

The Influence of Instagram on Adolescents with Reference to Tamilnadu: A Brief Analysis

Vijayaraj M¹ & Dr. Rajesh R²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Visual Communication, Faculty of Science and Humanities, SRM IST, Kattankulathur, Tamilnadu – 603203. vm3913@srmist.edu.in

²Associate Professor, Department of Visual Communication, Faculty of Science and Humanities, SRM IST, Kattankulathur, Tamilnadu – 603203. rajeshr@srmist.edu.in

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ABSTRACT

Adolescents are progressively depending on social media platforms for diverse goals, such as self-expression, social interaction, and information dissemination. Among social media networks, Instagram is notably one of the most popular, especially among teens. This study examines the complex effects of Instagram, a widely used social media site, on adolescents, emphasizing its impact on psychological well-being, self-esteem, social interactions, and general conduct. The extensive use of Instagram by adolescents necessitates an understanding of its effects on their developmental stage. This study employs a quantitative survey approach. Structured closed-end questionnaires were employed to gather data from the samples. Approximately 200 adolescents from educational institutions in the metropolitan areas of Tamil Nadu constituted the sample for the study. A snowball sampling method is employed to get the sample. This study highlights the necessity for improved digital literacy and emotional intelligence in adolescents to effectively manage the intricacies of social media.

1. Introduction

Over the years, social media has transformed the ways in which individuals interact, communicate, and share information. Social media denotes online platforms and technologies that facilitate the sharing, creation, and exchange of multimedia content, ideas, and information inside virtual networks among individuals and groups. These platforms link individuals globally by enabling contact, interaction, and collaboration in many manners. Users may engage with others, create profiles, and publish updates using social network functionalities such as comments, likes, shares, and direct messaging.

1.1.Characteristics of social media

Profiles of Users on the site, whether people or companies, establish profiles that represent themselves. Profiles may encompass personal information, interests, and connections. Users can disseminate many types of material, including textual posts, images, videos, hyperlinks, and more formats. Users may disseminate this information to specific audiences or display it on their accounts. Social media platforms facilitate the formation of networks of friends, followers, or connections. These connections facilitate content sharing and communication. Engagement Users may engage with the content by like, commenting, sharing, or reacting to postings. This connection fosters communication and the cultivation of online communities.

Social media platforms have distinct traits that differentiate them from conventional media. A defining characteristic is interactivity, enabling users to generate and disseminate material, participate in debates, and establish connections beyond geographical borders. This promotes community development and networking, enabling users to establish groups based on common interests or objectives. Moreover, social media prioritizes user-generated content, empowering users to create and distribute information, frequently resulting in the democratization of media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). A vital element is real-time communication, wherein changes and interactions transpire instantaneously, rendering these platforms essential for news transmission and trend development. Ultimately, the algorithmic personalization of information, informed by users' prior interactions and choices, guarantees that individuals are continually presented with customized material, hence maintaining their engagement (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

1.2. Evaluation of Social media Timeline

The evolution of social media started in 1971 when Ray Tomlinson created the inaugural networked email system via ARPANET, enabling near-instantaneous electronic communication. In 1997, Six Degrees pioneered the notion of online mass communication, enabling users to exchange material and establish communities, so initiating the era of social networking. Friendster (2002) linked users by shared connections, whilst MySpace (2003) had swift expansion followed by a downturn, in contrast to LinkedIn's consistent stability. Facebook, established in 2004, evolved from Mark Zuckerberg's initial website at Harvard and developed into a worldwide platform. YouTube and Reddit were established in 2005, offering platforms for video sharing and community-oriented discourse. Twitter (2006) pioneered real-time microblogging, while Instagram (2010) transformed photo-sharing. Snapchat (2011) introduced ephemeral messaging and augmented reality, whilst Google+ sought to penetrate the market. These anniversaries underscore the rapid expansion of social media and its revolutionary influence on global communication.

1.3. Role of Social Media on Pandemic Period (2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 had a significant effect on social media usage, among other facets of society. Social media became the main way that individuals kept in touch with friends, family, and the outside world during the global lockdowns, stay-at-home orders, and social distancing measures. Social media involvement skyrocketed as a result of spending more time at home. In addition to exchanging personal updates, users were looking for entertainment, knowledge, and a sense of belonging. People's habits of consuming content shifted as they sought out amusement, instructional materials, and COVID-19 updates to help them deal with the pandemic's issues. Webinars, internet events, and live streaming became more common.

Social media platforms played a crucial role in facilitating remote work and collaboration. Professionals and businesses used platforms like LinkedIn, Slack, and others for communication, networking, and sharing industry insights. The rapid spread of information, both accurate and inaccurate, about the virus and its impact became a challenge. Social media platforms had to grapple with the dissemination of misinformation and implement measures to address it. Social media became a platform for expressing solidarity, support, and gratitude. Users shared messages of encouragement, participated in virtual events, and organized initiatives to help those affected by the pandemic. Discussions around mental health and well-being proliferated on social media as individuals contended with the

emotional repercussions of the epidemic. Users exchanged coping mechanisms, resources, and experiences pertaining to mental health. Brands modified their social media strategy in response to the evolving marketplace. Some concentrated on sympathetic and educational material, while others transitioned to e-commerce solutions to engage consumers who had largely moved online. Governments globally utilized social media channels to disseminate public health information, recommendations, and updates concerning the epidemic. This facilitated rapid outreach to a broad audience. Social media emerged as a centre for amusement during lockdowns. Challenges, trends, and innovative material thrived on platforms such as TikTok, offering consumers a means of entertainment and connection. The COVID-19 pandemic expedited pre-existing tendencies in social media utilization and instigated novel behaviours as individuals pursued connection, knowledge, and enjoyment during a worldwide catastrophe. It also emphasized the crucial role that social media plays in influencing and mirroring society experiences during difficult periods.

1.4.Instagram

Instagram's rapid expansion resembles a Silicon Valley myth, as the start-up attained extraordinary traction within a mere few months. Within around eight weeks, software engineers developed the photo- and video-sharing social networking application, which was launched on Apple's mobile operating system in October 2010. Facebook (META) acquired the company for \$1 billion in shares and cash over a span of less than two years. As with any compelling narrative, the process was characterized by fluctuations, victories and failures, conflicts and partnerships, along with a significant element of fortuitous chance. In 2009, Next Stop employed Kevin Systrom, 27-year-old alumni of Stanford University, who had previously served as a corporate development associate at Google and interned at Odeo, which subsequently evolved into Twitter. Although lacking a computer science background, Systrom dedicated weekends and evenings to studying coding at Next Stop. He conceived the concept for Burbn, a web service prototype enabling users to post plans, exchange photographs, and check in, distinguished by a unique photo-sharing functionality. Engaging in a March 2010 event for the Silicon Valley start-up Hunch was a crucial turning point for Systrom. Systrom met two venture investors from Andreessen Horowitz and Baseline Ventures at the event. After evaluating the prototype of his program, they agreed to meet for coffee to discuss it. After their initial encounter, Systrom resolved to resign from his position and commit himself to Burbn. In under two weeks, he secured \$500,000 in initial capital from Andreessen Horowitz and Baseline Ventures to advance his startup plan. With this first finance, Systrom initiated the establishment of an investing group for his venture, appointing 25-year-old Mike Krieger as the first member. After graduating from Stanford, Krieger worked as an engineer and user-experience designer for the social networking site Meebo. The two had known one other since their undergraduate studies at Stanford. The two had been acquainted since their undergraduate years at Stanford.

1.5.Newer Features Added to the App

Despite its various features, Instagram's design primarily enables users with a free account to contribute material, encompassing both images and videos. Subsequently, users may apply filters to their uploaded media and arrange it using geographical data and hashtags, which are words or phrases prefixed by a hash sign and often employed on social media platforms to categorize postings on certain subjects. Users have the option to designate their profiles as either private or public. A private profile enables individuals to choose who may view their postings, while a public profile allows all Instagram users to access their photographs and

videos. Instagram users may search for places and hashtags to get images and videos shared by other users. Moreover, individuals may explore a collection of popular material and engage with other users' images and videos using buttons that allow them to "like" or remark textually on posts. A user who "follows" another user integrates their images and videos into their feed. In the initial version of the Instagram application, users were restricted to seeing their photographs in a square aspect ratio. An aspect ratio signifies the proportionate connection between the width and height of an image. An picture with a square aspect ratio has same height and width. Consequently, in 2010, Instagram restricted its users to uploading material that conformed to the width of the iPhone 4 (640 pixels). In 2015, Instagram modified this function to allow users to upload bigger media, up to 1080 pixels. Since its beginnings, Instagram has incorporated a chat component and allowed users to integrate several photographs or videos within a single post.

2. Review of Literature

This introductory article, according to Ellison (2007), outlines the features of social networking sites (SNSs) and provides a comprehensive description. We subsequently present an analysis of the historical context of these locations, scrutinizing significant modifications and developments. After a short review of the existing literature on social networking sites, we examine the publications in this area and conclude with considerations for future research trajectories.

According to Tseng in 2007, Twitter, a popular microblogging network, has had substantial growth since its launch in October 2006. This study elucidates our results about the microblogging phenomena by analyzing the topological and geographical attributes of Twitter's social network. Individuals employ microblogging to share their everyday activities and to request or distribute information. Ultimately, we analyze user intents at the community level and illustrate how users with similar purposes are interconnected.

The 2015 study by Gibbs, which analyzed photographs on public Instagram accounts tagged with '#funeral' about funerary customs, supplies data for this work. Most images associated with the hashtag #funeral mostly illustrated an individual's emotional condition and affective context, allowing them to recontextualize their funeral experience within wider networks of acquaintances, friends, and relatives. This study enhances our comprehension of how architectural principles and use dynamics influence platform vernaculars.

This study provides qualitative and quantitative assessments of Instagram, as seen by Manikonda in 2014. We utilize computer vision techniques to examine photographic material. Therefore, we classify the different types of active users on Instagram by clustering analysis. Our research uncovers some previously unexamined observations regarding Instagram. 1) Eight common kinds of photographs; 2) Five unique classifications of Instagram users based on their shared images; and 3) The autonomy of a user's audience (follower count) from the photographs they upload on Instagram. This seems to be the first thorough evaluation of content and users on Instagram.

Larsson (2018) contends that this paper elucidates how news media consumers engage with online interaction about the social media presence of diverse Norwegian media organizations. The study used a comparative strategy, examining data from the established platform Facebook and the comparatively recent site Instagram. The results notably corroborate the previously noted tendency of audience members to choose "lighter" or less demanding

methods of engaging with online news material on the latter of the two analyzed platforms. We analyze the ramifications for news media enterprises and prospective patterns in audience engagement, considering that Instagram predominantly attracts younger demographics.

Daryl (2018) contends that this study provides individuals and businesses engaged in social media with a comparative examination of major social media platforms and insights into digital marketing strategies for Instagram and corporations. Implementing these observations might improve the survival probability of nascent social media platforms and provide a more profound understanding of Instagram as a strategic tool for professionals. This study is significant since it broadens existing concepts related to strategic thinking in social media strategies.

Tiggemann (2020) highlights a modern trend on Instagram characterized by the posting of 'Instagram versus. Reality' photos, showcasing side-by-side photographs of the same woman—one depicting an idealized version and the other a more genuine portrayal. This study aimed to empirically investigate the effect of such pictures on body image. We randomly allocated 325 women, aged 18 to 30 years, to see one of three categories of Instagram photographs: 'Instagram vs. reality' photos, the 'ideal' side solely, or the 'actual' side alone. As expected, exposure to 'Instagram vs. reality' and genuine pictures resulted in decreased body dissatisfaction relative to idealized images.

3. Methodology

The research is being undertaken among teenagers in the metropolitan cities of Tamil Nadu. This study seeks to investigate the influential aspects of popular Instagram among teenagers. The study employed a quantitative survey approach and utilized descriptive analysis. This study used a snowball sampling approach. An online questionnaire with both closed-ended and open-ended questions was developed, concentrating on the primary goals of the study. The questionnaire was disseminated online to responders using social media groups. The questionnaire was disseminated via Google Forms and gathered data from 250 responders. Fifty samples were discarded due to invalid responses, and two hundred samples were selected for the investigation.

4. Discussion and analysis

Sample distribution regarding age

This study employs a concentrated random sampling approach, encompassing a sample distribution of over 250 respondents, with data gathered via Google Forms in 2023. Only 200 legitimate replies were included in the study; the remaining 50 were discarded due to erroneous or irrelevant information. The data was exclusively gathered from the youth demographic (ages 15-25) to gain insights into the impact of social media, specifically Instagram addiction, and to assess the associated risks of mental and health-related issues among higher education students who frequently utilize Instagram in their daily lives. In this study, over 90 percent of the participants were aged 17 to 20 years, while around 10 percent were aged 15 to 16 years. This indicates that the respondents were appropriate for the research aimed at comprehending the influence of online gaming on the student life cycle.

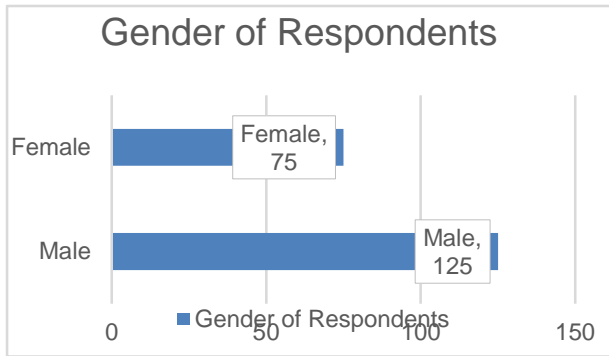


Fig. 1.1

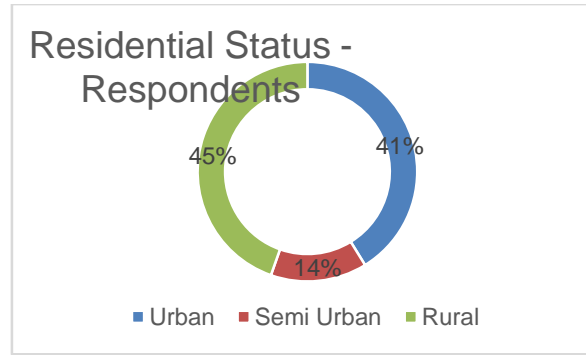


Fig. 1.2

Fig 1.1 shows that more than 65 percent of the respondents were male, and nearly 35 percent were female. This indicates that apart from the gender differences, most youngsters are engaging themselves in social media platforms to manage their boredom. The data shows that (**Fig 1.2**) more than 45% of the participants belong to Rural areas, and 41 % of the participants belong to Urban areas, which provide the scope for the students to know about social media platforms for connectivity and lack of outside atmosphere create an addiction to the particular popular culture. Celebrity status and TikTok-like platforms initiated a massive influence on the youth regarding social media platforms, and the COVID-19 lockdown made a significant impact on the lifestyle change of the GenZ audience. Interestingly, more than 55 students from rural and semi-urban areas used social media platforms the most. Compare this to the past decade when those platforms started to rule the time and space of teenagers.

This result shows how the COVID-19 lockdown created space for online class culture, significantly impacting students' different economic classes to have smartphone devices. Also, the intervention of Jio telecom service and the digital India process create awareness and impact in rural areas of the need for people to have social media accounts. All the respondents were aware of Instagram and regularly spent a few hours a day on the application for their stress relief and entertainment purposes. 99.3 percent of the respondents use the Instagram platform through their mobile devices. This shows that after the lockdown significant number of the students had their own mobile phones for personal use.

Nearly 35 percent of the respondents whose family income was around two lakh – above four lakhs per annum were studied, mainly in Private institutions like schools or colleges. The remaining 65 percent of the respondents, whose family income was less than or equal to one lakh per year, were studied in either Government or nearby private institutions.

Fig 1.3: The graphical figure was about the response detail to the question ‘How often do you use Instagram in a day?’

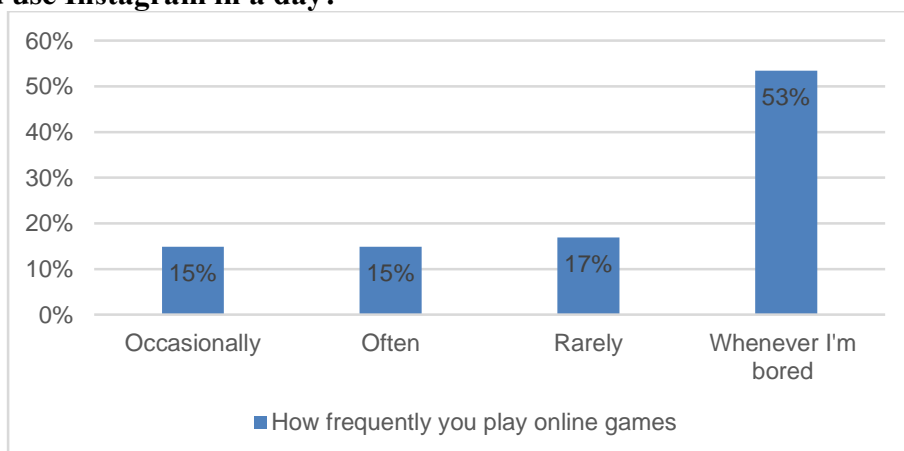


Fig. 1.3

Fig 1.3 shows that 53 percent of the respondents use the Instagram platform whenever they feel bored. Also, more than 30 percent of the students mentioned that they sometimes frequently use Instagram. They won't bother about that if they don't get access to the Instagram platform. This shows that more than 80 percent of the students engage with social media platforms like Instagram whenever they want to connect with them. Apart from the addiction level in rural areas, urban and semi-urban area students use Instagram during their boredom. Only 17 percent of the respondents said they rarely use Instagram for stress relief.

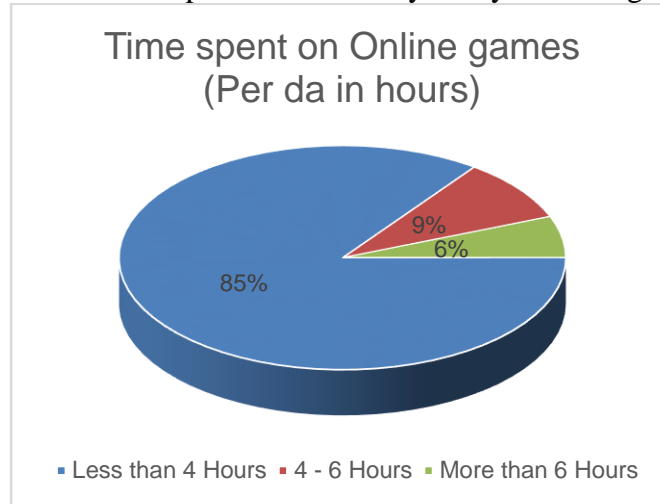


Fig. 1.4

Fig 1.4 shows that the student's residency and belonging environment influence the usage of Instagram and other social media platforms for relief and the social connection parameters. To strengthen this statement, nearly 55 percent of the respondents from urban areas and 30 percent of rural area students spend almost 4 hours daily on the Instagram platform. Apart from other social media platforms, students primarily engaged with Instagram because of the social connections and common-man-to-celebrity-building nature of that social media. Instagram's interface attracts a younger audience more than other social media platforms. Also, the known celebrities of the present generation use Instagram as an attractive platform for connecting with their fan base. The responding students also felt that the addiction of watching reels and sharing those viewed reels with their peer group and reacting to those videos creates more connection than chatting alone.

More than 80 percent of the respondents mentioned that they have been using the Instagram platform for over two years and that nearly 39 percent of the students have used social media for three years and above. Some were using it to become famous, like other social media influencers. They regularly post reels and connect with the audience through chat and story. Also, they worry about the views and high reach of their video and followers. More than 58 percent of the students said they spend one to 1.5 GB of data daily. Twenty-three percent of the respondents spend more time and data, which is nearly 2 GB daily. Ten percent of binge users proudly said they spend more than 2.5GB of data daily for entertainment and social connectivity.

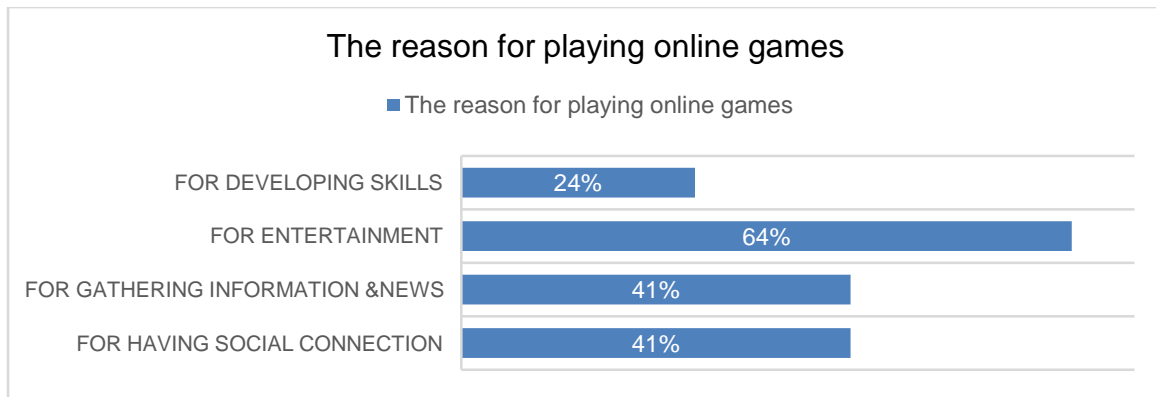


Fig. 1.5

Fig 1.5 clearly shows that most respondents use social media platforms for entertainment. Nearly 64 percent of the respondents mentioned using Instagram for entertainment or time-pass activity. 41 percent of the respondents mentioned using these popular social media for gathering information and news. Another 41 percent of the students said they use Instagram to have social connections. Only 24 percent of the respondents mentioned some other skill development parameters also responsible for using Instagram, like educational purposes, income-generating skills, and becoming a social media influencer in the popular medium.

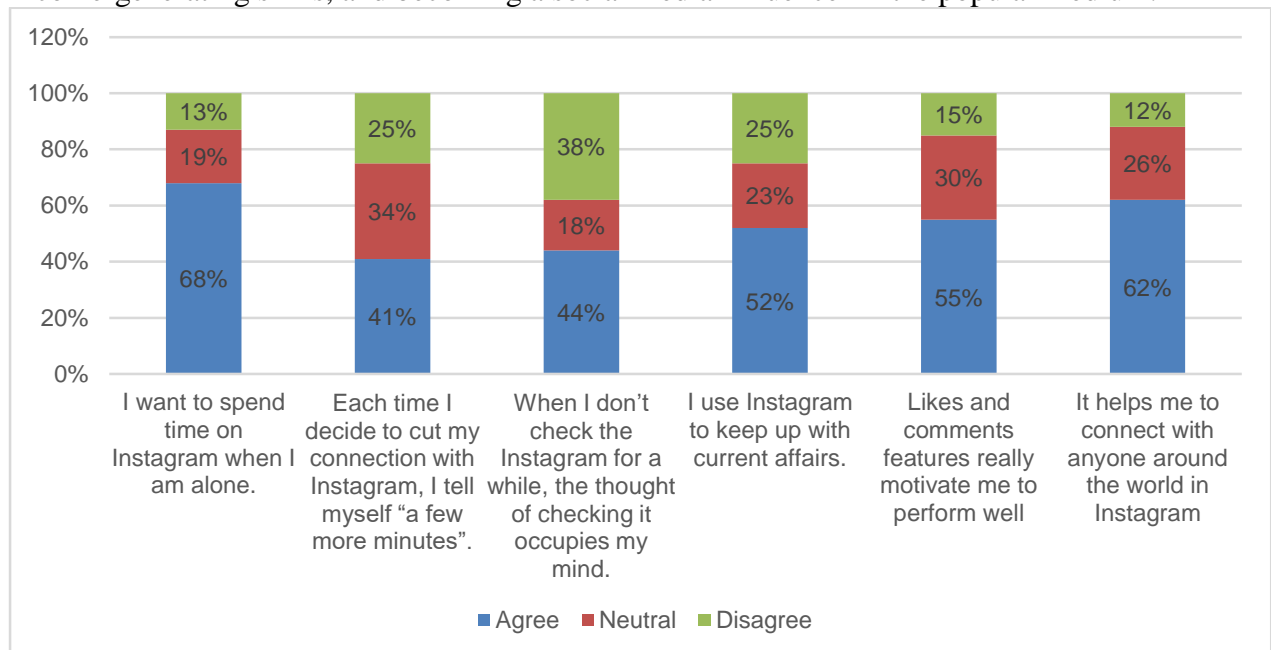


Fig. 1.6

Fig 1.6 clearly shows that more than 68 percent of the respondents felt that when they felt alone, their minds automatically forced them to spend time on Instagram. The urge to use that social media platform was high for most respondents when they felt alone, and only 13 percent of the students disagreed with this statement. Nearly 41 percent said they cannot cut the connection with Instagram, even though they want to get out of that social media. More than 70 percent of the students agree they were addicted to Instagram in many ways. Even though 44 percent of the students agreed that most of the time, they had the thought of checking Instagram often, nearly 40 percent of the respondents disagreed with the same statement. 52 percent of the students mentioned using Instagram to learn about current happenings and new trends, even though more than 25 percent opposed it. 55 percent of the students agreed they were addicted to posting regularly on Instagram because the 'like and comment' feature on the platform motivates them to use it often. Nearly 20 percent of the students disagree with this statement. More than 62 percent agree that Instagram helps them

connect with their peer groups, but 12 percent of the students disagree that Instagram doesn't help them create a social circle.

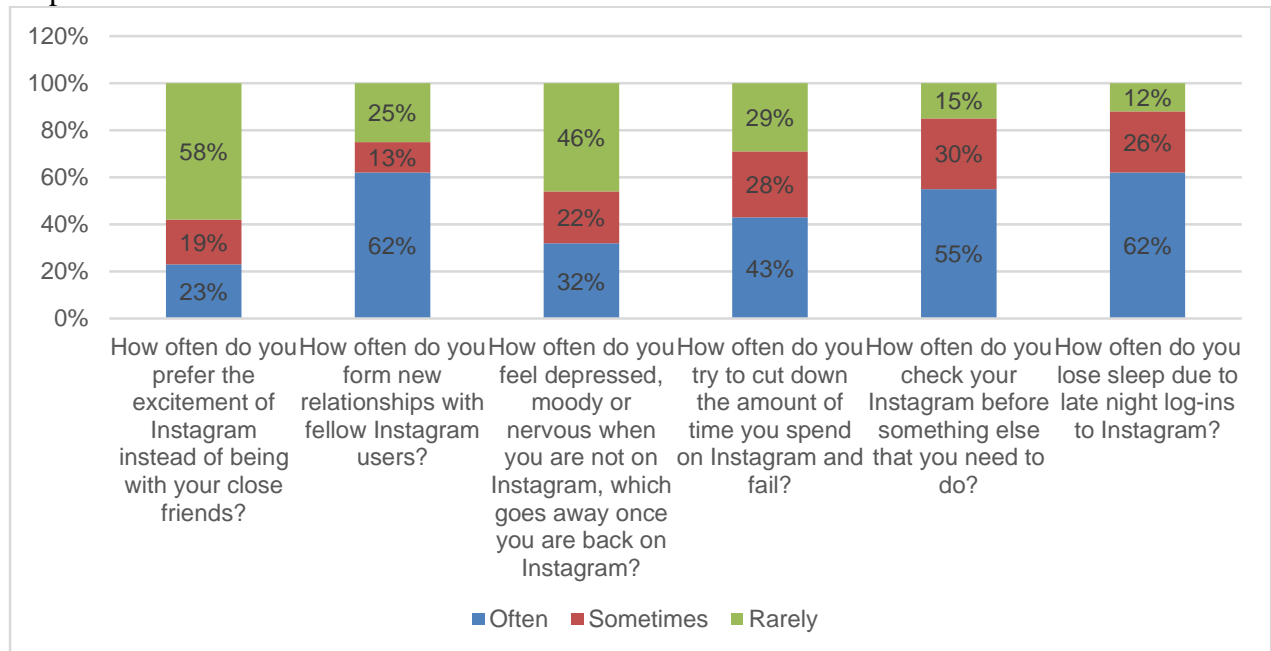


Fig. 1.7

The above graphical figure shows that more than 58 percent of the respondents doesn't get over-excited about using Instagram instead of being with their close buddies. Nearly 62 percent of students agree that they often create and develop new relationships with their fellow Instagram users. They felt happy because of spreading their social circle without any boundaries. Even though 32 percent of the students agreed that most often, they had feelings of depression and nervousness when they went away from the Instagram application. Nearly 46 percent of respondents disagree with this statement. They never felt depressed when leaving Instagram. 43 percent agree that they often try to cut down the time they spend on the Instagram application, and they fail most of the time. This shows that most respondents had a high urge to use this particular social media platform. Nearly 30 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement and said that they successfully cut out time on Instagram. More than 55 percent of the students responded that they could not resist checking Instagram often instead of doing something else. Nearly 62 percent of the respondents confessed that they lost proper sleeping hours because of late-night log-ins on the Instagram application. Only 12 percent of the students alone disagreed with this particular statement. This shows most of the students who responded to this survey were mentally addicted to the Instagram platform.

5. Finding

- 99.3 percent of the respondents use the Instagram platform through their mobile devices.
- More than 80 percent of the respondents mentioned that they have been using the Instagram platform for over two years and that nearly 39 percent of the students have used social media for three years and above.
- More than 62 percent agree that Instagram helps them connect with their peer groups, but 12 percent of the students disagree that Instagram doesn't help them create a social circle.
- Nearly 62 percent of the respondents confessed that they lost proper sleeping hours because of late-night logins on the Instagram application.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, Instagram's impact on teenagers is multifaceted, influencing various aspects of their social, emotional, and psychological well-being. The platform's emphasis on visual content and peer interaction can significantly affect teenagers' self-esteem, body image, and social relationships. Positive impacts include fostering creativity, building communities, and providing a space for self-expression. However, the potential negative effects, such as the promotion of unrealistic beauty standards, social comparison, and cyberbullying, cannot be overlooked. A survey-based approach to analysing these effects offers a valuable method for gathering direct feedback from teens, providing insights into how they experience Instagram on a daily basis. Through a well-structured questionnaire, key areas like time spent on the platform, emotional responses to content, and the influence of likes and comments on self-worth can be examined. This comprehensive analysis will offer a more accurate picture of Instagram's role in shaping teenage behaviour, allowing for informed discussions on both its benefits and drawbacks.

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