are required to extract the needed information from large chunks of data derived from a number of sources. Social computing is also an emerging discipline which refers to the study of analyzing, monitoring, and modeling the behavior of social media participants to yield productive results and use intelligent applications [19].

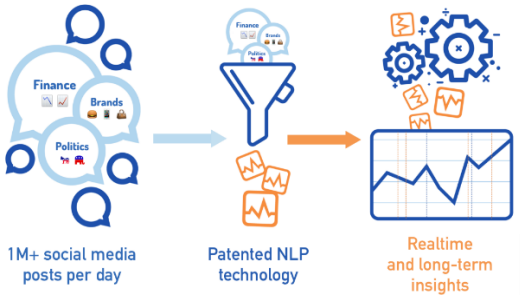


Figure 4. NLP and Social Media

A social network consists of different actors and a group of binary relations among them. The goal of social media experts is to formulate or model the structure of interactions with a social group to influence and model their behavior, along with identifying how different variables and structures can be altered over time

to yield better results as shown in figure 4. The textual data of social media is drawn from a number of open sources such as internet forums, chats, blogs, ratings, feedback, comments, FAQ's and online games, just to name a few. The social media texts are slightly different from traditional messages and texts because they are posted in real-time as a social conversation and reveal the social behavior of a specific target population. NLP-based user modeling can help social media experts and marketers in understanding how a message in its totality can be designed and used to manipulate social media participants. It takes into account certain variables, including several attributes of the user such as their gender, ages, location or region, political affiliations or orientation, drawn from their social media posts. This information is used for recommendation systems, personalization and advertising or marketing purposes [20]. Modeling user personality by Farzindar & Inkpen discusses how the overall personality of the social media user can be modelled grounded on their social media user profile and the messages or posts they share. The style of their posting and the way they share their emotions can be valuable source information for advertisers and marketers (2015). One of the early works on this subject was done by [21]. In their study they worked on how personality can be detected based on blogs. They classified the participants on the basis of four personality traits including agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness and neuroticism by using three different classes against each trait that included low, medium and high levels. They used n-gram features to train binary and multi-class SVM classifiers. Similarly, in [22] her study demonstrated a system to recognize personality by exploiting various language cues. For the experiment, she administered her system on the basis of sampled dataset from the FriendFeed social network. Five standard personality traits including openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and emotional stability were used and by using various language cues, Celli generated a personality model for each user type. She than evaluated each model by comparing it with the user type. The study revealed that almost 748 Italian participants of FriendFeed were insecure, agreeable, organized, extravert and unimaginative. NLP provides business executives and marketers with a set of verbal as well as physical cues to influence the subjective experience of their consumers or participants. According [23] , NLP can help in creating an overall subjective experience which means that each user or consumer will take something from the social media post and will engage differently. This means that NLP can be used to generate a subjective reality where each individual will learn in advance the ways to react or act towards a particular post or event on the social media.

3. Research design

This exploratory cross-sectional survey used a within-participant paired-comparison design. Twenty participants from management, social media management, graphic design, human resources, healthcare, business, and media-related backgrounds were recruited through purposive sampling. Complete responses were collected through a Google Forms questionnaire distributed via email and WhatsApp. The questionnaire assessed design preference, attention order, text readability, color, logo or product prominence, object placement, and background clarity. Frequencies and percentages were generated using Google Forms. Because no formal questionnaire validation or power analysis was performed, the study was treated as an exploratory pilot investigation. The evaluated features were operationalized as linguistic presentation (text size, color, and readability), visual prominence (logo, product, and object placement), contextual clarity (background and visual distortion), and reported attention order. Each paired-design preference was evaluated using a two-sided exact binomial test against an equal-preference probability of 0.50. A Bonferroni-adjusted significance threshold of 0.0083 was applied across the six comparisons, and 95% exact confidence intervals were reported. Results: This study focuses on the impact of NLP in designing posts for social media. The results of the study will allow the researcher to analyze the efficacy of different social media posts that are designed keeping in mind the NLP practices. The occupational breakdown of participants is as follows:

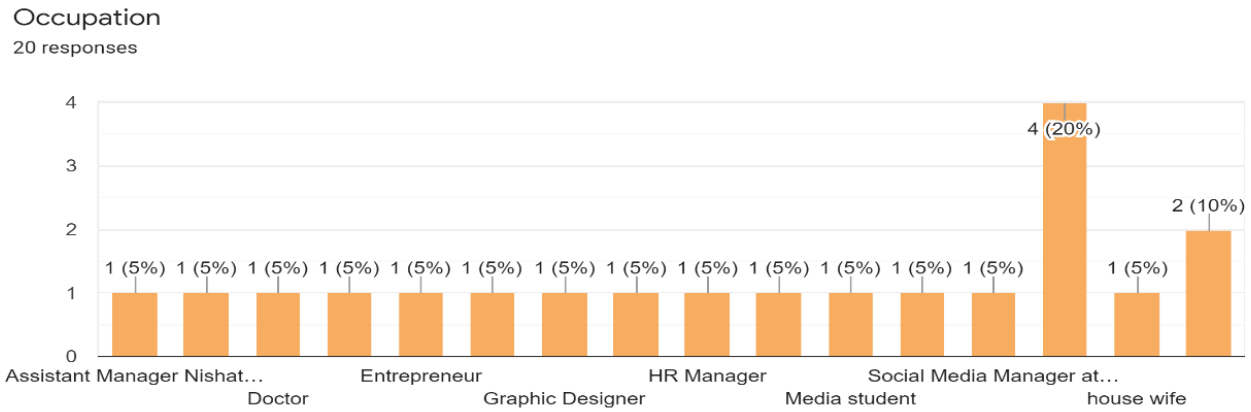


Figure 5. Occupation of respondents/participants

Figure 5 highlight that the majority of respondents/participants worked as social media managers in different textile companies (20 percent), followed by students (10 percent) and housewives (5 percent). The age breakdown of participants is as follows:

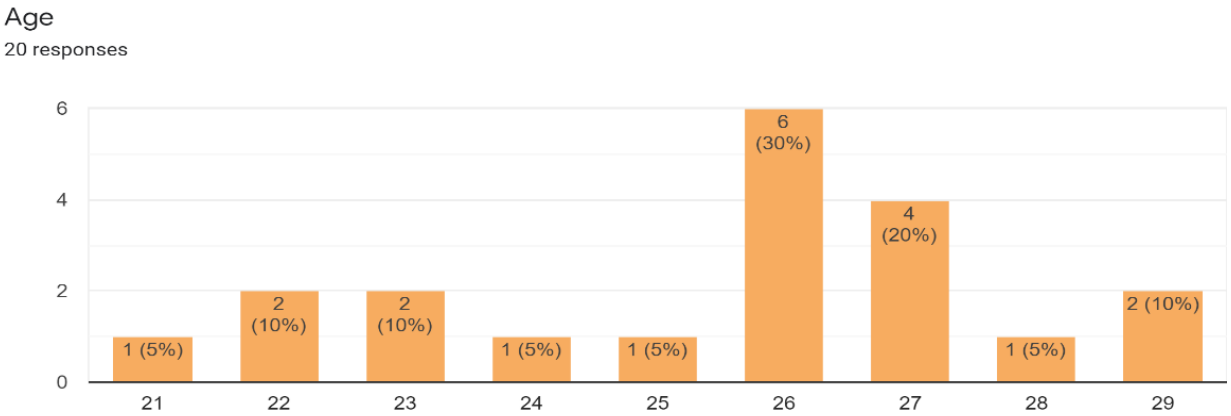


Figure 6. Age of Participants

Figure 6 highlight that the majority of participants fall in the age bracket 26 (30 percent), followed by age bracket 27 (20 percent) and age bracket 22, 23 and 29 (10 percent) respectively.

Question 1

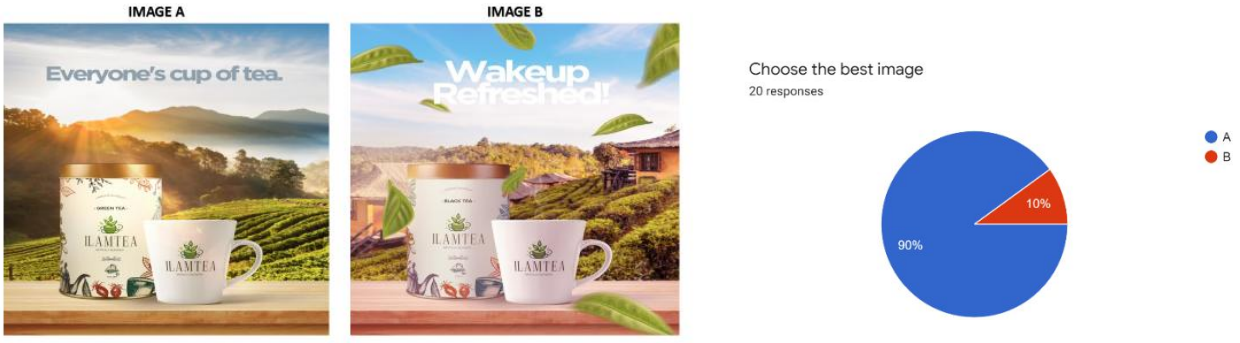


Figure 7. Image A and B

As shown in Figure 7, 18 participants (90%) preferred Image A, whereas 2 participants (10%) preferred Image B.

Question 2

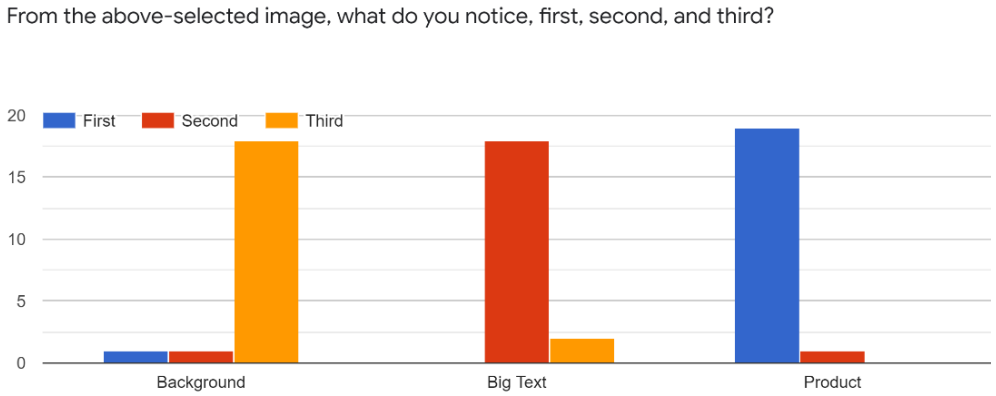


Figure 8. Prominent features of the image A and B

Participants were asked about the features that they noticed first in both the images as shown in Figure 8. The results highlight that majority of the participants noticed the product first, followed by big text (second) and background (third).

Question 3

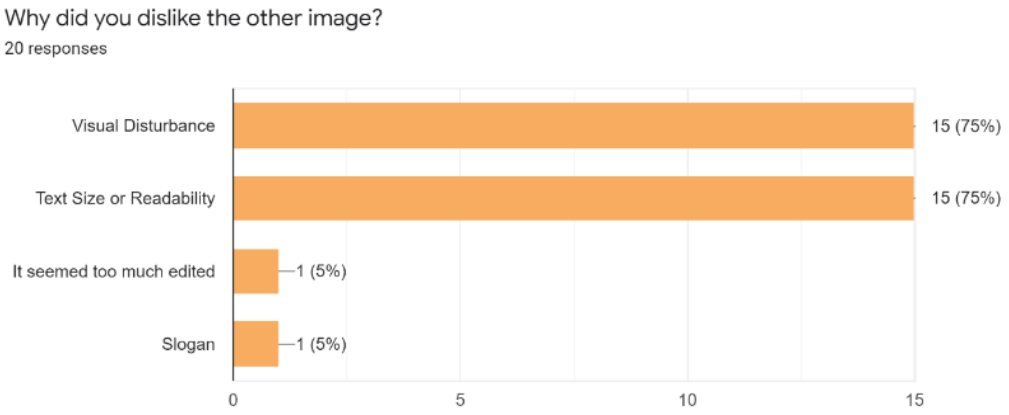


Figure 9. Reasons behind disliking the other image

The participants were asked about the reason behind disliking the other image as shown in Figure 9. The results highlight that visual disturbance and readability of the text (75 percent), were the major reasons behind disliking image B.

Question 4



Figure 10. Image A and B

The participants were asked to select the best image from option A and B. The results highlight that all the participants selected image A as shown in Figure 10.

Question 5

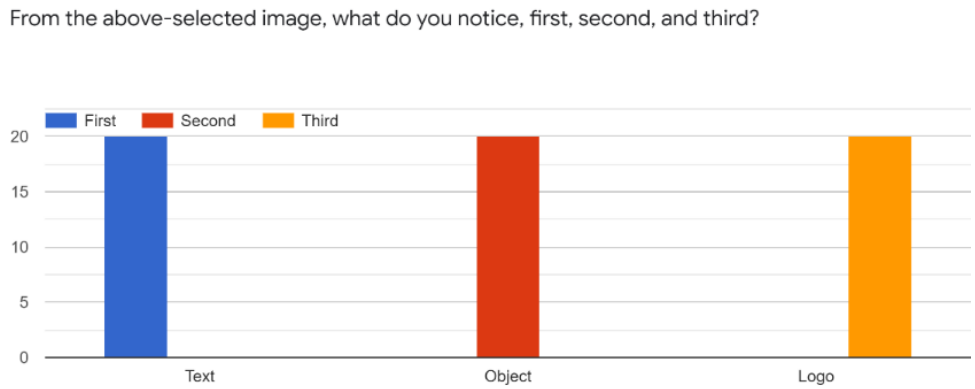


Figure 11. Prominent features of image A and B

The participants were asked about the features that they noticed first in both the images. The results highlight that majority of participants noticed text first, followed by object (second) and logo (third) as shown in Figure 11.

Question 6

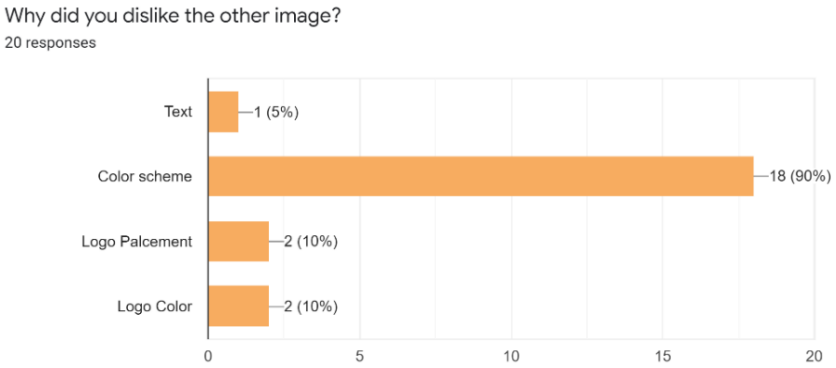


Figure 12. Reasons behind disliking the other image

The participants were asked about the reason behind disliking the other image. The results highlight that 90 percent participants disliked the image B because of its color scheme, followed by its logo placement and logo color as shown in Figure 12.

Question 7

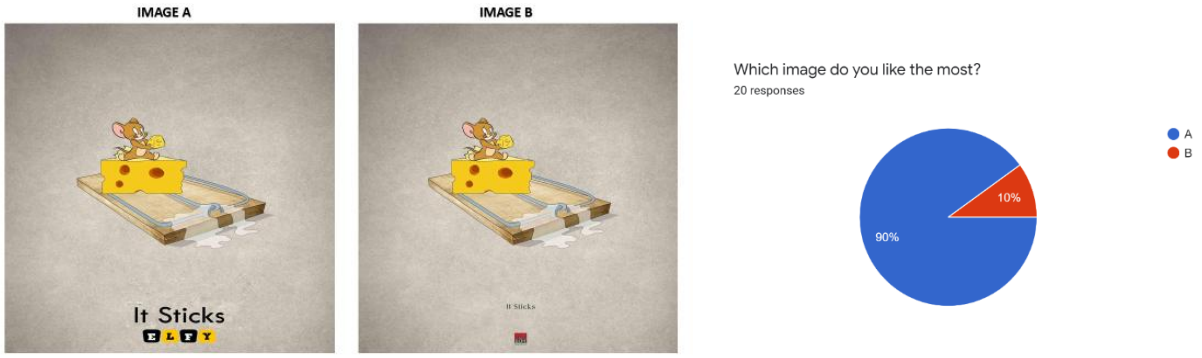


Figure 13. Image A and B

The participants were asked to select the best image from option A and B. The results highlight that 90 percent respondent's selected image A, while 10 percent selected image B as shown in figure 13.

Question 8

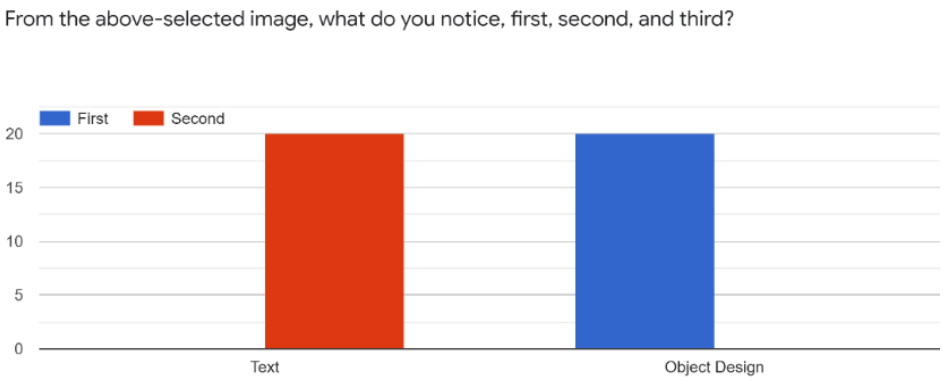


Figure 14. Prominent features of Image A and B

The participants were asked to select the features that they noticed first in both the images. The results highlight that majority of the participants noticed text first, followed by object design (second) as shown in figure 14.

Question 9

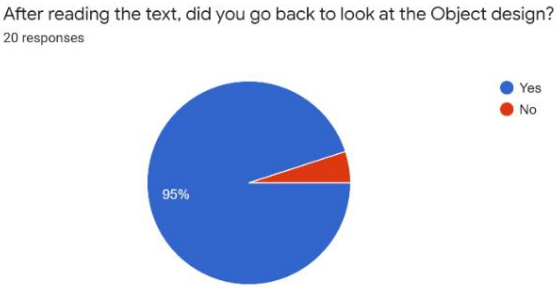


Figure 15. Looked back at the object design after reading the text

The participants were asked whether they looked back at the object design after reading the text or not. The results highlight that 95 percent participants looked back at the object design after reading the text. The participants were asked about the features that they disliked in the other image. The results highlight that 90 percent participants disliked the logo size and color, followed by text size and color**.** The participants were asked to select the best image from option A and B. The results highlight that 95 percent respondent's selected image A as shown in figure 15. The participants were asked to select the features that they noticed first in both the images. The results highlight that majority of the participants noticed object design first, followed by text (second) and logo (third). The participants were asked whether they looked back at the object design after reading the text or not. The results highlight that 95 percent participants looked back at the object design after reading the text.

Question 10

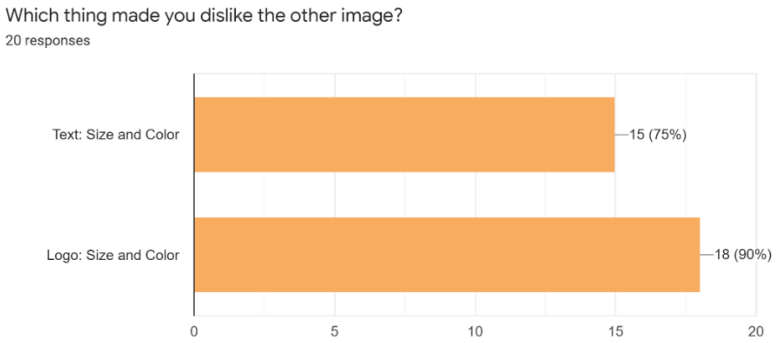


Figure 16. Reasons behind disliking the other image

As shown in Figure 16, 18 of 20 participants (90%) disliked the logo size and color, while 15 (75%) disliked the text size and color. Multiple responses were permitted.

Question 11

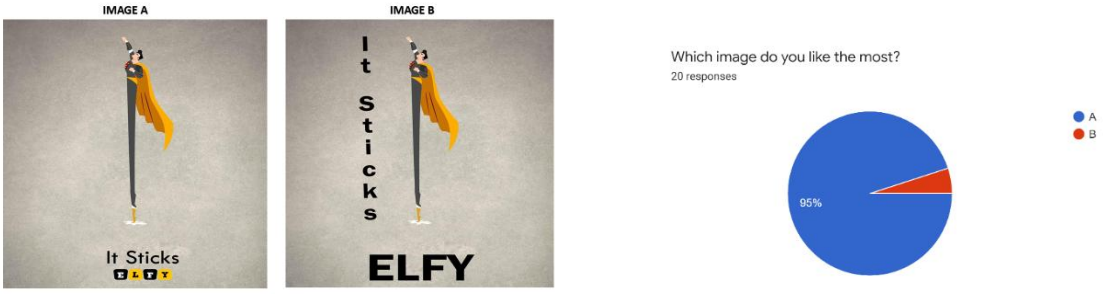


Figure 17. Image A and B

As shown in Figure 17, 19 of 20 participants (95%) preferred Image A, whereas 1 participant (5%) preferred Image B.

Question 12

From the above-selected image, what do you notice, first, second, and third?

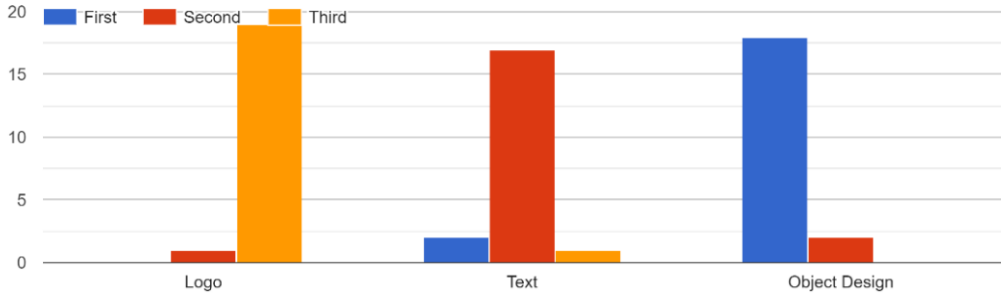


Figure 18. Prominent features in image A and B

As shown in Figure 18, object design was ranked first by 18 participants (90%) and second by 2 (10%). Text was predominantly ranked second (17; 85%), while the logo was predominantly ranked third (19; 95%).

Question 13

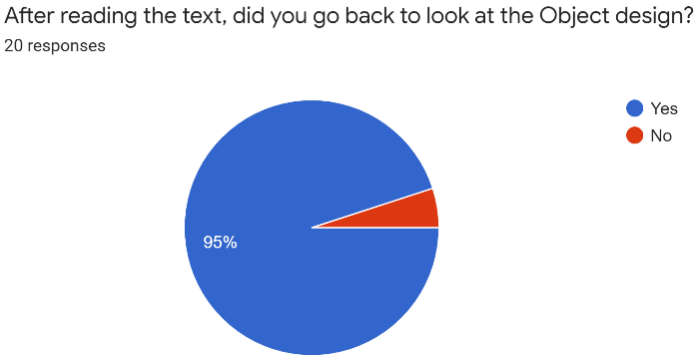


Figure 19. Looked back at the object design after reading the text

As shown in Figure 19, 19 of 20 participants (95%) reported looking back at the object design after reading the text, whereas 1 participant (5%) did not.

Question 14

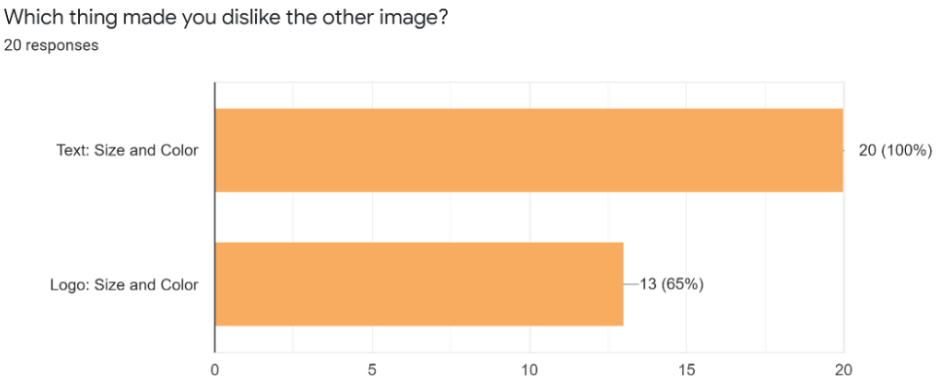


Figure 20. Reasons behind disliking the other image

The participants were asked about the features that they disliked in the other image. The results highlight that majority participants disliked the text size and color, followed by logo size and color as shown in figure 20**.**

Question 15



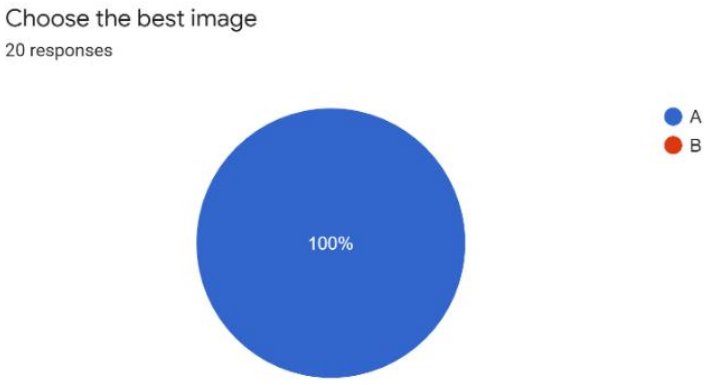


Figure 21. Image A and B

The participants were asked to select the best image from option A and B. The result highlight that all the participants selected image A as shown in figure 21.

Question 16

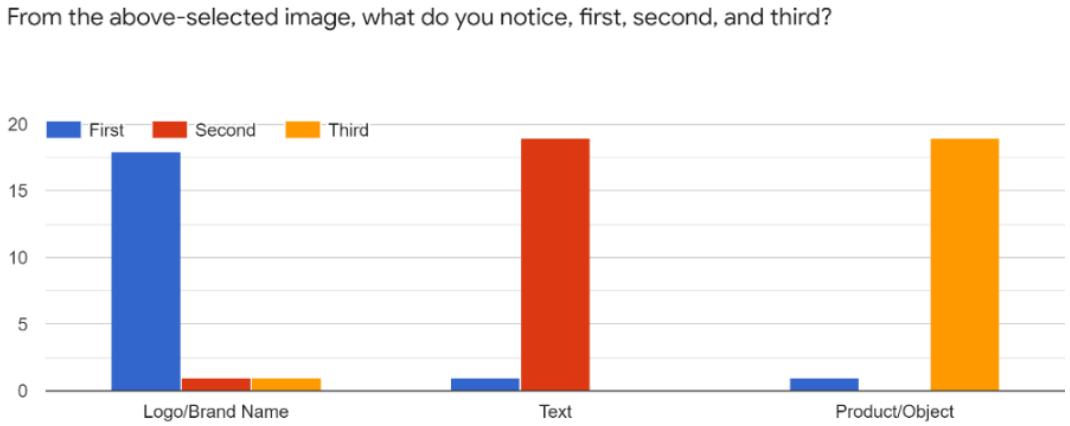


Figure 22. Prominent features of Image A and B

The participants were asked to select the features that they noticed first in both the images. The results highlight that majority of the participants noticed logo/brand name first, followed by text and product as shown in figure 22.

Question 17

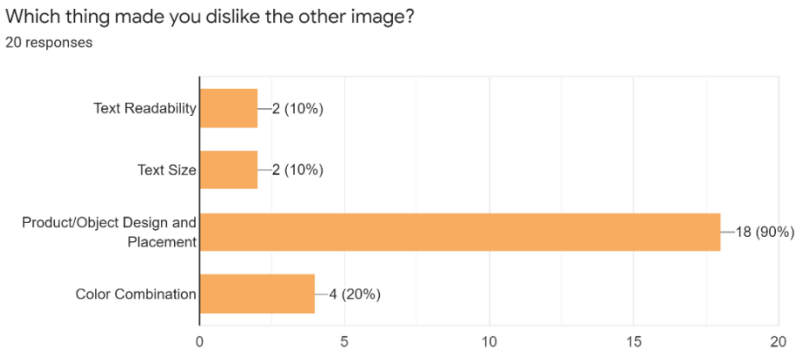


Figure 23. Reasons behind disliking the other image

The participants were asked about the features that they disliked in the other image. The results highlight that 90 percent participants disliked the object design and placement, followed by color combination, text size and text readability as shown in figure 23**.**

Question 18

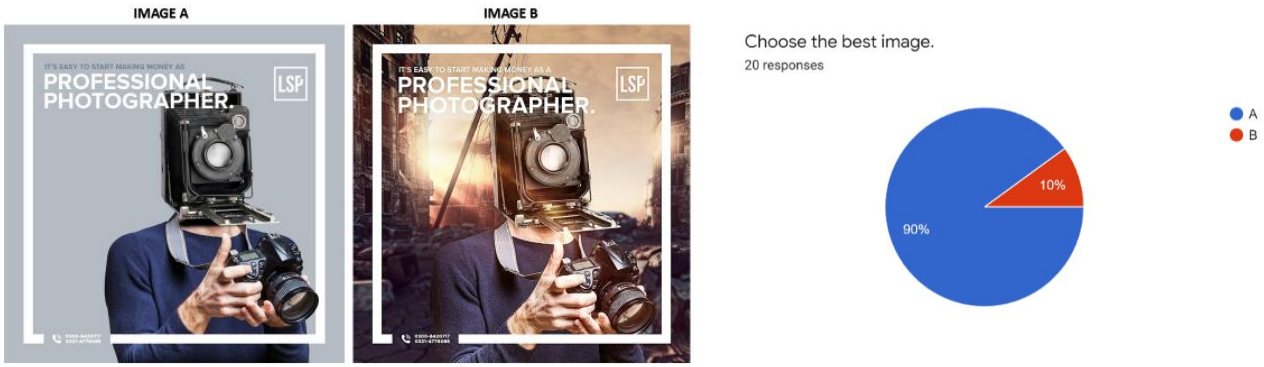


Figure 24. Image A and B

The participants were asked to select the best image from option A and B. The result highlight that 90 percent respondent's selected image A as shown in figure 24.

Question 19

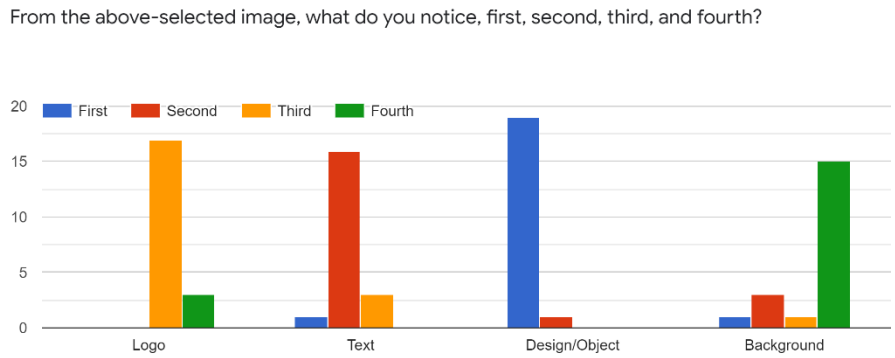


Figure 25. Prominent features of Image A and B

The participants were asked to select the features that they noticed first in both the images. The results highlight that majority of the participants noticed design first, followed by text (second), logo (third) and background (fourth) as shown in figure 25.

Question 20

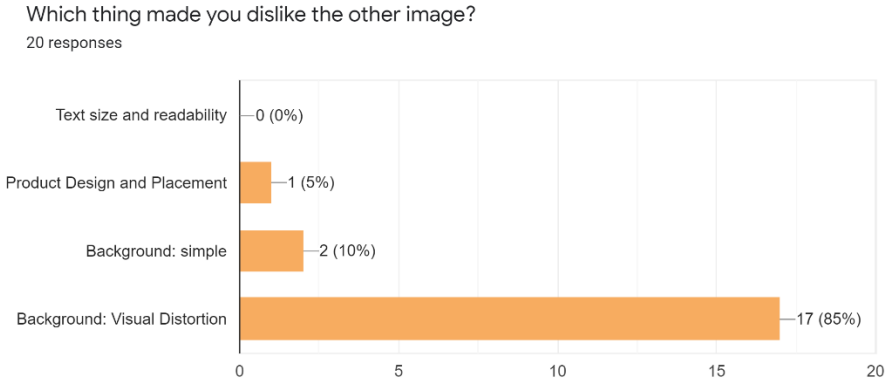


Figure 26. Reasons behind disliking the other image

As shown in Figure 26, 17 participants (85%) identified visual distortion as the main reason for disliking the alternative image, followed by background simplicity (2; 10%) and product design or placement (1; 5%).

Across the six comparisons, Image A was preferred by 18/20, 20/20, 18/20, 19/20, 20/20, and 18/20 participants, respectively. Exact binomial tests remained significant after Bonferroni correction (adjusted $p \leq 0.0024$). These findings support H1 for participants' stated design preferences but do not establish behavioral or causal effectiveness.

4. Discussion

NLP can be defined as the study of how human behavior can be influenced or altered with the help of communication or real life examples and how human mind can be used in a consistent and coherent manner to achieve specific life goals. The research study aims to explore the impact of NLP

on social media post designing. The study aims to investigate how NLP techniques can be used by social media marketers to influence the mind as well as behaviour of the consumer. The results of the study highlight that NLP influences the actions and the behaviours of the consumer, forcing them to notice or discern the characteristics in a sequential order predetermined by the designer of the intended social media post. Through NLP the social media marketers, plan out the sequence of the items in the poster or post such as text, size, background or color and also determine how they wish the audience to decipher the meaning or intent behind the post. They control the mind of the audiences who subconsciously view the features that they want them to view first.

The results highlight how participants reacted differently to two similar images in which subtle NLP techniques were used by the social media marketer. Results of Question 1 highlight that respondent's selected image A over image B due to the placement of the product in the image. Moreover, majority of participants disliked image B due to visual disturbance and size of the text which reduced its readability level. Results of Question 4 highlight that respondent's selected image A over image B due to its text, object and logo which was also the sequence in which they noticed the prominent features of the image A. Moreover, majority of participants disliked image B due to its color scheme, logo placement and color.

Results of Question 7 highlight that respondent's selected image A over image B due to its text and object design. Participants also admitted that they looked back at the design of the product after reading the text which shows that text was the standalone factor behind selecting image A over B. Moreover, majority of participants disliked image B due to its logo size and color. Results of Question 11 highlight that respondent's selected image A over image B due to its object design, text and logo which was also the sequence in which they noticed the prominent features of image A. Participants also admitted that they looked back at the design of the product after reading the text which shows that text was the standalone factor behind selecting image A over B. Moreover, majority of participants disliked image B due to the text size and color in comparison to that of image A.

Results of Question 15 highlight that respondent's selected image A over image B due to the logo and brand name, followed by the text and product. While responding to the features that they disliked in image B, majority of participants blamed the placement of the product in the image, followed by the color combination and lower readability levels of the text. Results of Question 19 highlight that respondent's selected image A over image B due to the design/object, followed by text, logo and background which was also the sequence in which they noticed the prominent feature of image A. Participants disliked image B due to the visual distortion in its background, the simplicity of the background and the placement of the object in the image.

The participants also believed that the sharpness of the background, color scheme, empty spaces in the image, readability of text, crowded text, visual distortion and rusty background are some of the key features that they notice while discerning an image over the social media. Analysis of the images in the questionnaire indicate that different NLP techniques are incorporated while designing social media posts to increase their efficacy. Some of the prominent features, include color combination, background, size and color of the text, logo of the brand, placement of the object, object design, name of the brand and readability of the text that are incorporated to attract social media consumers and influence their buying preferences. Moreover, the social media marketers also decide the sequence in which the social media user discern the prominent features of the image, forcing them to follow the predetermined sequential order as per the message that needs to be highlighted by the designer. The results of the study support hypothesis 1 (H1) which states that the "use of neuro-linguistic approach in designing social media posts makes it more effective than conventional designing approaches," hence rejecting the null hypothesis.

4.1. Limitation

This study is limited by its small purposively selected sample of 20 participants, which restricts generalizability. The paired images differed across multiple visual attributes, preventing preferences from being attributed to a single design feature. The questionnaire was not independently validated, and the outcomes represented self-reported preferences rather than objectively measured attention or purchasing behavior. The non-randomized presentation order may also have introduced order bias. Although exact binomial tests were used for individual comparisons, the small sample and absence of repeated-measures modelling limit broader statistical inference.

5. Conclusion

NLP is a behavioral technique of practice that allows to understand human behavior and how human decisions can have a lasting impact on their life. It is not a therapy but a psychological or neurological tool that allows to study the human brain and how communication with other people can change or alter their opinions, perspectives or behavior. Neuro refers to the nervous system and the ways our experiences are processed.

Linguistic deals with verbal and non-verbal aspects of language or communication, while programming refers to how people think and behave along with processing information through our neurotic system to achieve the desired results. The emergence of social media has redefined the role of traditional media outlets and has led to a new two-way communication channel that allows media participants/consumers to create, share, and develop media content with people around them. These new media models have transformed the passive media participants into active participants who understand the underlying dynamics of these evolving mediums and how they are used to share news, build relationships, and market different products. Social media is emerging as a viable marketing tool and is considered vital in influencing the decision of the consumer, starting from the product awareness stage to the post-purchase evaluation phase [24-25]. NLP is a new arena of research in the field of media and technology. Its relevance and application in the context of new media or social media can allow to understand how NLP approaches can be used to design effective social media posts to influence social media participants and alter or change their behavior and perspectives. NLP can allow social media marketers to understand what type of content or text catches the eye of the social media user, what colors attract their attention and what type of posts can help in increasing the traffic to the website in an organic manner.

Authors' Contribution Statement:

N.M.K., M.I., and Y.J. have collected data from different resources and contributed to writing—original draft preparation. A.A., M.A.K., and Y.J. drafted pictures & tables. N.M.K., M.A.K., and M.I. performed formal analysis and performed revision, and improved the quality of the draft. U.F.K., and M.A.K.; writing—review and editing, performed supervision. U.F.K received the funding. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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