

Visual Political Communication on Instagram: How Images, Reels and Infographics Shape Youth Political Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

The study looks at various aspects such as exposure, focus on visual format, impact on political perception, credibility, and verification, of political content. Using the quantitative cross-sectional study design, the data was collected by using a structured questionnaire, from 100 respondents through sampling. The data shows that 81% of the sample were between the ages of 18-20 and that 65% were university students. A majority of the sample of 61% had determined reels and videos to be the most watched form of visual political content and 61% of the sample said these are also the form which people spend the most time engaging with. 41% of the sample said they occasionally came across political content. When asked about the ease of understanding this content 45% of the sample said that visual content makes it easier to understand information on politics slightly. A similar number 42% of the sample agreed that Instagram slightly has a moderate influence of political knowledge, with 23% saying it has a high and 5% saying it has a very high influence. Also, 40% said content with high aesthetic value made it credible to a small extent and 53% of the sample sometimes checked the credibility of political content on other websites. The results here highlight the importance of the short form video and information that it can convey and show that the influence on and perception of credibility may vary.

Keywords: Visual Political Communication; Instagram; Political Perceptions; Reels; Media Literacy; Youth in India.

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital media, as new media and channels of the media space, have increasingly led to the emergence of platforms for political communication in India that can provide a dialogue, participative and multimodal social space for politicians, media actors, and general citizens (Neyazi & Schroeder, 2021). As an essential platform for political self-presentation and communication, Instagram enables users to receive campaign messages in a multimodal communication environment consisting of photo-based posts, videos, and short descriptions (Bast, 2021). In a context where the authorisation of political communication has led political actors to adapt their messages to a platform-specific context to respond to the audience's changing desires for visibility and competition attention (Akash & Mochish, 2026), studying

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visual communication through Instagram is essential to analysis young Indian users' capacity to access, understand and appraise political information, public interest and attitudes towards parties and democratic institutions (Sam et al., 2024).

Visual political communication is defined as "the use of images, Reels and infographics to showcase political actors, to communicate issues and to transmit political meanings through visual and verbal sign properties" (Bast, 2021). Images may provide a demonstration of leadership, identity and solidarity (Bast, 2021). Reels with their animated combination of movements, music and speech may be more effective at capturing attention and creating "sticky" messages (Akash & Mochish, 2026). Experimental analysis of political Instagram posts shows that visual attention and issue involvement are the two key factors that cause discordant images of three types of political engagement (Gaul et al., 2025). Likewise, political images influence evaluations of political candidates, with whether the image is positive or negative depending on the audience's ideological traits (Dan & Arendt, 2025). Infographics also warrant further investigation; how the combination of numeric data, textual description and graphical illustration affect how political information is presented and understood (Bast, 2021).

The role of social media in context of understanding of young people's political communication was crucial as they are made to consume and deliberate politics increasingly through the platform (Sam et al, 2024). However, although political content on Instagram can empower young people with knowledge, autonomy and capacity to participate in democracy, it can often also result in exposure to agenda-setting content and emotive concepts (Akash & Mochish, 2026). Studies on young Indian voters focus on algorithm-driven recommendations and the filter-bubbles in the context of homophiles network formation, which can be vital in the overall information ecosystem of young people (Sonny et al., 2026). Moreover, it is observed that social media may impact agenda setting and polarisation of discourse, demanding a critical evaluation of Instagram's potential in political discourse (Sharma & Sivakumar, 2023).

This current research investigates the perceived influence of Instagram image posts, Reels and infographics on young people's political perceptions in India (political knowledge, credibility, attitudes, trust and participation) (Akash & Mochish, 2026; Sam et al., 2024). This research positions against the perceived influence of Instagram image posts, Reels and infographics on political perceptions, while also providing an analysis of how exposure, audience and interpretations of political content interact with changes in political perceptions. (Gaul et al., 2025; Sonny et al., 2026). This research incorporates the comparison of Instagram image posts against young people's political perceptions research to contribute to narratives about digital journalism, Instagram and new communication technologies (Bast, 2021; Neyazi & Schroeder, 2021), adds to research into the possibilities and dangers of visual political communication in democratic deliberation, particularly by acknowledging how Instagram may educate political opinions, and how it may pose dangers of misinformation and limitation in the functioning of democracy (Sharma & Sivakumar, 2023; Sonny et al., 2026).

1.1 Background of the Study

The rise of digital media has transformed the political communication sphere in India, allowing

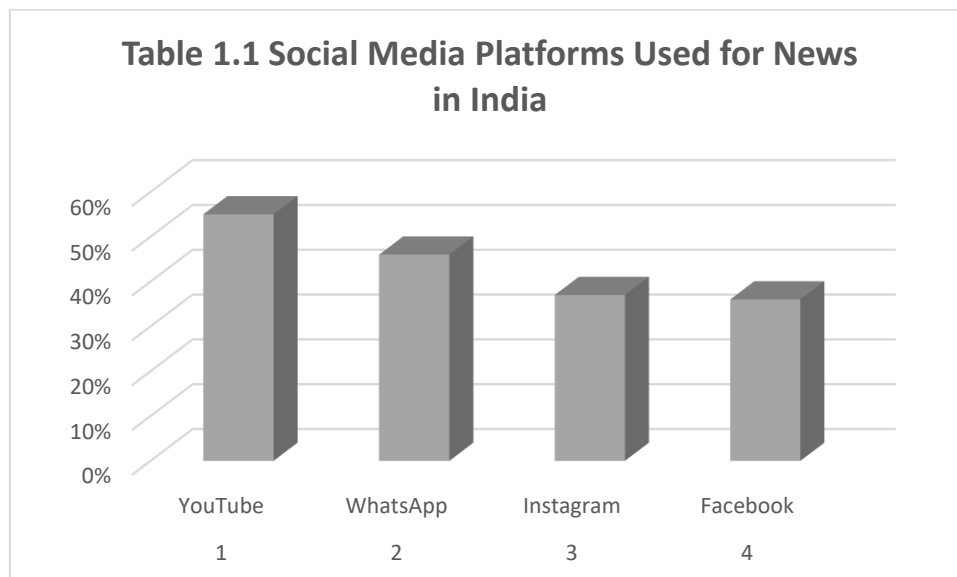
political parties, journalists, public representatives and the people to use lively and interactive digital spaces to spread political communication (Akash & Mochish, 2026). Instagram has played a key part in this to date, as people consume political communication through photograph-based posts, short videos called Reels and Infographics, which are visual representations and simpler explanations of political events. These updates signal the growing role of platformisation and attention economies for contemporary political campaigning (Akash & Mochish, 2026).

The context of this study lies in the increasing role played by social media in news consumption. The Digital News Report 2025 shows that 37% of its mostly English-speaking Indian respondents used Instagram as a news source relative to YouTube (55%), WhatsApp (46%) and Facebook (36%) (Krishnan, 2025). Despite highlighting that the sample does not enable drawing conclusion over to the total use of Instagram by Indian youth, the report emphasizes the importance of Instagram in the dissemination of news.

Table 1.1 Social Media Platforms Used for News in India

S. No.	Platform	Respondents using the platform for news (%)
1	YouTube	55%
2	WhatsApp	46%
3	Instagram	37%
4	Facebook	36%

Source: Krishnan (2025), Digital News Report 2025



The visual forms of Instagram could play a role in how the youth perceives political leaders and policies. The form of Reels is one that combines motion pictures, sounds, captions, and narratives, whereas the other forms are those of static pictures and infographics to convey political identity, campaign messaging, and selected information (Akash & Mochish, 2026). However, studies involving the youth in India as political candidates indicate the relevance of

algorithms and network homophily in political polarisation (Sonny et al., 2026).

Table 1.2 Selected Quantitative Evidence Relevant to the Study

S. No.	Research indicator	Numerical evidence	Source
1	Indian survey respondents using Instagram for news	37%	Krishnan (2025)
2	Young Indian voters surveyed in research on algorithmic recommendations and political polarisation	825 respondents	Sonny et al. (2026)

Sources: Krishnan (2025); Sonny et al. (2026).

This research investigates the relationship between the use of Instagram photographs, Reels and graphics with young Indians' political exposure, credibility evaluation, political notions and participations. A comparison of this visual content will highlight where these formats of visuals may be linked to different political perception and what could be the impact for digital political journalism and democratic communication (Akash & Mochish, 2026; Sonny et al., 2026).

1.2 Significance of the Study

This research is added to the body of knowledge about the impact of Instagram's different visual formats on young Indians' political perception. Comparing the images, Reels and infographics pushes the body of knowledge about digital political communication, visual framing and audience engagement (Bast, 2021). On top of that, it helps identify the potential risks of algorithmic recommendation, political polarisation and confirmation bias in the context of young voters (Sonny et al., 2026). The research findings could contribute to journalistic practices, democratically education and communication towards a more democratic way of participatory journalism.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the demographic profile of young Indians' use of Instagram and frequency of exposure to political content.
2. Images, Reels, Infographics, Memes & Stories. To find out which political visual formats are experienced most often and best engaged with by young people on Instagram.
3. To examine the influence of visual political information on young people's political consciousness, understanding, information retention and willingness to engage in political debates.
4. To evaluate the influence of political images, Reels, infographics and pictures with emotional effect on young people's perceptions of political leaders, political issues, and policies and credibility of government.

5. Design To assess how young people view the overall impact of Instagram in relation to visual political content, e.g. how credible the information is and whether they check things before believing or sharing.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the demographics, Instagram usage habits, and political content consumption patterns of young people in India?
2. What types of political images on Instagram does young people most often come across and most often engage with?
3. To what degree are young people's understanding and recall of political information and their desire to engage in politics influenced by the use of Instagram images, Reels and infographics?
4. How does the emotional power of Instagram's visual political formats influence young people's perceptions of politicians, issues, government policies, and the validity of politics?
5. How do young people determine the accuracy of political images on Instagram, how frequently do they fact check these images through other sources, and to what extent do they believe that political images seen on the platform influence their opinions?

1.6. Outline of Structure

The paper is organised into six chapters. 1: Introduction presents the research background, significance, objectives and research questions. 2: Review of Literature examines existing studies, theoretical perspectives and research gaps concerning visual political communication. 3: Research Methodology explains the research design, sampling, questionnaire and analytical techniques. 4: Result presents and interprets the collected data. 5: Discussion summarises the principal results. 6: Conclusions discuss the conclusions, practical implications, limitations and directions for future research.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Visual Political Communication: Theories of Framing, Identity, and Selective Exposure

In a recent meta-analysis, Kubin and von Sikorski (2021) synthesized studies on media and political polarisation and demonstrated how participants' exposure to ideologically homogeneous messages reinforces existing attitudes. Their paper guides us in studying selective exposure and political attitudes on Instagram.

Image communication of political candidates on Instagram In a paper by Bellido-Pérez and Gordillo-Rodríguez (2022) with the analysis of the Spanish candidates, they analyze the visual communication of their image through Instagram. Their results reveal how photographs, settings and campaign symbols communicate leadership and candidate trustworthiness.

Trelles Villanueva et al. (2023) analysed 162 Instagram photos posted during the 2022

Andalusian election campaign. Regarding visual strategies, ideal-candidate framing and a link between positive content and level of engagement were relevant.

Febryanti & Ahmad (2023) examine ideal and populist candidate framing on the Instagram postings of two Indonesian politicians: Ganjar Pranowo and Puan Maharani. The authors describe how visual images of politicians are used to project a leader's qualities, attractiveness and accessibility for the voters.

Moffitt (2024) analysed 432 Instagram photos of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders to understand how their images visually represented "the people." The research demonstrated that images of social groups could be instrumental in communicating a populist in-group identity for politics.

2.2 Visual Image Shorts Reels and Info- graphics, Algorithmic Visibility

Farkas and Bene (2021) analysed the use of Facebook and Instagram images by politicians to communicate. The results found differences between Facebook and Instagram and that pictures had a purpose that was apart from text.

Gordillo-Rodríguez and Bellido-Pérez (2021) talked about the way in which politicians have been using the Instagram to present himself. And this article provides a theoretical basis for researchers to study what candidates could have done with respect to these images (particular photos, selfies, etc.).

Ferré-Pavia and Codina (2022) studied campaign communication, spectacle and candidate self-presentation on Instagram at the 2019 general elections in Spain. This article defined the importance of Instagram narratives in constructing political actors' visual identities.

Melek and Raza (2023) analysed the Associated Press, CNN and Fox News' reporting on the 2020 US presidential candidates' Instagram posts. They observed inconsistencies in the way each outlet visualized the candidates' Instagram posts.

Scott (2023) investigated how Instagram messages by political candidates could be used for teaching of political argumentation and visual argument analysis. In the article there was some information how young people could learn to deconstruct images and social media in political communication.

Haßler et al (2024) analysed 2,313 Instagram posts over the period of three German election campaigns. They observed that personalisation was prevalent in the data but that political issues were also present - meaning personalisation did not push out or dominate issue-driven postings.

Uluçay and Melek (2024) analysed 2,776 Instagram photos of mayoral candidates from the 2019 elections in Istanbul to shed light on framing by politicians. They grouped the ideal candidate and populist campaigner photographs and showed how these politicians used Instagram to position themselves as leaders.

De-Lima-Santos et al (2024) study analysed 11,263 Instagram posts made during the 2018 and 2022 Brazilian presidential campaigns by 19 candidates. Posts were celebratory, and focused on personalisation and emotional communication in the posted image. This was in stark

contrast with the investigation into Instagram campaigning in India.

Lukyanova and Kalashnikova (2025) an examination of visual stories and their application in online political public communication. Their findings demonstrated how the visual stories could be applied to make effective point with the short stories, potentially relevant to the piece that researches the short format videos on Instagram.

Eriyanto and Jamil (2026) analysed how Prabowo Subianto did self-representation in 1,236 posts on Instagram between 2015 and 2024. These images have also been used to demonstrate how the political figures can have different personas in different contexts and this has been used to frame this paper.

2.3. Political perceptions of young adults in India: Political knowledge, voting behaviour, trust, participation and polarisation

Hindarto (2022) conducted a systematic review of Tik Tok and youth political communication. This paper underpinned why the short video is so vital to engage youth around politics and provides a theoretical base for why IG.

Parmelee et al. (2023) interviewed Generation Z regarding their views about political communication on Instagram. Their research indicated "two-way communication, and access to moments on and off camera" increased the politicians' relatability and credibility and was therefore a critical aspect in understanding the generational viewpoints of Instagram.

Gupta and Bhardwaj (2024) have done research in Delhi among 115 college students. They studied that Instagram was played a role in increasing political participation. This fact proved the research as it was to study about the attitude of youth of India towards political values.

Moffett and Rice (2024) examined how Tik Tok persuades youths to be civically active. Results established a relationship between the short video app and involvement with political networks and civic participation. This is the reason for the current research on how Instagram persuades young Indians to actively take part in politics.

Schwemmer and Riedl (2025) analysed political influence actors on Instagram in the 2021 federal elections in Germany. They found that among those surveyed, 6 percent used influencers in the 2021 general elections to assist in the voting decision, underlining how important the level of trust to the Instagram influencer among young people and the resulting influence on their attitude towards political campaigns.

2.4. Research Gap

The above articles examined the different topical areas within visual political communication research as visual framing of a political image, self-representation of a politician, social media use, and algorithmic polarisation. Very few studies compare the comparative effects of Instagram images, Reels and Infographics on the political perceptions of young people. The role of the visual form of political communication in shaping the political awareness and perceptions of leadership of young people, their knowledge, retention, and trust on politics remains relatively unexplored. Additionally, there is scant research on the relationship between the appeal of political information visualised in Instagram and the tendency of young people

to verify information. This research fills the gap by comparing the impact of visual tools of Instagram on the political perceptions of young people in India.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This is a quantitative, cross-sectional, descriptive analytical study that describes a description that investigates the impact of pictures, Reels and infographics on youth perception of politics on Instagram in India. The main form of data collection used is a questionnaire that consists of 20 questions covering different dimensions of demographics, Instagram use, viewing of political content, visual preference, awareness about politics, and perception of leaders, authenticity, and confirmation of information respectively. The questionnaire is designed to systematically document the perceptions of respondents and to investigate the effect of visual political content on self-reported political outcomes.

3.2. Sample and Sampling Design

3.2.1. Universe

Those Indian users who come across political content on visual social media sources such as Instagram.

3.2.2. Population

Interested in the population are the young owners of Indian Instagram, most of whom I hope to be in the age range of 18-29 years, however, the respondents who do not qualify by age (Over 30) will be retained by categories in the questionnaire.

3.2.3. Sampling Unit

The sampling unit is one Instagram user willing to answer the questionnaire.

3.2.4 Sample Size

A sample of 100 respondents has been proposed. This will enable some descriptive analysis and some exploratory comparison, but is likely to be too small for further statistical analysis and generalisation.

3.2.5. Method of Sampling

Non-probability convenience sampling method will be used to recruit and select the eligible respondents through online network and social media networks. There will be no any sorts of reward or gift given to the respondents. As well as, the respondents' participation will be voluntary and we will get informed consent before questionnaire.

3.3. Collecting data

3.3.1. Tool of investigation

The primary research instrument will be a 20-question structured questionnaire that covers demography, multiple choice, and items related to the level of exposure, attention, what was

perceived to have an effect, credibility etc., and checking behaviour.

3.3.2. Approach to data collection

The primary data will be collected from an online survey, preferably through google forms, or a different provider if the first is not applicable. The data collected from the questionnaire will be checked for valid data, then scored and entered into the statistics data set. Participants will be kept anonymous and data will be used for academic purposes.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data will be analysed using a suitable statistical package. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations will be used to summarise respondents' demography and responses to items in the questionnaire. Correlational analysis will be used to determine the relationships between exposure to political content and perceptions of influence. Regression analysis will be used to investigate whether exposure and visual format preference are significant predictors of self-perceived political perceptions. Independent-samples t tests will be used to examine differences between two groups while ANOVA will be used to compare three or more groups. The assumptions of the analysis will be tested for and suitable non-parametric procedures considered for ordinal data.

3.5. Limitations of the Study

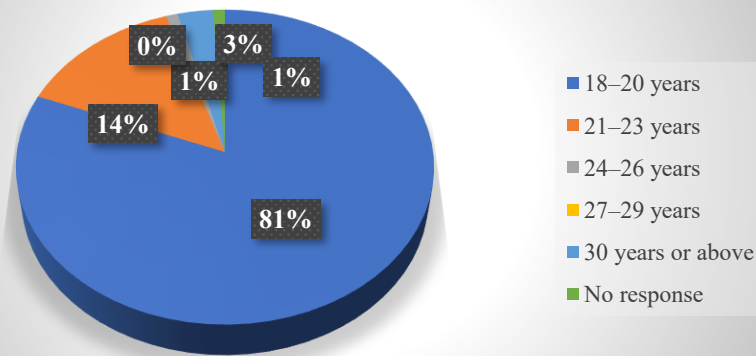
Limitations Convenience sample of 100 people, which may not be representative of or generalisable to all of India or other populations. Data collection Information is by participants on social media, social desirability bias and recall bias will be experienced as memories may be altered or uncertain. This study cannot establish a cause-and-effect relationship. Regional variations, language issues, political beliefs, and features of Instagram may also influence how subjects respond, and these will be considered when analysing data.

4. RESULTS

Table 4.1: Age Group of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18–20 years	81	81%
21–23 years	14	14%
24–26 years	1	1%
27–29 years	0	0%
30 years or above	3	3%
No response	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Table 4.1: Age Group of Respondents

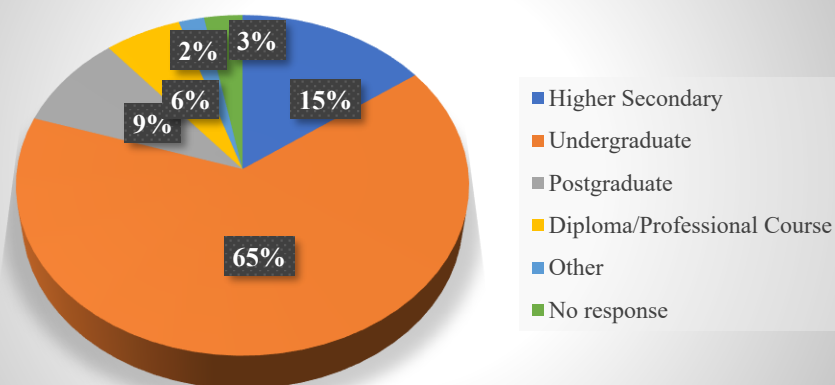


Among the 100 respondents, 81 (81%) were 18-20 years, 14 (14%) – 21-23, 1 (1%) – 24-26, 0 (0%) – 27-29, and 3 (3%) – 30 years or older. One respondent (1%) selected the option of not giving an answer. Those who were between 18 and 20 years were in the majority.

Table 4.2: Highest Level of Education

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Higher Secondary	15	15%
Undergraduate	65	65%
Postgraduate	9	9%
Diploma/Professional Course	6	6%
Other	2	2%
No response	3	3%
Total	100	100%

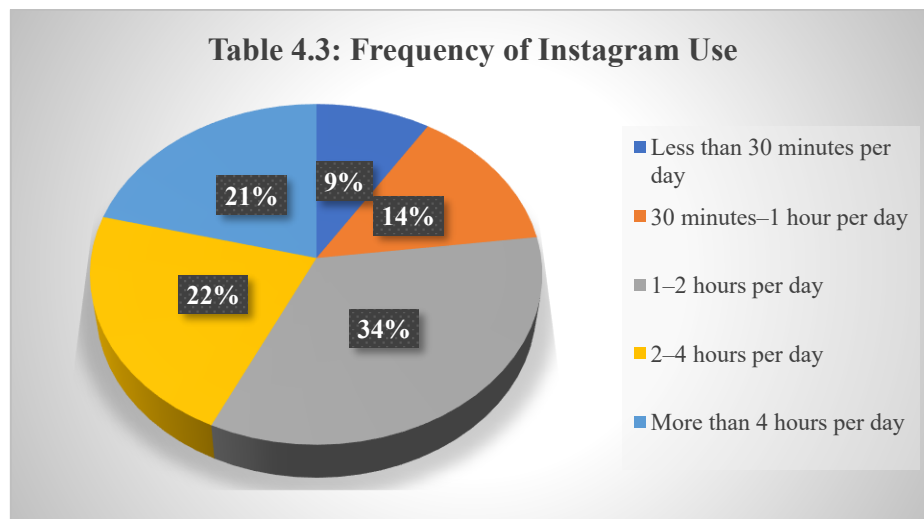
Table 4.2: Highest Level of Education



Undergraduate was the most common group among the respondents and included 65 (65%) of the participants. Higher Secondary education accounted for 15 (15%), postgraduate – 9 (9%), diploma/professional courses – 6 (6%), and other – 2 (2%). Three (3%) did not give an answer. The majority of the respondents were undergraduates in higher education.

Table 4.3: Frequency of Instagram Use

Frequency of Instagram Use	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 30 minutes per day	9	9%
30 minutes–1 hour per day	14	14%
1–2 hours per day	34	34%
2–4 hours per day	22	22%
More than 4 hours per day	21	21%
Total	100	100%

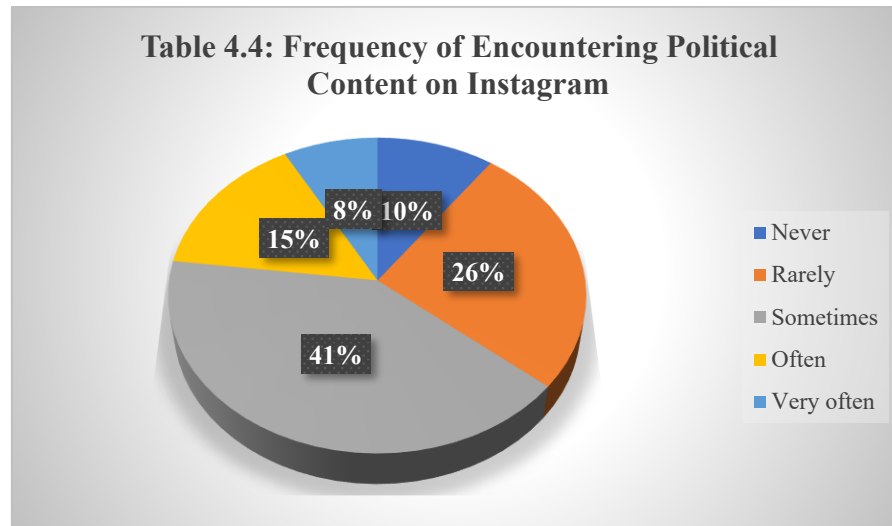


With regards to the daily time spent on Instagram, 34 (34%) respondents reported watching the platform for 1-2 hours daily, 22 (22%) – 2-4 hours, and 21 (21%) – more than 4 hours daily. Fourteen (14%) used this platform between 30 minutes and 1 hour during the day, whereas 9 (9%) – less than 30 minutes. The majority of the respondents spent 1-2 hours per day watching Instagram.

Table 4.4: Frequency of Encountering Political Content on Instagram

Frequency of Encountering Political Content	Frequency	Percentage
Never	10	10%
Rarely	26	26%

Sometimes	41	41%
Often	15	15%
Very often	8	8%
Total	100	100%

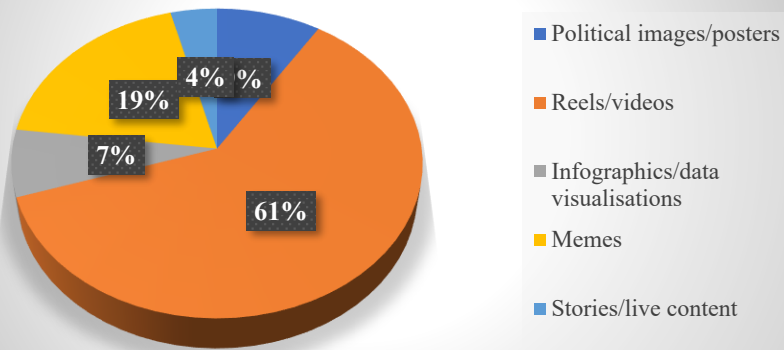


With regards to the frequency of political content exposure, 41 (41%) respondents encountered political content on Instagram sometimes, 26 (26%) – rarely, and 15 (15%) – often. Eight (8%) said that they experienced it very often, whereas 10 (10%) selected the option of not at all. The largest group of the respondents encountered political content sometimes on the social media platform.

Table 4.5: Most Frequently Encountered Type of Political Visual Content

Type of Political Visual Content	Frequency	Percentage
Political images/posters	9	9%
Reels/videos	61	61%
Infographics/data visualisations	7	7%
Memes	19	19%
Stories/live content	4	4%
Total	100	100%

Table 4.5: Most Frequently Encountered Type of Political Visual Content

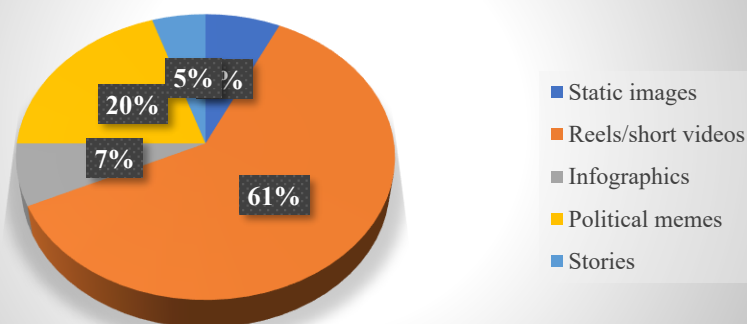


Reels and videos were the most frequent source of political visual content reported by 61 respondents (61%). Political memes followed with 19 (19%), and political images/posters – 9 (9%). Infographics and data visualisations were reported by 7 (7%) respondents, whereas Studios or live content was selected by 4 (4%). The majority of the participants encountered Reels and videos with political content on Instagram.

Table 4.6: Instagram Format That Attracts the Most Attention

Format Attracting Attention	Frequency	Percentage
Static images	7	7%
Reels/short videos	61	61%
Infographics	7	7%
Political memes	20	20%
Stories	5	5%
Total	100	100%

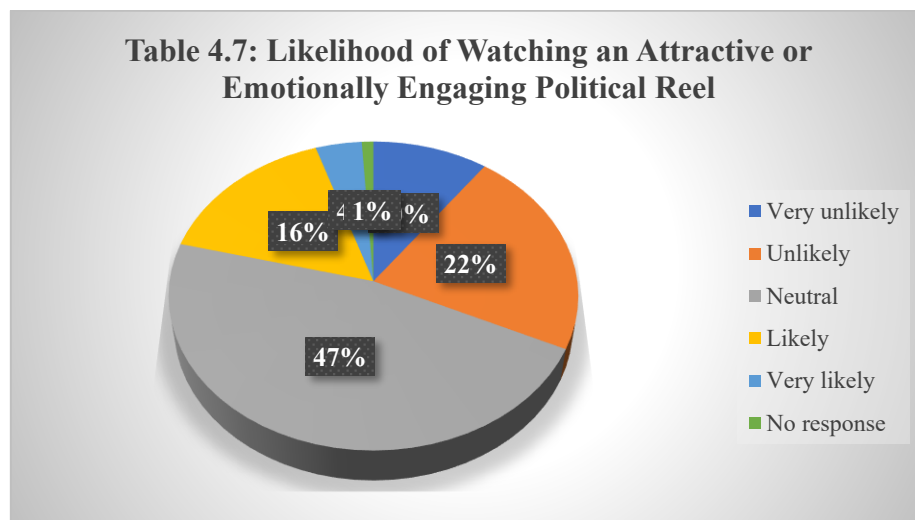
Table 4.6: Instagram Format That Attracts the Most Attention



Reels and short videos attracted the most attention, as reported by 61 respondents (61%). Political memes were the second most-liked type of political visual content on Instagram with 20 (20%). Static images and infographics received 7 (7%) each as the responses, whereas 5 (5%) indicated Stories. Short videos received the largest attention from the respondents.

Table 4.7: Likelihood of Watching an Attractive or Emotionally Engaging Political Reel

Likelihood of Watching	Frequency	Percentage
Very unlikely	10	10%
Unlikely	22	22%
Neutral	47	47%
Likely	16	16%
Very likely	4	4%
No response	1	1%
Total	100	100%

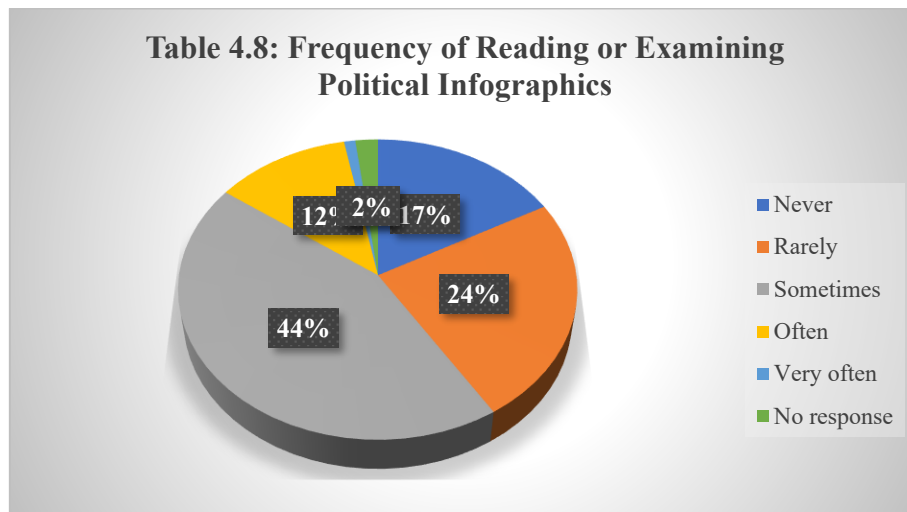


Forty-seven (47%) respondents were neutral about the likelihood of watching an attractive or emotionally appealing political Reel. Sixteen (16%) were likely to watch, and 4 (4%) – very likely. In turn, 22 (22%) were unlikely and 10 (10%) – very unlikely to watch such a Reel. One respondent (1%) did not give an answer. The majority of the respondents were neutral about this statement.

Table 4.8: Frequency of Reading or Examining Political Infographics

Frequency of Examining Infographics	Frequency	Percentage
Never	17	17%

Rarely	24	24%
Sometimes	44	44%
Often	12	12%
Very often	1	1%
No response	2	2%
Total	100	100%

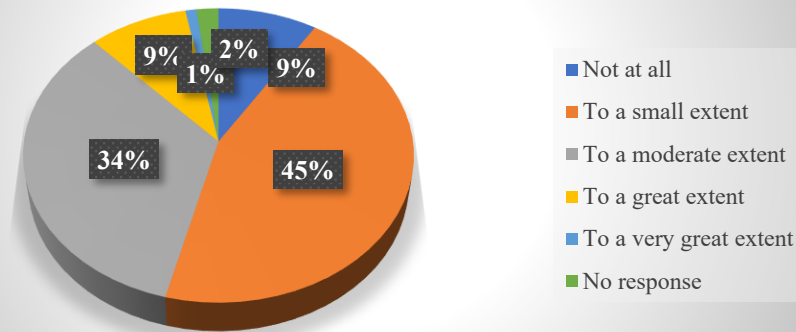


For the frequency of viewing political infographics, 44 (44%) respondents selected sometimes, which was the largest category. In turn, 24 (24%) – rarely, 17 (17%) – never, 12 (12%) – often, and 1 (1%) – very often. Two (2%) did not give an answer. The majority of the participants viewed political infographics sometimes on Instagram.

Table 4.9: Extent to Which Political Visuals Make Information Easier to Understand

Extent of Improved Understanding	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	9	9%
To a small extent	45	45%
To a moderate extent	34	34%
To a great extent	9	9%
To a very great extent	1	1%
No response	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Table 4.9: Extent to Which Political Visuals Make Information Easier to Understand

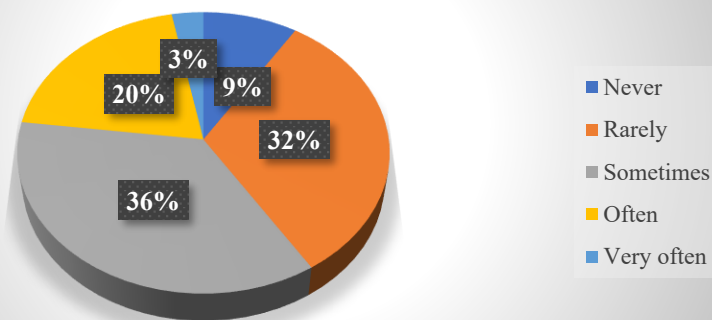


Forty-five (45%) respondents indicated that political images, Reels and infographics made information slightly easier to understand. Another 34 (34%) selected moderately. In turn, 9 (9%) selected not at all, 9 (9%) – to a great extent, and 1 (1%) – to a very great extent. Two (2%) did not provide an answer. The majority of the participants selected slightly easier to understand this type of political information.

Table 4.10: Frequency of Encountering Political Content Designed to Influence Viewers

Frequency of Encountering Influential Visual Design	Frequency	Percentage
Never	9	9%
Rarely	32	32%
Sometimes	36	36%
Often	20	20%
Very often	3	3%
Total	100	100%

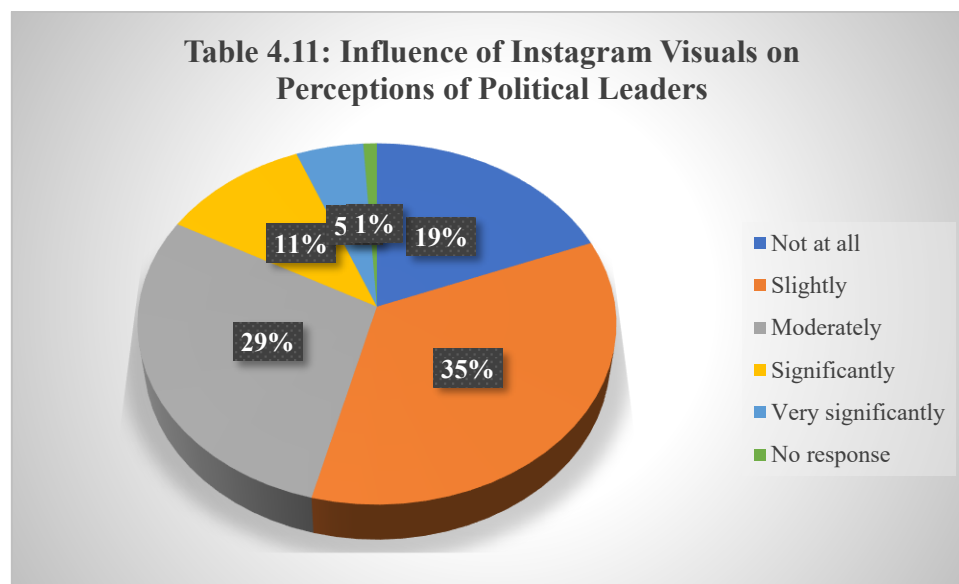
Table 4.10: Frequency of Encountering Political Content Designed to Influence Viewers



Thirty-six (36%) respondents sometimes encountered political content using photographs, colours, symbols, slogans or graphic design to influence the views and opinions of the viewers. Another 32 (32%) selected rarely, whereas 20 (20%) – often. Nine (9%) indicated that they never encountered this kind of political content on Instagram, and 3 (3%) – very often. The largest group of participants occasionally experienced politically-influencing visual content on this social media platform.

Table 4.11: Influence of Instagram Visuals on Perceptions of Political Leaders

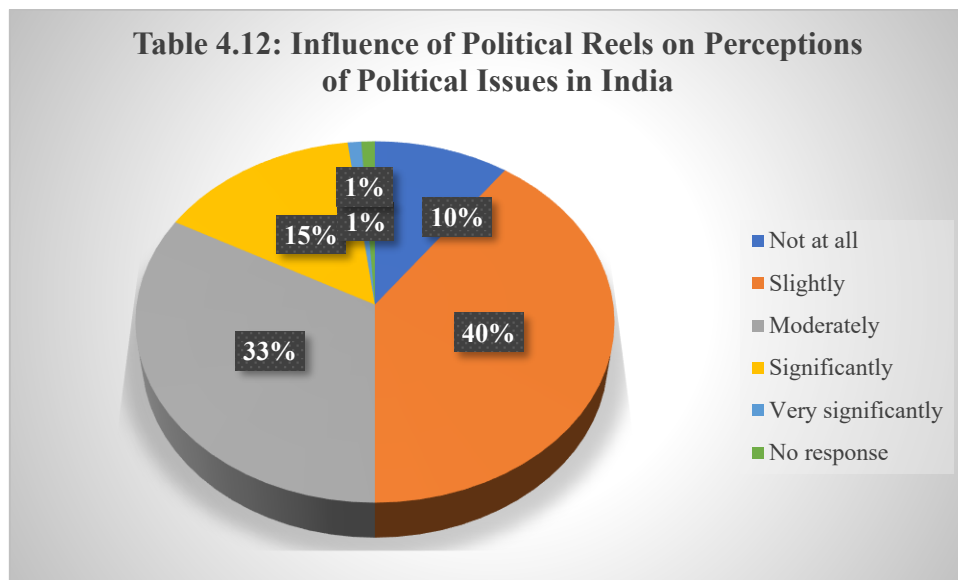
Extent of Influence	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	19	19%
Slightly	35	35%
Moderately	29	29%
Significantly	11	11%
Very significantly	5	5%
No response	1	1%
Total	100	100%



Instagram visuals slightly influenced perceptions about political leaders for 35 respondents (35%) and moderately for 29 (29%). In turn, 19 (19%) indicated that they were not influenced at all, 11 (11%) – significantly, and 5 (5%) – very significantly. One respondent (1%) did not give an answer. The majority of the participants were slightly influenced by Instagram visuals concerning political leaders.

Table 4.12: Influence of Political Reels on Perceptions of Political Issues in India

Extent of Influence	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	10	10%
Slightly	40	40%
Moderately	33	33%
Significantly	15	15%
Very significantly	1	1%
No response	1	1%
Total	100	100%

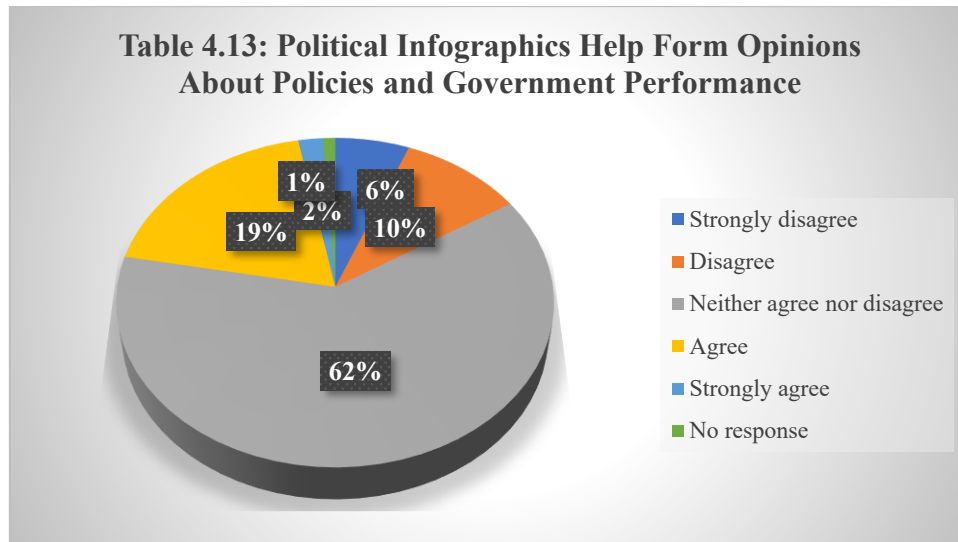


Political Reels slightly influenced perceptions about political issues in India for 40 respondents (40%) and moderately for 33 (33%). In turn, 15 (15%) indicated that they were significantly influenced, whereas 10 (10%) said that they were not at all. One respondent (1%) selected the option of very significantly influenced and another (1%) – did not give an answer. The majority of the participants were slightly influenced by political Reels on Instagram.

Table 4.13: Political Infographics Help Form Opinions About Policies and Government Performance

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	6	6%
Disagree	10	10%

Neither agree nor disagree	62	62%
Agree	19	19%
Strongly agree	2	2%
No response	1	1%
Total	100	100%

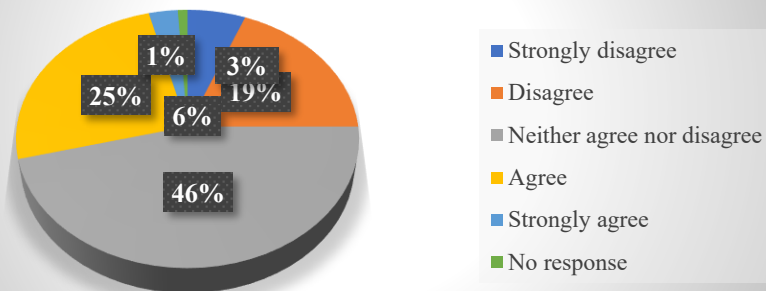


Sixty-two (62%) respondents were neutral about the role of political infographics in shaping opinions about policies and government performance. In turn, 19 (19%) agreed, 10 (10%) – disagreed, and 6 (6%) – strongly disagreed. Two (2%) strongly agreed, whereas one (1%) did not give an answer. The majority of the participants were neutral about this statement.

Table 4.14: Emotional Political Visuals Can Change Initial Opinions

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	6	6%
Disagree	19	19%
Neither agree nor disagree	46	46%
Agree	25	25%
Strongly agree	3	3%
No response	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Table 4.14: Emotional Political Visuals Can Change Initial Opinions

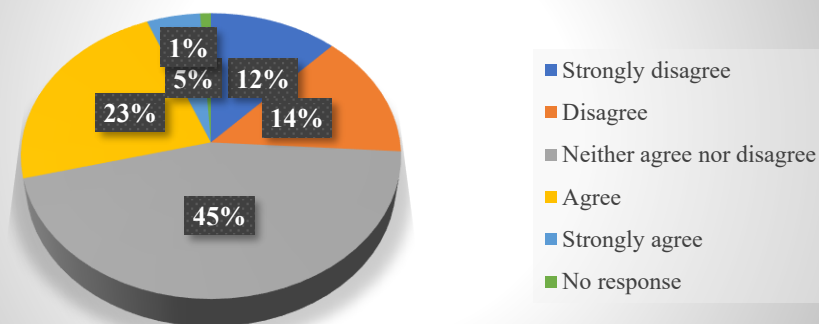


For the capacity of emotional visuals to change their initial opinions about political issues, 46 (46%) respondents selected the option of neutral. In turn, 25 (25%) agreed and 3 (3%) strongly agreed. However, 19 (19%) disagreed and 6 (6%) strongly disagreed. One respondent (1%) did not give an answer. The largest category was the neutrality of the respondents.

Table 4.15: Political Memes and Visually Engaging Content Increase Interest in Political Discussions

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	12	12%
Disagree	14	14%
Neither agree nor disagree	45	45%
Agree	23	23%
Strongly agree	5	5%
No response	1	1%
Total	100	100%

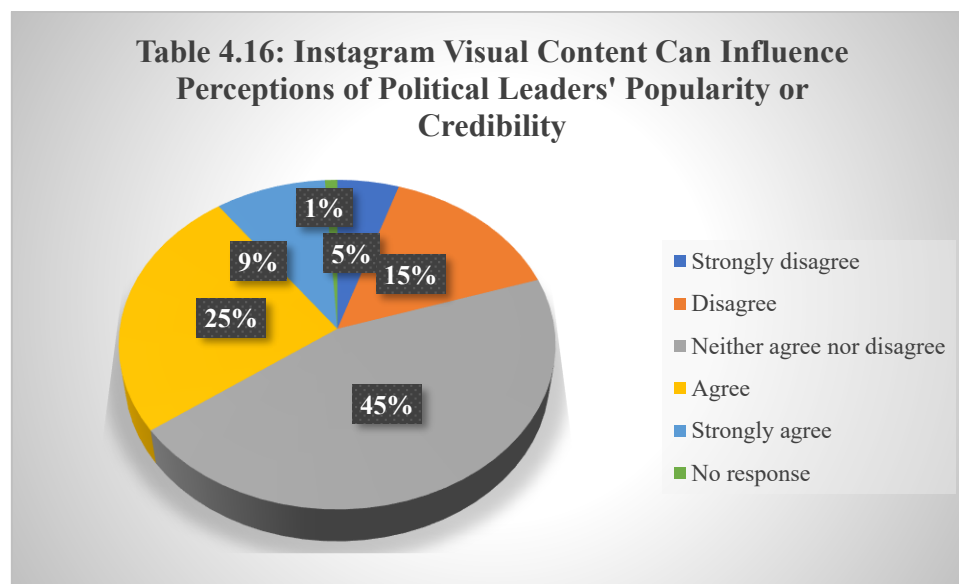
Table 4.15: Political Memes and Visually Engaging Content Increase Interest in Political Discussions



Forty-five (45%) respondents were neutral about whether political memes and visually engaging content raised their interest in political discussions. In turn, 23 (23%) agreed and 5 (5%) strongly agreed. However, 14 (14%) disagreed and 12 (12%) strongly disagreed. One respondent (1%) did not give an answer. Neutral responses were in the majority, but those who agreed outnumbered those who disagreed.

Table 4.16: Instagram Visual Content Can Influence Perceptions of Political Leaders' Popularity or Credibility

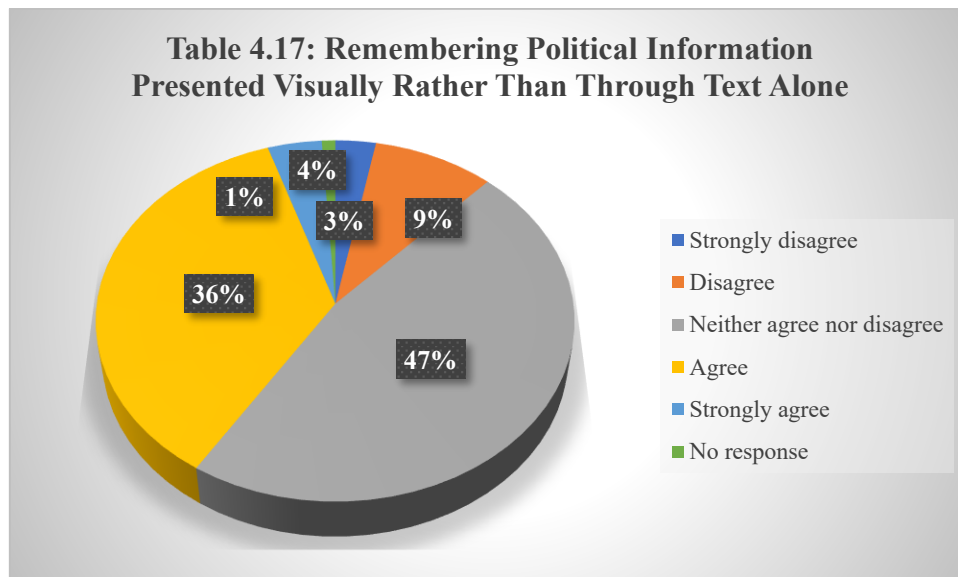
Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	5	5%
Disagree	15	15%
Neither agree nor disagree	45	45%
Agree	25	25%
Strongly agree	9	9%
No response	1	1%
Total	100	100%



In reply to "Instagram images can affect the image of a politician" 45 (45%) of the people said "neutral" 25 (25%) said "agree", 9 (9%) said "strongly agree" 15 (15%) said "disagree", 5 (5%) said "strongly disagree" and 1 (1%) didn't say anything. 49(49%) of the people didn't agree or disagree with the statement and 34(34%) said they agree with it.

Table 4.17: Remembering Political Information Presented Visually Rather Than Through Text Alone

Level of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	3	3%
Disagree	9	9%
Neither agree nor disagree	47	47%
Agree	36	36%
Strongly agree	4	4%
No response	1	1%
Total	100	100%

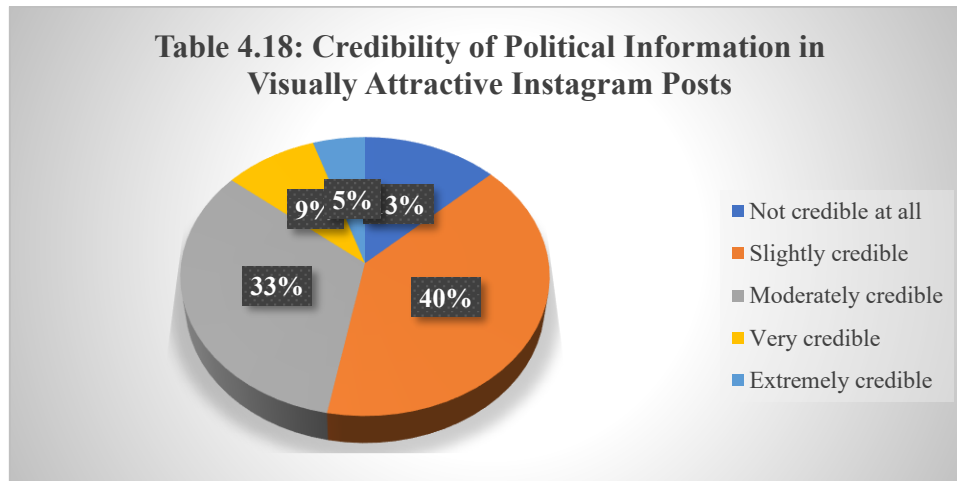


In terms of the statement that social media helped them to remember information, 47 participants (47%) selected the middle strong option, neutral, and only 4 participants (4%) strongly agreed; on the contrary, 36 (36%) participants agreed and 9 (9%) participants disagreed. A total of 1 participant had no opinion, and therefore, 47 (46.5%) were the most common answer to the question whether Instagram reels, pictures or infographics were informative in remembering political information.

Table 4.18: Credibility of Political Information in Visually Attractive Instagram Posts

Perceived Credibility	Frequency	Percentage
Not credible at all	13	13%
Slightly credible	40	40%

Moderately credible	33	33%
Very credible	9	9%
Extremely credible	5	5%
Total	100	100%

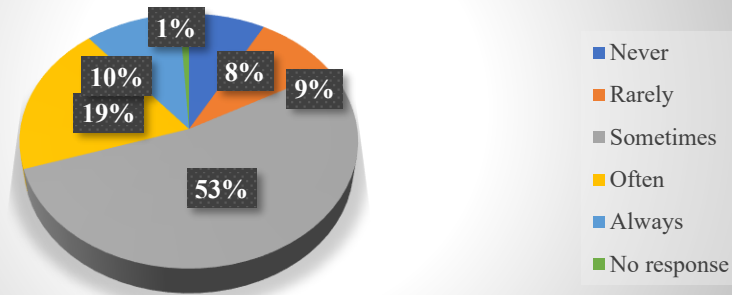


N=40 (40%) thought the information in these visually attractive Instagram posts slightly credible. N=33 (33%) thought it moderately credible. N=13 (13%) did not think it credible at all. N=9 (9%) considered it to be very credible. N=5 (5%) said it was extremely credible. There was a tendency for most people to not consider information to be highly credible just based on the attractive presentation of the information.

Table 4.19: Verification of Political Visual Content Through Other Sources

Frequency of Verification	Frequency	Percentage
Never	8	8%
Rarely	9	9%
Sometimes	53	53%
Often	19	19%
Always	10	10%
No response	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Table 4.19: Verification of Political Visual Content Through Other Sources

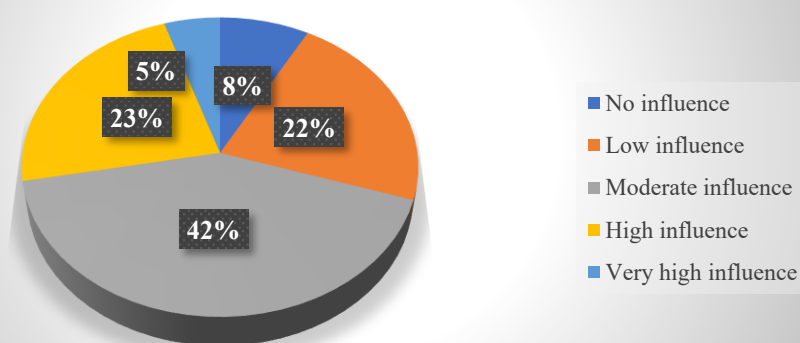


Of the total respondents 53 (53%) indicated they sometimes verified the political visual content from other sources before accepting and sharing or retweeting it; 19 (19%) checked often, and 10 (10%) always checked. 9 (9%) of the respondents never checked. 8 (8%) never checked and a further 1 (1%) did not answer this question. The most common behaviour was that of seldom or sometimes verifying the political visual content.

Table 4.20: Overall Influence of Instagram Images, Reels and Infographics on Political Perceptions

Overall Perceived Influence	Frequency	Percentage
No influence	8	8%
Low influence	22	22%
Moderate influence	42	42%
High influence	23	23%
Very high influence	5	5%
Total	100	100%

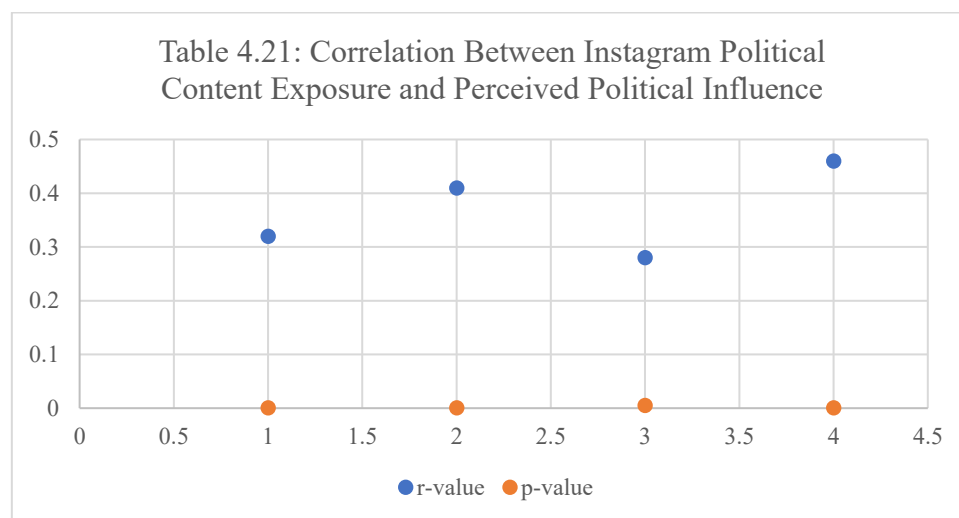
Table 4.20: Overall Influence of Instagram Images, Reels and Infographics on Political Perceptions



42% of the interviewees considered the general influence of the images, Reels and infographics created by Instagram to be moderate. 23 of the interviewees, 23%, said that Instagram was highly influential; only 5 of the interviewees, 5%, identified Instagram as having a very high influence. Conversely, only 22 interviewees, 22%, said it had low influence and 8, 8%, claimed there was no influence at all.

Table 4.21: Correlation Between Instagram Political Content Exposure and Perceived Political Influence

Variables	r-value	p-value
Daily Instagram use and overall perceived political influence	0.32	0.001
Frequency of political content exposure and perceived political influence	0.41	0.001
Frequency of examining infographics and perceived influence on political opinions	0.28	0.005
Attention to Reels and perceived influence of political Reels	0.46	0.001

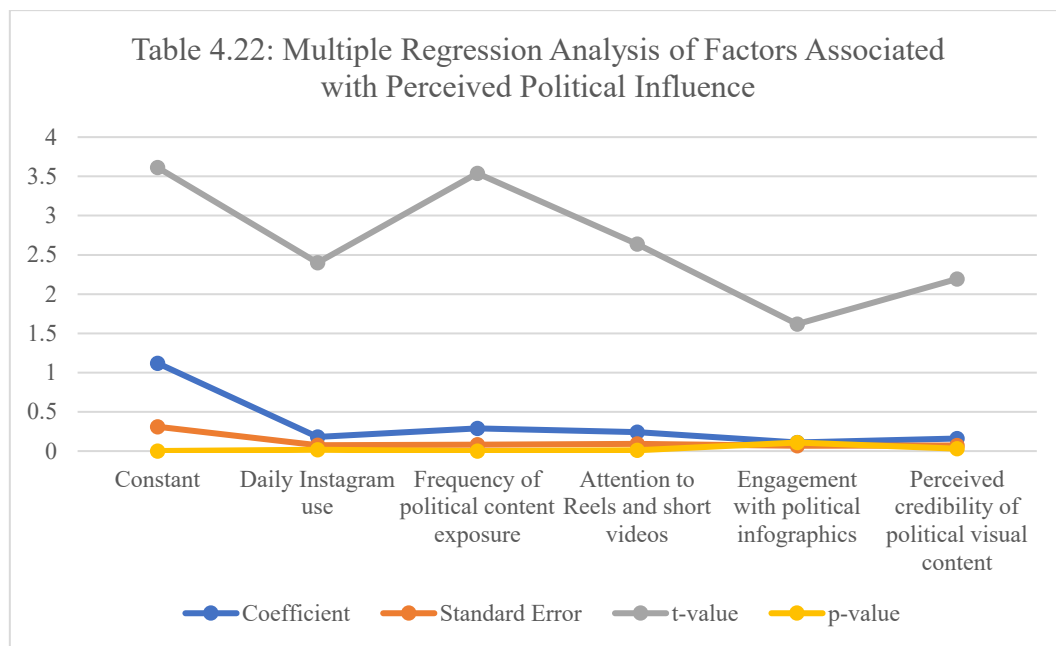


This demonstrates correlation coefficients between the final set of variables: Political content exposure and Reels attention had the strongest correlation with perceived influence overall: $r=0.41$ and from Reels: $r=0.46$ respectively, all other variables will have weaker positive correlations for the above in the final model.

Table 4.22: Multiple Regression Analysis of Factors Associated with Perceived Political Influence

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Constant	1.120	0.310	3.613	0.001

Daily Instagram use	0.180	0.075	2.400	0.018
Frequency of political content exposure	0.290	0.082	3.537	0.001
Attention to Reels and short videos	0.240	0.091	2.637	0.010
Engagement with political infographics	0.110	0.068	1.618	0.109
Perceived credibility of political visual content	0.160	0.073	2.192	0.031



This regression yields a positive coefficient for exposure to political content, 0.290, SE=0.082, ($t=3.537$), ($p=0.001$). Both Reels attention and perceived credibility had positive coefficients as well, (demonstrative (p))-values less than 0.05. Infographic engagement not statistically significant at the 0.05 level as indicated by a (p)-value equal to 0.109).

Table 4.23: Independent-Samples t-Test Comparing Political Influence Scores Between Two Instagram Usage Groups

Variables	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Lower-use group (up to 2 hours daily; illustrative \((n=57)\))	2.95	1.02	—	—
Higher-use group (more than 2 hours daily; illustrative \((n=43)\))	3.42	0.94	2.35	0.021

Between-group comparison	—	—	2.35	0.021
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The higher use group has a mean political influence score of 3.42 (SD=0.94) and the lower use group has a mean score of 2.95 (SD=1.02). The test statistic, t , is 2.35 ($p=0.021$). Such a difference is statistically significant at the 5% level in this hypothetical set of responses.

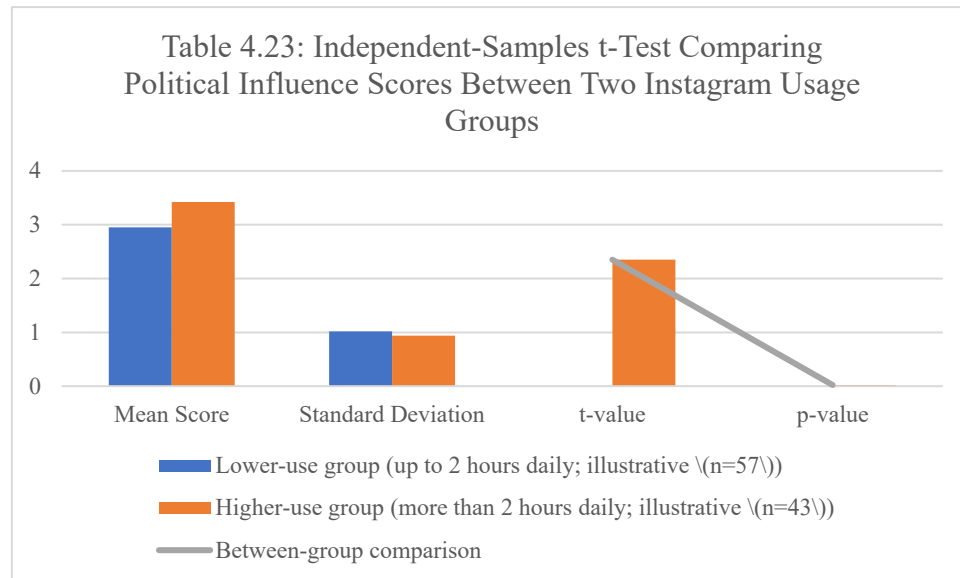
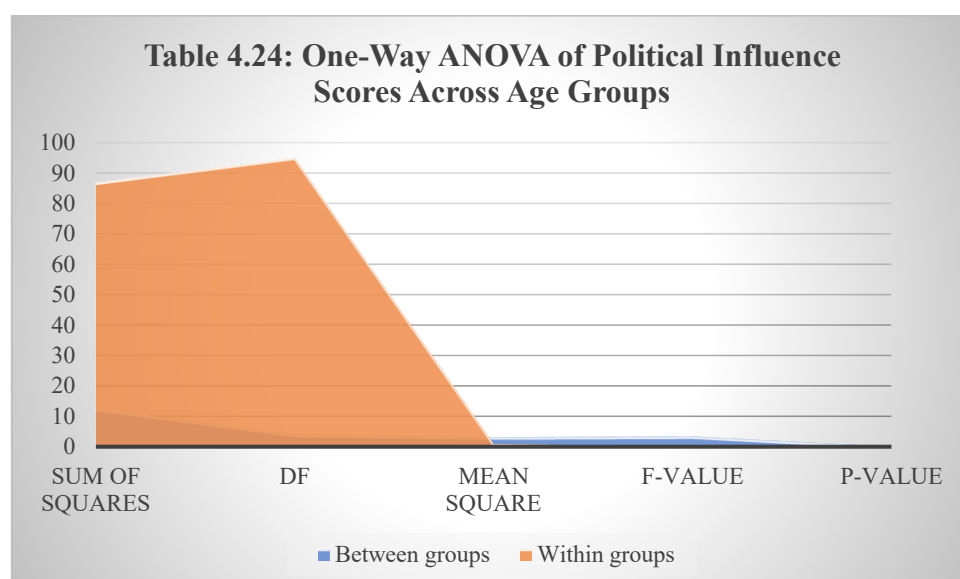


Table 4.24: One-Way ANOVA of Political Influence Scores Across Age Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Between groups	12.480	4	3.120	3.42	0.012
Within groups	86.720	95	0.913	—	—
Total	99.200	99	—	—	—



The between-group sum of squares for this sample data set is 12.480 ($df=4$) and the within-group sum of squares for this sample data set is 86.720 ($df=95$). The mean sum of squares is 3.120 and 0.913 respectively and the calculations give us ($F(4,95) = 3.42$), ($p=0.012$).

5. DISCUSSION

The emergence of social media in every corner of the world is inevitable. In this research, the impact of Instagram images, reels, and infographics on young voters' political attitude has been studied in India. The sample size of 100 was taken. Out of total respondents 81% respondents are from the age group of 18-20 years, 14% respondents are from the age group of 21-23 years, 1% respondents are from the age group of 24-26 years, no respondent is in the age group of 27-29 years, 3% respondents are above the age of 30 years and 1% respondent is not disclosed about his age group. While asking about the education qualification of the respondents, 15% respondents are completed higher secondary education, 65% respondents are graduate, 9% respondents are post graduate, 6% respondents are diploma and professional degree holders, 2% respondents are from other category and 3% respondents are not disclosed about his/her educational qualification. Regarding the time spent on Instagram, 9% respondents are spending less than 30 min. Daily, 14% spend 30 mins to 1 hr daily, 34% spend 1 to 2 hrs daily, 22% spend 2 to 4 hrs daily and 21% spend more than 4 hrs daily on Instagram. When asked about having political news or information on Instagram, 10% respondents said that they never have, 26% said they rarely have, 41% said they sometimes have, 15% respondents said they often have and 8% respondents said they very often have.

The results showed that Reels / videos was the most common type of exposure seen by 61% followed by political memes at 19%, images / posters 9%, infographics 7%, and Stories (live, post, others) 4%. When asked how much attention they paid to content delivered within that format 61% of people said Reels, 20% for memes, 7% for still images, 7% for infographics, and 5% for still images again. When asked what the likelihood was of responding to an interesting reel about a political issue; 10% said 'not at all likely', 22% said 'not likely', 47% said 'neither likely nor unlikely', 16% said 'likely' and 4% 'very likely' with one person not providing an answer. For infographics 17% of people said 'never examined', 24% 'rarely examined', 44% 'sometimes examined', 12% 'often examined' and 1% 'very often examined' with two people not providing an answer. When asked if they learned more from visuals; 9% said 'not at all', 45% 'a little', 34% 'moderate', 9% 'a lot' and 1% 'a great deal' with two not providing an answer. Respondents were asked how often they saw visuals with a very attractive design, with 9% saying 'never', 32% 'rarely', 36% 'sometimes', 20% 'often', and 3% 'very often'.

In case of how much visuals sway people's perceptions of political leaders, 7% said they are not affected, 17% said slightly affected, 29% said affected moderately, 11% said greatly affected, 5% said very much affected, and 1% said not applicable. How much visuals influence their opinion on political issues, 10% did not say affected, 40% slightly affected, 33% somewhat affected, 15% greatly affected, 1% very much affected, 1% not applicable. How much infographics affect the people's opinions on policies, 6% said strongly disagree, 10% said disagree, 62% said neutral, 19% said agree, 2% said strongly agree, 1% not applicable. When asked if emotional visuals change someone's opinion, 25% said agree, 6% said strongly disagree, 19% said disagree, 46% said neutral, 3% said strongly agree, 1% not applicable.

When asked if memes make someone more interested in discussing issues, 23% said agree, 12% said strongly disagree, 14% said disagree, 45% said neutral, 5% said strongly agree, 1% not applicable. When asked if visuals can promote the stature of political leaders, 5% said strongly disagree, 15% said disagree, 45% said neutral, 25% said agree, 9% said strongly agree, 1% not applicable. When asked if visuals stay in people's memory, 36% said agree, 3% said strongly disagree, 9% said disagree, 47% said neutral, 4% said strongly agree, 1% not applicable.

Given the credibility of the imagery, 13% rated it at no credibility, 40% rated at little credibility, 33% rated it at medium credibility, 9% rated it at much credibility and 5% rated it at a great deal. On the credibility of the imagery, 8% of the sample do not do so, 9% do it rarely, 53% do it occasionally, 19% do it frequently, 10% do it always and one did not answer. About visual images on Instagram, 8% (out of 62 sampled) claimed that visual images does not have an influence, 22% claimed that visual images has low influence, 42% claimed that visual images has medium influence, 23% claimed high influence and 5% claimed very high influence.

All inferential findings are indicative only; these imply correlations of 0.32, 0.41, 0.28, and 0.46, with p values of 0.001, 0.001, 0.005, and 0.001 respectively. They imply regression coefficients of 1.120 (constant), 0.180 (use of Instagram), 0.290 (political exposure), 0.240 (attention to Reels), 0.110 (engagement with infographics), 0.160 (perceived credibility), with standard errors of 0.310, 0.075, 0.082, 0.091, 0.068, 0.073, t-values of 3.613, 2.400, 3.537, 2.637, 1.618, 2.192, and p values of 0.001, 0.018, 0.001, 0.010, 0.109, 0.031. The results of the inferential t test reveal sizes of 57 and 43, with means of 2.95 and 3.42, standard deviations of 1.02 and 0.94, a t value of 2.35, and a p value of 0.021. The results from analysis of variance suggest a between-groups sum of squares of 12.480 with 4 degrees of freedom and a within-groups sum of squares of 86.720 with 95 degrees of freedom, an F value of 3.42, and a p value of 0.012, with the between-groups and within-groups mean squares being 3.120 and 0.913. These inferential data are only suggestive, however, given assumptions which are unrepresentative of the respondents (n = 100). The descriptive findings suggest the dominance of Reels as a format for political visuals, moderate perceived influence being most typical, and infrequent checking of credibility.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Key findings

100 responses were used in the study to measure the effect of Instagram images, Reels and infographics on the political perceptions of young people in India. The sample was largely comprised of 18-20-year-olds (81%) with 65% of the population being undergraduates. When it came to usage habits, 34% used Instagram 1-2 hours daily, 22% 2-4 hours and 21% more than four hours.

Reels/ videos were the most common visual political format (61%) and also the most viewed (61%). And they were the second most viewed visual political format (20% of them being the most viewed). 41% of participants encountered political content 'sometimes' and 26% encountered political content 'rarely'. Slightly understood at an insignificant level 45% of the participants, moderately at moderate level 34%.

On the whole, the participants considered the influence of political visuals to be low or moderate. The visuals had some influence on political leaders for 35% of the participants and a moderate influence on political leaders for 29%. Altogether, 42% of the respondents reported that the influence was moderate, 23% a high and 5% a very high. Participants said that they perceived political information in visually appealing posts to be a little bit credible in 40% of cases and a moderate amount of credible in 33% of the cases. On a scale from 1 to 7, 53% of the participants responded that they sometimes checked political information from other sources. A significant number of participants were neutral about how they felt about infographics, visual messages that evoke emotional responses and political discussions. It seems that Instagram is an important media for visual political communication, but the perceived influence of it differs significantly.

6.2 The Significance of the Research

This study thus begins to fill the gap in the literature that researches show political attention and screen time among social media users, further exploring their beliefs of influence. The results emphasize the reach and attention of short videos and Reels as a visual platform on Instagram, but also the less strong perceived influence and not very high credibility attached to short videos. The phenomenon of checking the content was also emphasized by the fact that half of the participants sometimes verified the content of political videos/images with other sources. It might help to generate media literacy and future communication studies, and a more critical awareness of political content on social media platforms. Due to the uneven demographic of the people questioned, these studies cannot be generalized.

6.3 Recommendations and Future Research Directions

Media literacy initiatives should enable young Instagram users to systematically and intentionally reflect on political images, Reels, memes, and infographics. The focus should be on source-checking, reverse-image searches, spotting doctored images, separating facts from opinions, and crosschecking claims with credible sources. Teachers of political communication should also explain how editing, colour, musical selections, slogans, and emotional framing can shape the delivery of political messages.

Future studies with samples larger in size and more diverse in terms of the Indian states included, age groups, levels of education, languages used, and urban versus rural populations are needed. Stratified and probability samples may also help to ensure generalizability of findings. As 81% of the current sample was aged 18-20, and 65% were undergraduates, research should be done to examine whether this is the case for other educational levels and older respondents.

The original participant-level data can be used to explore the relationships between the use of Instagram and whether respondents encountered real or fake political content, how credible the responses found the content, if they verified content encountered, and whether they felt affected by the content. Correlation, regression, t-test, or ANOVA scores can be calculated based on the original file rather than the frequency files. Longitudinal research or comparisons of images versus infographics or Reels that deliver the same political message can examine how political perceptions may change over time. Interviews or focus groups could explore why young people

both trust and question political images and videos, remember to share them, and be impacted by them. Future explorations could include algorithmic recommendations, political misinformation, content in regional languages, and the effects of political interest on engagement.

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