

**INFLUENCE OF INSTAGRAM ON THE LIFESTYLES OF UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS**

**A Dissertation submitted to the University of Kerala in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Masters of Arts Degree Examination in Sociology**

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DECLARATION

I, **Remya P**, hereby declare that the dissertation titled "**INFLUENCE OF INSTAGRAM ON THE LIFESTYLES OF UNDRGRADUATE STUDENTS**" is based on the original work carried out by me and submitted to the University of Kerala during the year 2022-2024 towards partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Sociology Degree Examination. It has not been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or other similar title of recognition before.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "**INFLUENCE OF INSTAGRAM ON THE LIFETYLES OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**" is a record of genuine work done by **REMYA P**, a fourth semester, Master of Sociology student of this college under my supervision and guidance and that is hereby approved for submission.

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ABSTRACT

This research study investigates the influence of Instagram on the lifestyles of undergraduate students, focusing on three main objectives: understanding the purpose and extent of Instagram usage, studying its effects, and evaluating how the platform's idealized portrayals impact students' social expectations. The study reveals that Instagram serves as both a tool for social connection and a platform for self-expression, with students spending varying amounts of time engaging with a wide range of content, from personal updates to curated lifestyle imagery. Findings indicate that extensive use of Instagram can lead to significant effects on students' mental well-being, including heightened social comparison and feelings of inadequacy. The study highlights how Instagram's representation of idealized relationships and lifestyles shapes students' expectations for their own social lives, often leading to unrealistic aspirations and pressures to conform. This influence is particularly pronounced in areas such as self-image, social interactions, and consumer behavior. The research underscores the complex interplay between Instagram's visual culture and students' personal and social development, illustrating how digital media can both inspire and challenge contemporary youth. As Instagram continues to evolve, its impact on student lifestyles reflects broader trends in social media's role in shaping identity and social norms.

CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Social interaction involves communication. Since humans are social creatures, communication is a necessary part of daily existence. Humans can relate to society through communication without being constrained by time or location. When the meaning of the message transmitted and the meaning received align, it's considered effective communication.

In the age of globalisation, information technology is advancing very quickly in social life. With ever-improving technology, people can communicate information. Without actually getting together. People can communicate with each other more easily now that social media is around. If the two users of the social media platform reply to one another, communication will occur.

Social media is a digital platform that enables people to share information and express themselves. Social media can be utilised as platforms for social bonding, business trading, and fact-transmission. The existence of social media and the rising daily user base offer intriguing data regarding how potent the internet is a necessity for everyone, even in academic settings.

Instagram is one of the social media platforms that students find particularly appealing. Instagram is a program that allows users to share and exchange images and videos. Instagram users are able to post and distribute images and movies in accordance with the account user's preferences. Students make use of social media as a resource for the most recent information, from current events to viral hangouts styles, among other things. It's regrettable that kids increasingly measure their performance on social media lifestyles, they frequently place a premium on great status. The effect of this tragedy that is being felt is that in order to satisfy their needs, pupils may lose themselves.

Lifestyle refers to the typical lifestyle of social groups. On the other hand, lifestyle helps determine one's attitudes, values, wealth, and social status. Self-actualization has a different lifestyle and is different from one another. Self-realization has many motives, such as the desire to be known, to be grateful, to be equal, and to be with others. Sometimes he pushes himself and even makes himself miserable. Instagram is one of the social media that supports all

activities that can affect lifestyle. Instagram is also a benchmark for its users to show their lifestyle either by posting photos or videos about fashion, food, places, shopping or other activities. They tend to emphasize recognition from the virtual world, not the real world (Adila, 2022).

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In recent years, Instagram has emerged as a dominant social media platform, particularly among younger populations, including undergraduate students. Its rise to fame among college students is largely due to its visually appealing content, user-friendly interface, and its ability to connect people through images and videos. Given its widespread use and influence, understanding how Instagram shapes the lifestyles of undergraduate students is both timely and relevant.

Instagram plays significant role in the lives of college students. As they transition into adulthood, students are heavily influenced by the social trends and norms propagated through social media. Instagram, with its emphasis on visual storytelling, allows users to share their lives in a curated and often idealized manner, which can have profound effects on how students perceive themselves and their peers.

Instagram influences students in several key ways. It often sets trends in fashion, beauty, travel, and lifestyle, which students may feel compelled to follow to fit in or gain social validation. The platform also fosters a culture of comparison, where students measure their lives against the highlight reels of others, potentially impacting their self-esteem and lifestyle choices. The constant exposure to these curated images can lead students to adopt certain behaviors, such as prioritizing social appearances, engaging in consumerism, or striving to emulate the lifestyles of influencers they follow.

Instagram's popularity among college students can be attributed to several factors. First, its visual nature resonates with the preference for quick, engaging content that aligns with the fast-paced lives of students. Second, the platform offers a sense of community and belonging through the ability to follow, interact, and engage with peers, celebrities, and influencers. Finally, Instagram's integration with other social media platforms and its ability to create viral content has solidified its place as a central part of the social lives of many students.

This study aims to delve into how Instagram influences the lifestyle choices and social behaviors of undergraduate students, exploring the reasons behind its popularity and the most significant ways it impacts their daily lives. By examining these aspects, the research seeks to provide insights into the role of Instagram in shaping contemporary student culture

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the most widely used social media sites, Instagram, has a big impact on undergraduate students' life in a lot of different ways. Instagram is a visual content and social media network that frequently showcases idealised relationships, accomplishments, and lifestyles. Constant exposure to such content can have a significant impact on the self-esteem, mental health, and social behaviours of undergraduate students' individuals who are still forming in both their personal and social development.

Instagram has an impact on lifestyle decisions, academic achievement, and personal identity in addition to social connections. Pupils may experience social comparison, anxiety, and distorted reality views as a result of feeling compelled to live up to the expectations they observe online. Even though this group uses Instagram extensively, there is still a lot to learn about how it affects them as a whole.

An evolution from previous types of social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook Instagram has more than Whatsapp, Youtube, and to become as one of the most often used types of the new media. As per the findings of numerous studies intellectuals, there are various reasons why Use of Instagram.

With a focus on how Instagram influences undergraduate students' self-perception and lifestyle choices, this study attempts to explore how Instagram acts as a social media influence. Concerns have been made over Instagram's possible impact on undergraduate students' social connections, self-perception, and lifestyle decisions due to its usage. The highly edited content on Instagram, which is well-known, frequently presents idealised portrayals of relationships and lifestyles, which may have an effect on how students see their own lives and social settings.

1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study on the influence of Instagram on the lifestyle of undergraduate students lies in its exploration of how social media platforms, particularly Instagram, shape the daily lives, aspirations, and behaviors of young adults. By examining the ways in which Instagram influences lifestyle choices, social comparisons, and self-expression among students, this study contributes to the broader understanding of digital media's impact on contemporary youth culture.

This research not only bridges the gap between social media and real-world behaviors but also offers empirical evidence on how Instagram's portrayal of idealized lifestyles affects students' self-perception, mental well-being, and social interactions. By applying theoretical frameworks related to social comparison, identity formation, and media effects, the study enhances our understanding of the complex relationship between social media usage and lifestyle choices.

CHAPTER – 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. INFLUENCE ON LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Adila's (2022) study highlights how Instagram profoundly impacts daily habits and consumption patterns among students, illustrating that users are often unable to distance themselves from the platform's influence. Instagram's ability to showcase glamorous lifestyles and trends makes it highly compelling and influential, leading many students to mirror the fashion and activities they see. The platform's focus on trendy locations, stylish outfits, and luxury experiences drives users to seek out similar behaviors, such as frequenting trendy cafes or indulging in shopping sprees. This can lead to both positive outcomes, like increased inspiration and social connectivity, and negative consequences, including pressure to conform and materialistic tendencies. Additionally, Instagram's portrayal of celebrity lifestyles shapes how users perceive and aspire to these ideals, affecting their own behaviors and self-image. The unique and engaging features of the app ensure its regular use, making it a significant force in shaping modern consumption and lifestyle trends.

Malathi & Baskaran (2023) provide insights into the differential usage patterns of Instagram between urban and rural students, highlighting that urban students predominantly use the platform, whereas rural students engage with it less frequently. In contemporary times, Instagram serves multiple purposes beyond social networking; it is a versatile tool for online business, content sharing, and personal expression. Urban students leverage Instagram to explore and engage with various forms of media, including videos and photos, and to share their own content, benefiting from the platform's capacity for creative expression and communication.

The platform's features enable users to post images and videos, providing a powerful medium for expressing feelings and showcasing personal or professional content. This capability is appreciated by users across both city and rural settings, although the frequency and manner of use vary significantly between these groups. Urban students, with greater access to technology and higher engagement levels, tend to exploit Instagram's full range of functionalities, including online business and e-commerce activities. They may use the platform not just for

personal enjoyment but also as a tool for entrepreneurial endeavors, leveraging its broad reach to start or promote businesses. On the other hand, rural students, who use Instagram less frequently, might be less familiar with or have limited access to the advanced features of the platform. Despite this, the platform remains a valuable tool for them as well, providing opportunities for learning and engagement with a wider world. The continuous use of Instagram can lead to shifts in students' attitudes and behaviors. For urban students, frequent interaction with the platform may alter their perspectives on social interactions, self-presentation, and even their consumption patterns. The platform's influence can affect how students view themselves and their peers, shaping their attitudes towards trends, personal branding, and digital communication. Overall, Instagram's role in modern life is multifaceted, offering both opportunities and challenges. It enhances communication and creative expression while also necessitating a nuanced understanding of its impact on behavior and attitudes, particularly as usage patterns diverge between urban and rural users.

Elizabeth (2022) conducted a study revealing significant insights into how Instagram celebrities impact students' fashion choices and lifestyle preferences. According to the study, a substantial majority of students are influenced by the celebrities they follow on Instagram. Specifically, 69.6% of respondents acknowledged that Instagram celebrities sometimes affect their fashion lifestyle. This indicates a notable level of influence, where celebrities' fashion choices and styles inspire students, albeit not consistently for every fashion decision. Furthermore, 19.6% of the students reported that the influence of Instagram celebrities on their fashion lifestyle is very frequent. This subset of students is more intensely affected by the trends and styles showcased by these celebrities, suggesting that their fashion choices are strongly shaped by the content they see on Instagram. The study also found that 50% of respondents consider the fashion lifestyles of Instagram celebrities to be highly attractive. This reflects a significant level of admiration and aspiration towards the fashion choices of these celebrities. The attractiveness of celebrity fashion can drive students to emulate these styles, impacting their own clothing preferences and shopping habits. In summary, Elizabeth's study highlights that Instagram celebrities wield considerable influence over students' fashion choices, with a notable percentage of students being frequently inspired by their styles. The strong appeal of celebrity fashion, as perceived by half of the respondents, underscores the powerful role that social media influencers play in shaping contemporary fashion trends and personal style among students.

Nyambura's (2017) research highlights that while many college students experience pressure to alter their appearance after viewing Instagram influencers' photos, these influencers have the power to promote certain beauty standards and influence the purchase of cosmetic products. The study also emphasizes the negative impact on self-esteem that can result from comparing oneself to these highly curated, often Photoshopped images. Despite these findings, Nyambura found that students following influencers do not generally feel socially rejected or pressured to adopt a lifestyle they deem unsatisfactory in order to emulate the influencer. Moreover, browsing Instagram photos does not necessarily worsen students' self-perception of their appearance.

Akanksh & Manish (2020) conducted a study that revealed concerning levels of Instagram addiction among students, with 27.8% of the participants identified as being addicted to the platform. This finding suggests that Instagram's immersive and engaging nature is having a strong pull on nearly a third of the student population. Interestingly, the study also highlighted a significant difference in addiction rates based on the type of academic program students were enrolled in. Business and management students showed a higher tendency towards Instagram addiction compared to their counterparts in arts and sciences. This could be linked to the competitive nature of these fields, where networking, self-promotion, and engagement with trends might be more prevalent. Despite this high level of addiction, the study found that Instagram use had little impact on students' overall quality of life. This suggests that while students may spend excessive time on the platform, it does not necessarily interfere with their day-to-day well-being. However, this raises questions about the long-term implications of such habits, as addiction to social media platforms like Instagram might still affect academic performance, interpersonal relationships, or mental health over time.

According to Boateng & Amankwaa (2016), social media is a powerful tool that facilitates communication and engagement among users. It allows individuals to develop or maintain connections, share ideas, and interact for a variety of purposes, including both personal and professional reasons. Social media platforms enable users to build social networks or relationships with others who share similar hobbies, interests, or backgrounds, fostering both new connections and strengthening existing ones. By promoting the exchange of ideas and information, social media serves as a key avenue for interaction within communities and networks. However, the effectiveness of social media depends heavily on various electronic devices such as computers, tablets, iPads, and the availability of Internet-based technologies.

These technologies support a seamless connection between users across the globe. In this way, social media can be defined as a form of technology that enables global discussions, collaboration, and social interactions among users, transcending geographical barriers and facilitating widespread communication.

Porter highlights that Instagram is designed to emphasize user-to-user content sharing and online collaboration, allowing users to create, share, and distribute photographs and other types of content. This dynamic, adaptable, and interactive platform encourages active participation from its users, transforming it into a space where information is both exchanged and obtained across a variety of subjects. The informants in this context highlight Instagram's role in content sharing, especially in areas such as fashion, where trends are constantly evolving. By fostering the development, distribution, and dissemination of content, Instagram acts as a medium that connects users to new ideas, styles, and influences.

Instagram's significance as a platform for media publication is further underlined by its ability to facilitate online collaboration. It provides a stage where users can publish and share information with a global audience, thereby contributing to the visibility and spread of trends in various fields. For the four informants, Instagram plays a particularly vital role in keeping them updated with fashion trends. The term "fashion" can encompass various interpretations, but in this context, it represents the latest styles and trends that can change rapidly. The platform allows users to follow these trends, stay relevant, and gain recognition within their social circles. As Triani & Vusparatih (2014) point out, Instagram users, particularly those interested in fashion, often follow social media influencers to draw inspiration for their own style choices. Influencers serve as key figures who shape and promote fashion trends on the platform. Informants not only use Instagram to keep up with these trends but also actively contribute to the fashion ecosystem by sharing their own interpretations and adapting the trends to their unique preferences. This cyclical relationship between influencers, users, and trends makes Instagram an essential tool for staying current and engaging with the ever-changing fashion landscape.

Social media, as an amalgamation of digital media, integrates various forms of electronic content such as texts, graphics, videos, and sound into a cohesive, structured environment. This digital space enables individuals to interact with a vast array of data for multiple purposes, such as communication, learning, and entertainment. According to Vanithamani et al. (2021), while

social media has the potential to positively influence young people by enhancing their knowledge, fostering positive attitudes, and contributing to character development, it also poses significant risks. On the beneficial side, social media can serve as an educational tool, helping young people access information, expand their understanding of the world, and connect with others who share similar interests. It can also be a platform for personal growth, offering opportunities for self-expression and the development of social skills. However, these benefits come with serious drawbacks. One major concern is the potential for addiction, where excessive use of social media can interfere with daily responsibilities, academic performance, and personal relationships. Additionally, the anonymity and vast reach of social media platforms make them susceptible to cybercrimes, such as online harassment, identity theft, and other malicious activities. Predators can also misuse these platforms to locate and exploit vulnerable individuals, making it crucial for young users to exercise caution. Children, in particular, are advised to be vigilant when navigating social media. They should be wary of accepting friend requests from unknown users, as this opens them up to potential harm from online predators. Social media companies also bear responsibility in mitigating these risks. Vanithamani et al. (2021) emphasize the need for platforms to enhance their privacy policies to protect users, particularly minors, from unwanted exposure and interactions. Strengthening privacy controls and educating users about safe online practices are key steps in making social media a safer environment for all.

Deshmukh and Tathe (2014) conducted a study titled “An Impact of Social Networking Sites on Youngsters” to explore the effects of social media on Indian youth. The study utilized percentage analysis to examine data collected from a sample of fifty students. The findings revealed that young adults and teenagers are the primary users of social networking sites, underscoring how deeply embedded these platforms are in their daily lives. One of the notable conclusions drawn from the research was that social networking platforms could potentially benefit the family development sector. The study suggests that the design and functionality of social networking sites can be leveraged to foster stronger family connections. By facilitating communication, sharing experiences, and promoting family-related content, these platforms may help in bridging generational gaps, encouraging family cohesion, and supporting positive family dynamics. This insight points to the broader applicability of social media beyond entertainment and peer interaction, highlighting its potential role in contributing to societal structures like the family unit.

Alotaibi (2019) conducted a study that revealed a positive correlation between consumers' intentions to buy and their level of trust. This indicates that the more trust consumers have in a platform or seller, the more likely they are to make a purchase. The study found that when it comes to Instagram stores, consumers' purchase intentions are strongly influenced by Maroof (a certification system in Saudi Arabia for e-commerce businesses) and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), who are influential figures within specific niches. Additionally, the study emphasized that trust is further enhanced by Social Media Influencers (SMIs) and customer feedback. SMIs play a significant role in building trust, as their endorsements or reviews can reassure consumers about the credibility of the products or stores. Similarly, customer feedback provides social proof, further boosting trust among potential buyers. This combination of endorsements, reviews, and feedback contributes to a more trustworthy online shopping experience, ultimately driving consumer purchase intentions.

The study conducted by Parwal and Kumar (2023) provides a comprehensive overview of Instagram's influence on its users, particularly focusing on its impact through influencer marketing. The study's participants were almost equally divided between men and women, aged between 15 and 30, highlighting Instagram's strong appeal among younger demographics. The amount of time respondents spend on Instagram varies, with many dedicating 30 to 60 minutes daily. This reflects the platform's significant role in users' daily routines. Notably, a substantial majority (87.9%) reported familiarity with influencer marketing, indicating widespread awareness and understanding of this promotional strategy. Influencer content appears to be a common feature on users' feeds, with a large portion of respondents (70) frequently encountering it. Engagement with influencer posts is high, as 64.8% of respondents actively interact with such content. This suggests that influencer posts are not just viewed but are actively engaged with by a considerable segment of users. However, perceptions of the credibility of these influencers vary. While 45.1% of respondents find influencer suggestions to be reasonably credible, there is a small group that remains skeptical about their authenticity. Trust in influencers also varies. A significant portion of respondents (47.3%) report a moderate to high level of trust in the knowledge and recommendations of Instagram influencers, though some still express doubts. When choosing which influencer to follow, users value factors such as popularity, credibility, dependability, expertise, and experience in the field. Influencer endorsements have a notable impact on purchasing decisions; over half of the respondents (54.3%) have made purchases based on such recommendations, indicating a tangible influence

on consumer behavior. Despite this, 44.6% of respondents have not yet converted, suggesting further opportunities for future influence. Regarding satisfaction with purchases made on the basis of influencer recommendations, 42.9% of participants expressed contentment, while a small minority (7.7%) were dissatisfied. Additionally, the study reveals that a majority (68.1%) of respondents have engaged in word-of-mouth marketing by recommending products or brands endorsed by Instagram influencers, underscoring the effectiveness of influencer credibility and the power of personal recommendations in driving consumer behavior. Overall, the findings illustrate the significant role Instagram influencers play in shaping user perceptions and purchasing decisions, highlighting both the potential and limitations of influencer marketing in the digital age.

2.2. EFFECTS OF EXCESSIVE INSTAGRAM USAGE

Instagram, a prominent social media platform, attracts a diverse global audience and has become an integral part of daily life for many users. Its popularity has surged dramatically over the years. For instance, in 2005, only 12.5% of young adults engaged with social media. By 2020, this figure had skyrocketed to 90%, reflecting a significant shift in how individuals interact with digital platforms (Bettmann et al., 2020). Social media's role extends beyond mere communication. It offers a platform for users to showcase and share the highlights of their lives, which can foster a sense of connection and community. According to Bettmann et al. (2020), social media serves several functions: it helps users stay connected with friends, provides entertainment, and offers a means to manage social anxiety. This multifaceted use of social media underscores its growing importance in modern life. The ability to share personal milestones and experiences on Instagram not only keeps users informed about their social circles but also provides a source of enjoyment and engagement. Moreover, the platform's interactive nature allows users to engage with content that resonates with them, potentially alleviating feelings of loneliness and social anxiety by creating a virtual support network. Thus, Instagram has evolved from a simple photo-sharing app to a complex social tool that influences various aspects of users' lives. Bettmann et al. (2020) highlight the detrimental effects of excessive online interaction on the quality of personal relationships and the increase in feelings of loneliness. This issue is exemplified in a case study involving a 24-year-old female college student who sought counselling for symptoms of depression and anxiety related to her use of Instagram. In the study, the participant revealed that she often uses social media as an escape

from the stress of her daily life and academic pressures. Despite this, she reported that her social media use has exacerbated her feelings of dysphoria— a profound sense of unease or dissatisfaction. She articulated a recurring internal conflict between her authentic self and the personas she feels pressured to project to fit in with various peer groups across different online communities. This case study underscores the complex interplay between social media engagement and mental health. While social media platforms like Instagram offer an avenue for temporary relief from real-world stresses, they can also contribute to emotional strain and identity conflicts. The participant's experience reflects broader concerns about the impact of social media on well-being, highlighting the need for a balanced approach to digital interaction and greater awareness of its potential psychological effects.

Holmgren and Coyne's (2017) research delves into the negative effects of excessive Instagram usage, focusing on various psychological and behavioral outcomes. Their study found that heavy use of Instagram can lead to a range of adverse effects including increased sadness, poor sleep, heightened anxiety, low self-esteem, and conflicts in personal relationships. These issues are often linked to the way users engage with the platform and the content they encounter. A significant aspect of their study was the investigation into "pathological" Instagram use, characterized by addictive behaviors such as using the platform to escape reality. This form of usage can lead to withdrawal symptoms when users are unable to access Instagram, demonstrating a deeper level of dependence on the platform. The research involved a sample of 422 young individuals, with a balanced representation of genders (51.6% female and 48.4% male). The study assessed participants on their patterns of social media use, levels of depression, and self-regulation abilities. The findings indicated that the majority of participants did not exhibit pathological social media use. Instead, the negative outcomes associated with Instagram, such as depression, were more closely related to social comparison rather than sheer volume of use. Specifically, users who frequently compared themselves to others on Instagram were more prone to experiencing depressive symptoms. This study highlights that while not all users develop problematic behaviors, the act of comparing oneself to others on social media can have significant negative impacts on mental health. The findings suggest that fostering self-regulation and reducing social comparison may be key strategies in mitigating the adverse effects of Instagram use.

According to Pearce and Kim (2023), regular use of Instagram significantly influences how individuals compare themselves based on attractiveness. The study found that such appearance-

related comparisons on the platform have notable negative impacts, including increased feelings of envy, low self-esteem, dissatisfaction with life, and overall unhappiness. These effects arise from the exposure to curated and idealized images on Instagram, which can exacerbate individuals' insecurities and contribute to a distorted self-image. The research underscores the detrimental impact of appearance-focused social comparisons on mental well-being and highlights the need for strategies to mitigate these negative outcomes.

Laura and Sheila's (2022) study in the UK highlights a troubling association between Instagram use and mental well-being, noting a significant 94% increase in demand for university counselling services. Their research suggests that while Instagram can serve as a useful tool for learning and accessing educational material, its addictive nature may negatively affect academic performance and contribute to mental health issues among undergraduate students. The study indicates that excessive or problematic use of Instagram can exacerbate stress and anxiety, potentially leading to a decline in academic achievement. The platform's addictive qualities might divert students' attention and energy away from their studies, further compounding mental health challenges. This underscores the need for balanced social media use and targeted support systems to address the mental health needs of students affected by excessive social media engagement.

Subair's (2019) research provides a detailed overview of social media usage among undergraduates. The study found varied usage across different platforms, with WhatsApp being the most popular at 97%, followed by Facebook (85%), Instagram (65%), and YouTube (62%). Other platforms like Google Plus, Snapchat, and Twitter also showed notable usage, though at lower rates. Undergraduates typically spend two to three hours a day on social media, engaging in activities such as socialization (83%), obtaining information (74%), academics (73%), business (68%), and entertainment (61%). This varied usage reflects the multifaceted role social media plays in students' lives. The study also highlights several negative impacts of social media on undergraduate studies, including internet addiction (45%), distraction (32%), and poor writing and spelling skill (24%). Other concerns include anti-social behavior (6%) and cyberbullying (4%). Despite these issues, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp remain popular for their informational, academic, and social purposes. However, their widespread use may also contribute to social media addiction, affecting students' academic performance and overall well-being.

Li Sun (2023) found that university students who frequently use social media often report higher levels of loneliness and symptoms of social anxiety. This suggests that increased social media use may contribute to emotional distress, possibly due to negative social comparisons or reduced face-to-face interactions. In contrast, mobile apps designed with a mindfulness focus have demonstrated effectiveness in reducing anxiety and depression across various demographics. University students, in particular, have reported that accessing mental health support through technology is both easy and convenient. Factors influencing students' use of technology for mental health support include availability, stigma, peer support, attitudes towards technology, mental health literacy, and access to resources. The study highlights that individual who engaged with mindfulness apps for more than 24 days experienced noticeable improvements in anxiety and depressive symptoms. Additionally, personalized and engaging interventions were found to be more effective in promoting job search efforts. Overall, the research underscores the complex impact of social media on mental health and the potential benefits of leveraging technology for mental health support. It also emphasizes the need for users to be aware of social conventions and cultural values when navigating social media, as these factors can influence both the use of social media and its effects on health.

Dhiman (2024) found that Instagram affects both genders, though it is used more frequently by girls compared to boys. The study revealed that 24.4% of individuals felt that Instagram led to overthinking, while 37.8% reported no impact in this regard. The research also highlighted concerns about how Instagram affects youth behavior and anger management. Specifically, 28.9% of participants agreed that Instagram has a negative impact, while 20% disagreed. The remaining 51.1% of respondents were uncertain or had mixed views on this issue. Regarding emotional well-being, 6.9% of men and 10.9% of women admitted that Instagram use makes them feel gloomy. This suggests that a small but notable percentage of users experience negative emotional effects from their Instagram activity. Additionally, Instagram's influence on sleep patterns was evident, with 25% of women and 26.1% of men acknowledging that they delay going to bed due to their social media use. This behavior underscores a broader concern about how social media can disrupt sleep and potentially affect overall health and well-being. The study thus provides insights into the various ways Instagram can impact users, from emotional states and behavioural issues to practical aspects like sleep disruption.

The study on Instagram addiction found that the addiction was positively correlated with recognition needs, social needs, and entertainment needs. This suggests that users frequently

return to Instagram to satisfy their desires for amusement, social interaction, and validation. These findings align with previous research by Alhabash and Ma (2017) and Chen (2017), which also noted similar correlations between social media use and users' needs for recognition, social engagement, and entertainment.

Sheldon and Bryant (2016) further support this by highlighting that Instagram users often prioritize self-promotion and the enhancement of their self-identity, which aligns with the study's findings on the connection between Instagram addiction and the pursuit of recognition. This behavior is consistent with the broader understanding that users seek to affirm their identity and social status through their online presence.

Additionally, Arnett (2014) points out that younger individuals are particularly inclined to shape their identities by seeking acceptance and validation from others. This tendency contributes to the patterns observed in the study, where Instagram users, especially younger ones, are motivated to engage with the platform as a means of fulfilling their social and self-esteem needs. Thus, the study's results underscore the role of Instagram in meeting users' emotional and social needs, particularly through the lenses of self-promotion, social interaction, and entertainment.

According to Amin et al. (2022), Instagram influencers have a substantial impact on consumer purchase intentions on the platform, with the extent of this influence varying based on several factors. One of the most crucial factors is the credibility of the influencer. The study identifies three key elements that influence users' trust in Instagram influencers: the influencer's emotional connection with their fan base, their perceived social responsibility, and the users' emotional responses to the influencer. When consumers evaluate influencers' recommendations and marketing efforts, they consider these factors to be highly significant. Credibility plays a vital role throughout the pre-purchase phase, with many users finding electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) to be particularly effective. Positive eWOM, especially when communicated through trustworthy influencers, significantly impacts consumer perceptions of a product or service. The research also distinguishes between positive and negative eWOM, emphasizing that the spread of positive eWOM through credible influencers can greatly influence consumer attitudes towards a product. Conversely, if an influencer misuses eWOM marketing to promote a product or service that could cause financial or emotional harm, it can damage their credibility and negatively impact customer purchasing intentions. This underscores the importance of

maintaining credibility and ethical marketing practices for influencers to effectively shape consumer behavior and trust.

Hwang and Cho (2018) explored the factors influencing Instagram use and found that enjoyment, satisfaction from social connections, and perceived ease of use all positively impacted users' engagement with the platform. This suggests that users are more likely to continue using Instagram when they find it enjoyable, easy to use, and fulfilling in terms of social connections. In a related study, Trifiro (2018) examined how social media usage patterns affect well-being. The research revealed that active Instagram users tend to have higher self-esteem and overall well-being compared to less active users. This indicates that engaging with Instagram in a positive and active manner can be associated with improved self-perception and general mental health. Hanley et al. (2019) investigated the effects of Facebook and Instagram on subjective well-being and found that active users of these platforms reported higher life satisfaction. This study supports the notion that engaging with social media can contribute positively to individuals' overall happiness and contentment with their lives. Collectively, these studies highlight that while Instagram and other social media platforms have the potential to enhance enjoyment and well-being, the nature of their impact can vary based on usage patterns and individual experiences.

Foroughi et al. (2022) investigated the role of physical activity as a moderator in the relationship between students' needs and Instagram addiction among 364 university students. The study examined how Instagram addiction is associated with various factors, including social anxiety, depression, academic achievement, and life happiness. The findings indicated that Instagram addiction was significantly influenced by students' needs for recognition, social interaction, and amusement. However, the study found that information needs did not reliably predict Instagram addiction. Interestingly, physical activity moderated the relationship between social and entertainment needs and Instagram addiction. Specifically, when students engaged in physical exercise, the impact of these needs on Instagram addiction was reduced. The study also revealed that while Instagram addiction might help alleviate social anxiety and depression for some users, it negatively affects academic performance. Academic achievement was found to be a strong predictor of students' life satisfaction, whereas high levels of social anxiety and depression were associated with lower life satisfaction. Thus, while Instagram can have some positive effects on mental health, its detrimental impact on academic success highlights the need for a balanced approach to social media use among students.

According to Ashhar (2023), there is a significant difference in social media usage and addiction between college students in urban and rural areas. The study found that urban college students engage with a greater number of social media platforms compared to their rural counterparts. This discrepancy is influenced by several factors. Firstly, the availability of internet services in urban areas is typically more robust, with faster and more reliable internet connections that facilitate extensive social media use. Additionally, urban students often possess a broader knowledge of various social media platforms, which enhances their engagement with these networks. Socioeconomic factors also play a critical role, as urban students generally have better access to the financial resources needed to support frequent internet use and social media engagement. Lastly, urban students tend to have more free time compared to their rural peers, allowing them to spend more time on social media. These factors collectively contribute to higher levels of social media addiction among urban college students, as identified in the study.

According to Pekpazar et al. (2021), the study explored how university students' academic performance is influenced by procrastination, Instagram addiction, and self-esteem, examining both direct and indirect relationships among these factors. The findings reveal a significant detrimental relationship between procrastination, Instagram addiction, and self-esteem. Specifically, Instagram addiction was found to significantly influence procrastination but did not have a direct effect on academic achievement. In contrast, procrastination was identified as having a substantial direct impact on academic performance. Furthermore, procrastination was shown to mediate the indirect effects of both self-esteem and Instagram addiction on academic performance. This means that while Instagram addiction and self-esteem affect academic performance indirectly through procrastination, procrastination itself is the primary factor directly impacting students' academic outcomes. Thus, the study underscores the crucial role of procrastination in mediating the effects of Instagram addiction and self-esteem on academic success.

According to Kumar (2023), Instagram is extensively used by young people, with a notable trend of girls creating the majority of videos on the platform. On average, these youths produce one to two videos per day, engaging with a variety of content types, including humorous, love-related, and inspirational reels. However, the overuse of Instagram is adversely affecting young people's mental health. They often feel distressed if their videos or reels do not garner sufficient likes or comments, which can lead to significant emotional repercussions. Additionally,

excessive consumption of Instagram content impacts their sleep patterns and increases irritability when their posts receive fewer interactions. The findings suggest that today's youth are deeply integrated into the Instagram ecosystem, indicating a high dependency on the platform that influences various aspects of their well-being.

Rogowska and Libera (2022) conducted a pioneering study on the mediating role of loneliness in the bidirectional relationship between happiness and Instagram addiction during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study took place during a period when university students were engaged in remote online education and faced significant disruptions due to lockdown measures, such as social isolation, the use of disposable gloves and face masks, and restrictions on public interactions. These conditions, combined with uncertainties regarding employment, housing, financial stability, and academic performance, led to a decline in students' well-being. The research highlighted that social isolation likely intensified feelings of loneliness. During the pandemic, social media use (SMU) became a primary means for compensating for the lack of offline social interactions. The study found that younger individuals (ages 18-34) reported higher levels of loneliness compared to older participants, and those with higher levels of SMU were more likely to experience increased loneliness. Furthermore, the study observed that loneliness adversely affected life satisfaction among young adults in South Africa. The results suggest that excessive use of social media could create a detrimental cycle where increased loneliness drives more social media use, which, in turn, exacerbates loneliness and contributes to addiction.

CHAPTER – 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTON

This chapter explains various methodologies that are being used in gathering data and analysis, which are relevant to the research. The methodologies include areas such as research design, sampling, objectives, types of data, tools of data collection

3.2. TITLE OF THE STUDY

Influence of Instagram on the lifestyles of undergraduate students

3.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

General objective

- To study the influence of Instagram on the lifestyles of undergraduate students

Specific objectives

- To understand the purpose of using Instagram, amount of time spent, type of content
- To study the effects of using Instagram among undergraduate students.
- To evaluate how students' expectations for their own social lives are influenced by Instagram's representation of idealised relationships and lifestyles.

3.4. TYPE OF THE STUDY

Quantitative research method is used in this study to systematically measure and analyze the influence of Instagram on the lifestyle of undergraduate students, allowing for the collection of numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to identify patterns, relationship, and generalizable conclusion. This approach provides objective, precise, and replicable results that enhance the reliability and validity of the findings.

3.5. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is basically quantitative in nature using descriptive research design. A descriptive quantitative research design is a methodology that aims to systematically collect and analyze numerical data to provide an accurate representation of a particular phenomenon or population. This approach involves defining a clear research objective, selecting appropriate sampling techniques, and using reliable tools to collect quantitative data. The collected data is then analyzed using software's like Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The findings are presented through tables, charts, graphs, or written descriptions, along with a discussion of any limitations of the study. Descriptive quantitative research designs are commonly used in fields like sociology, psychology, education, marketing, and public health to describe and summarize data from large samples or populations, and to gain insights into the characteristics, behaviors, or attitudes of specific groups.

3.6. SAMPLING

Stratified random sampling was used to collect data from the respondents. This is a probability sampling method that was chosen based on the characteristics of the population and the objectives of the study. Stratified random sampling is used when the researcher wants to ensure representation of diverse subgroups within the population.

3.7. UNIVERSE

The universe of the present study is the college students of Kollam district

3.8. SOURCES OF DATA

Primary Data

A self-administered questionnaire created by the researcher was used to gather primary data.

Secondary Data

Secondary data has been gathered by the researcher from publications, websites, and journal articles.

3.9. TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher utilized the questionnaire and administered it in the form of Google Forms to collect primary data from the respondents. This digital approach facilitated streamlined data collection and organization for subsequent analysis. Google Forms provided a convenient and efficient platform for data collection, allowing the respondents to easily fill out the questionnaire online.

3.10. TOOLS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used the Statistical application for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a statistical analysis software application. The acquired data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise and describe the data's primary attributes. In contrast, inferential statistics were used to draw conclusions, predict outcomes, and test hypotheses about the population based on sample data.

3.11. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study focusses on the influence of Instagram on the lifestyles of undergraduate students, with equal respondents of both male and female. There were some limitations in this study. The genuineness of the responses could not be accurately analysed, as the participants, despite using Instagram daily, may not have provided completely accurate data. This reliance on self-reported information raises concerns about the validity of the findings. Additionally, the relatively small sample size restricts the ability to draw broader conclusions about how Instagram affects the lifestyles of undergraduate students as a whole.

CHAPTER – 4

DATA INTERPREATION & ANALYSIS

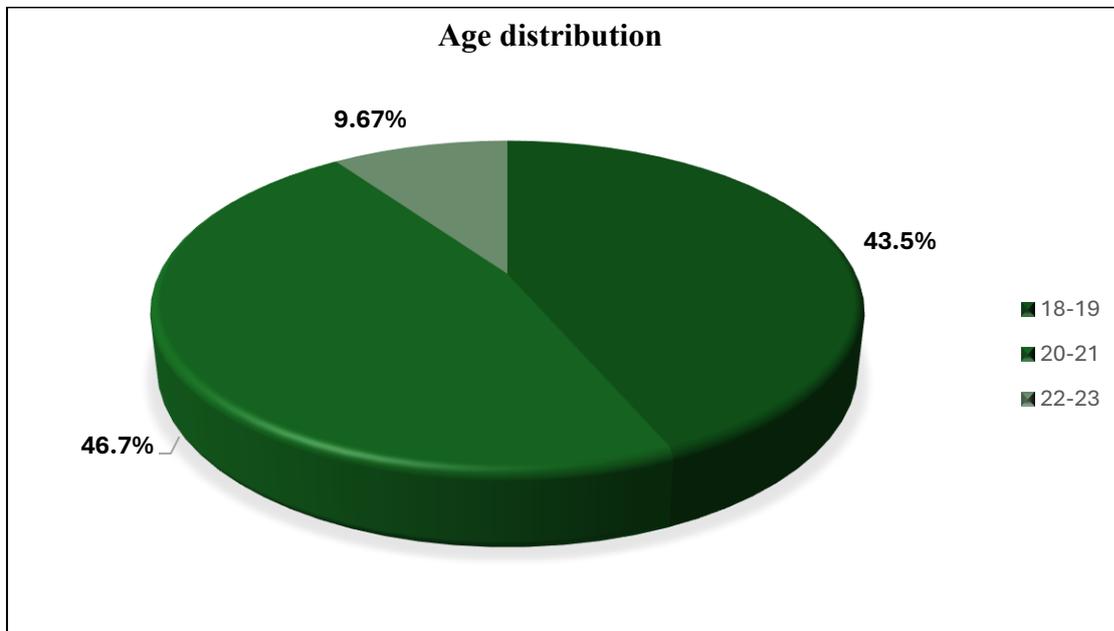
4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses data analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and Microsoft Excel. The study aims to investigate the impact of Instagram on the daily lives, preferences, and choices of undergraduate students. The data for this study was collected through a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to undergraduate students. The questionnaire was designed to understand the role of Instagram in shaping their lifestyle, including their entertainment preferences, social interactions, and consumer behaviour. The analysis of the data provides valuable insights into the ways in which Instagram influences the lifestyle of undergraduate students.

4.2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The demographic variables considered for the study are age and gender.

Figure 1. Age of the Respondents

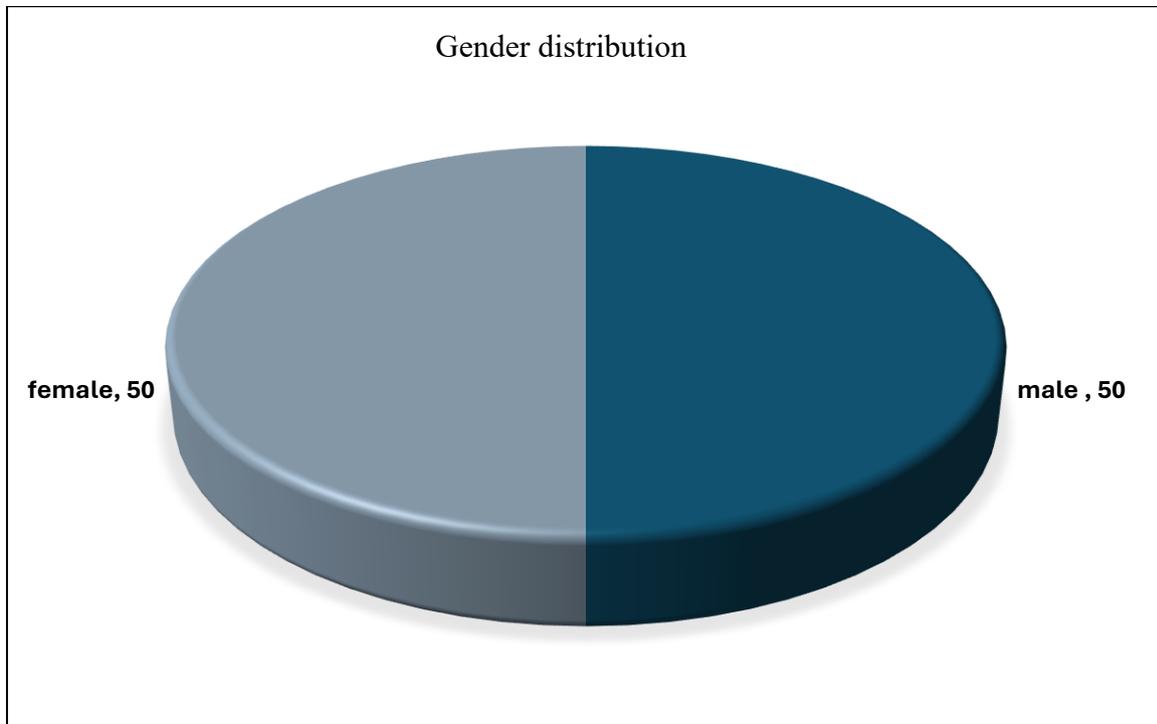


Source: Primary Data

The data illustrates the age distribution of the sampled population in the study. Among the total population the majority comprising about 46.7%, fall within the 20-21 age range, indicating

that this age group is the largest respondent in this study. This category stands out as the most prevalent, underscoring the substantial presence of young adults who are likely in the midst of their undergraduate studies and are actively engaged with Instagram. The next significant age group is 18-19, comprising 43.5% of the respondents. This group, representing younger undergraduates, also forms a large segment of the population, suggesting that Instagram usage and its influence on lifestyle choices are particularly relevant among those who are just beginning their university experience. A smaller portion of the respondents, 9.67% fall within the 22-23 age group. This indicates that while still present, older undergraduate constitute a less prominent segment of the population, possibly reflecting different engagement levels with Instagram or varying lifestyle influences compared to their younger peers. In summary, the data depicts a predominantly youthful age distribution, with the majority of respondents in their late teens and early twenties. Age emerges as a pivotal variable in understanding the influence of Instagram on lifestyle, with younger undergraduates forming the core group most engaged with the platform. This distribution suggests that Instagram's impact on lifestyle choices may be more pronounced among these younger students, who are at critical stages of personal development and social engagement.

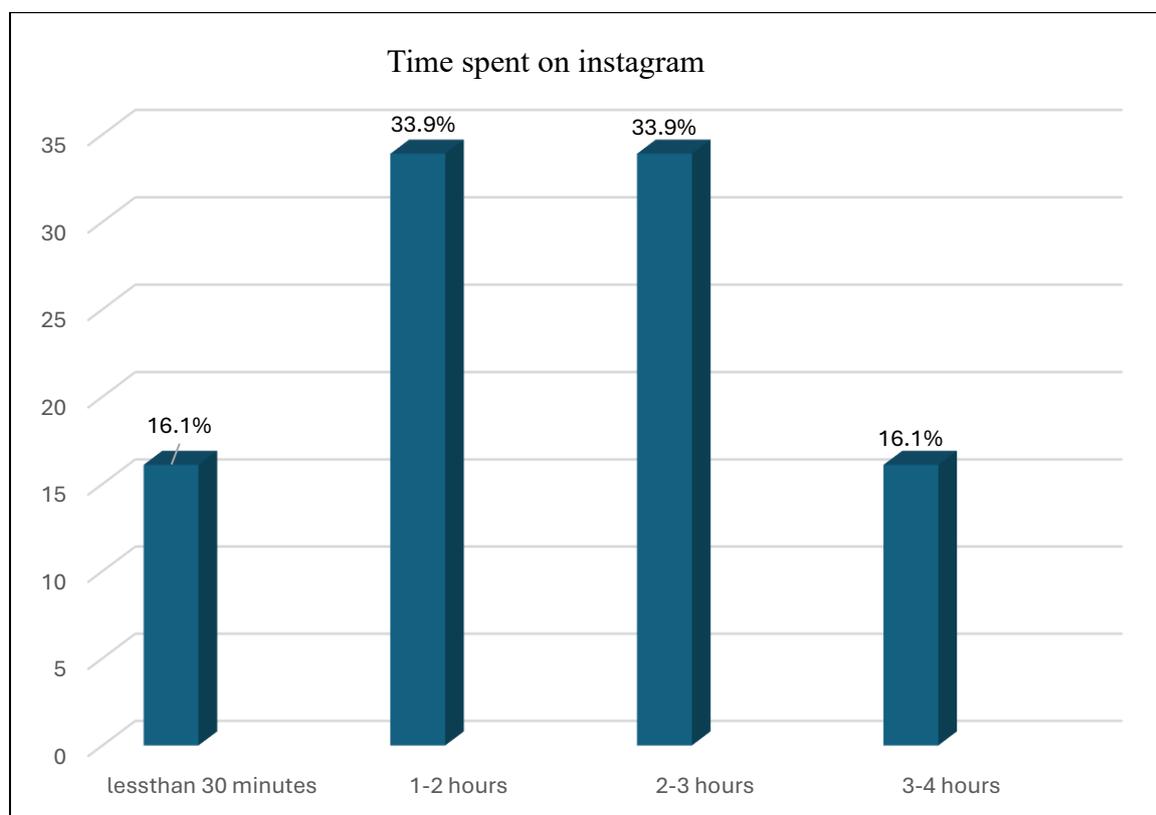
Figure 2. Gender of the Respondents



Source: Primary Data

The data illustrates gender distribution of the sampled population in the study. Among the total population, a perfectly equal proportion 50%, were female, and the remaining 50% were male. This indicates a balanced and representative sample, with no gender bias or majority. This study shows an equal distribution suggesting a representative sample of both female and male perspective.

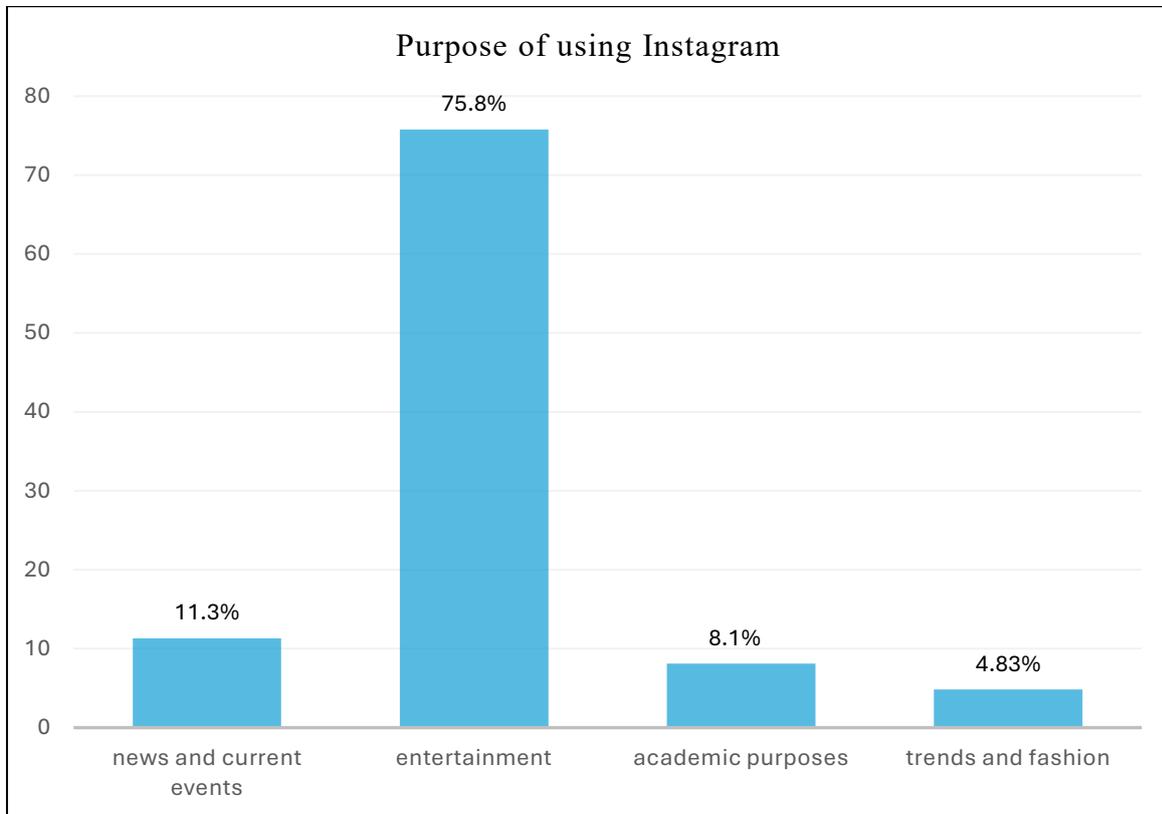
Figure 3. Time Spent on Instagram among Respondents



Source: Primary Data

Figure 3 provides valuable insights into the influence of Instagram on the lifestyle of undergraduate students, specifically in terms of time spent on the platform. Notably, the majority of students, 33.9%, spend 1-2 hours on Instagram, indicating a substantial influence on their daily routine and activities. This suggests that Instagram plays a significant role in shaping their leisure time, social interactions and personal priorities. A similar proportion, 33.9% spend 2-3 hours on Instagram, further emphasizing the platforms impact on their lifestyle. Conversely, a smaller proportion, 16.1%, spend less than 30 minutes on Instagram, indicating a limited influence on their daily routine. Additionally, 16.1% spend 3-4 hours on Instagram, suggesting an intense engagement with the platform, potentially leading to a more pronounced impact on their lifestyle choices and preferences. These findings highlight a correlation between time spent on Instagram and its influence on undergraduate students' lifestyle, with increased usage potentially leading to a more significant impact on their daily routines, social interactions and priorities.

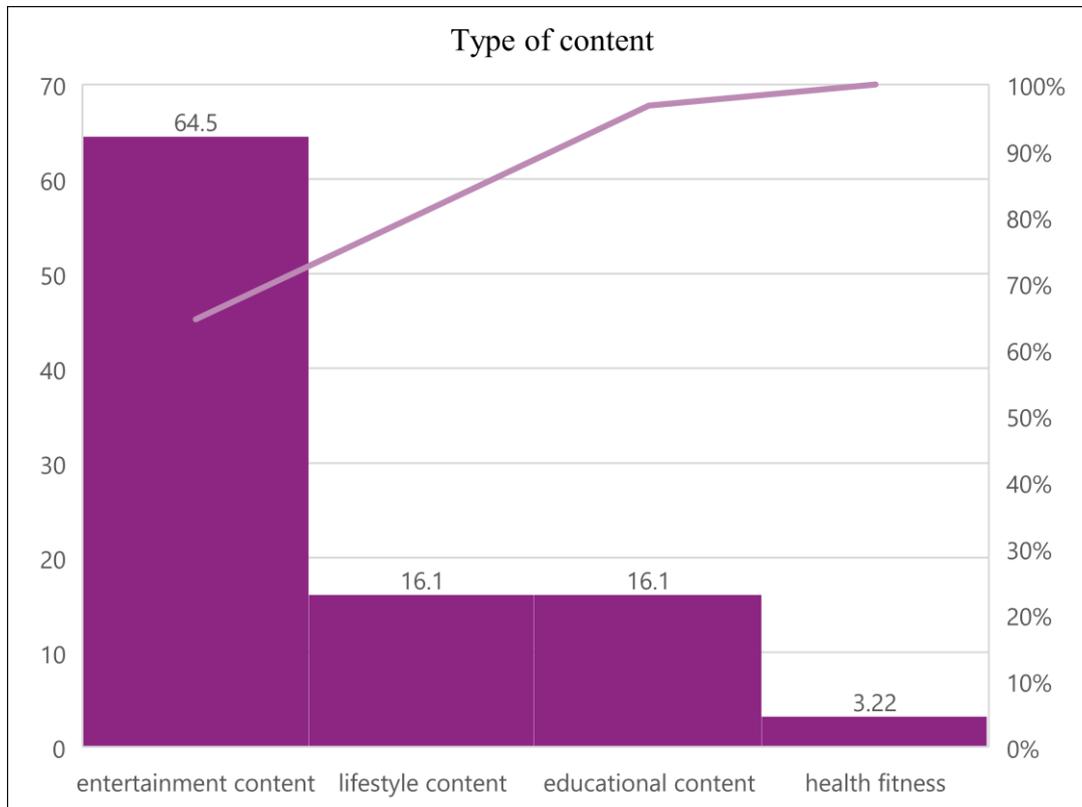
Figure 4. Purpose of using Instagram among respondents



Source: Primary Data

The data presented in Figure 4 offers valuable insights into the purposes for using Instagram among undergraduate students. The most substantial purpose is entertainment, with 75.8% of students using the platform for leisure and enjoyment. This suggests that Instagram plays a significant role in shaping their recreational activities and hobbies. Conversely, a smaller proportion, 11.3% use Instagram to stay informed about news and current events, indicating a limited but notable influence on their knowledge and awareness. Additionally, 8.1% of students utilize Instagram for academic purposes, highlighting the platform's emerging role in supporting educational endeavors. Furthermore, 4.83% of students use Instagram to stay updated on trends fashion, indicating a minor but notable influence on their style and aesthetic preferences. In summary the data underscores a diverse array of purposes for using Instagram among undergraduate students, with entertainment being the most prominent, followed by news and current events, academic purposes, and trends and fashion. These findings highlight the significance of Instagram in the lives of undergraduate students and its influence on their choices and preferences.

Figure 5. Type of content engaged by respondents

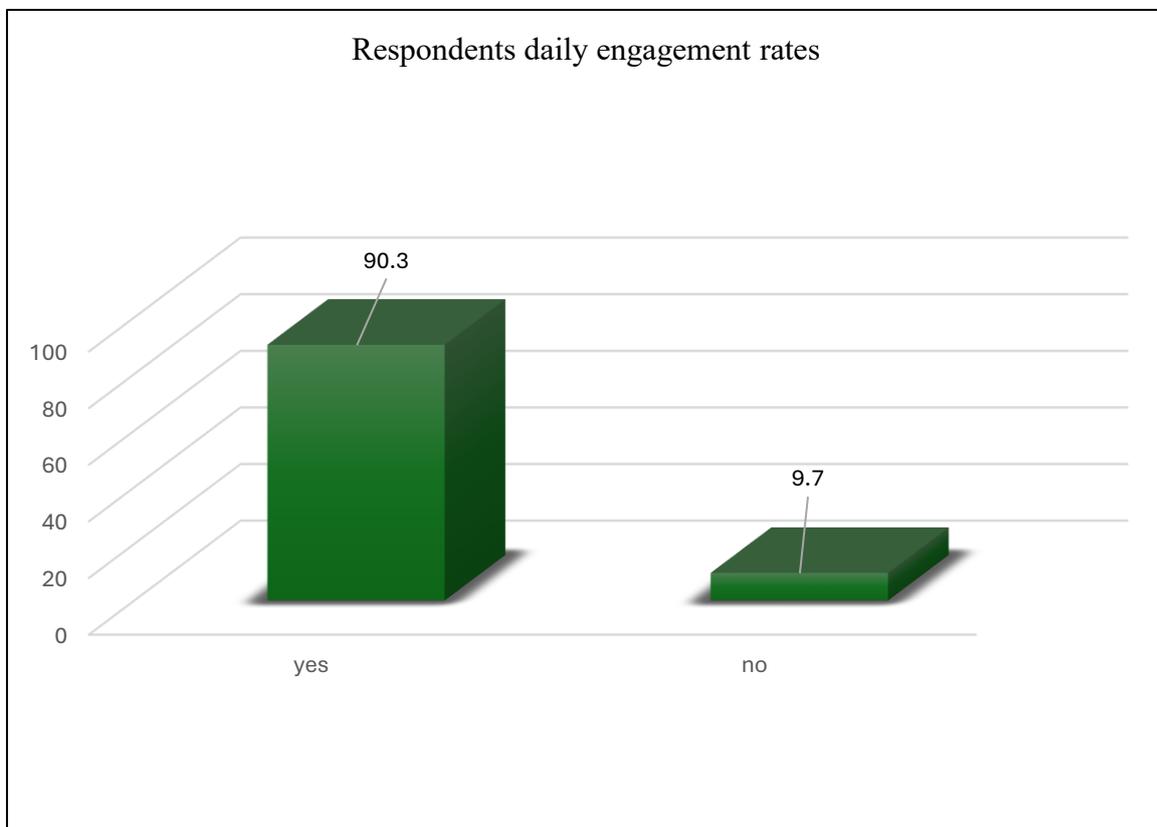


Source: Primary Data

The data highlights the type of content undergraduate students primarily engage with on Instagram, revealing significant insights into their preferences and lifestyle influences. A substantial majority 64.5% of respondents predominantly engage with entertainment content. This category stands out as the most prevalent underscoring the strong appeal of entertainment among students. It suggests that Instagram serves primarily as a source of leisure and amusement for large portion of the student population. In contrast, both lifestyle content and educational content each attract 16.1% respondents. This equal distribution indicates that while lifestyle content does influence a segment of students, its impact is on par with educational content. These findings suggest that Instagram is also utilized as a tool for both personal development and academic enrichment, although to a lesser extent than for entertainment. Lastly only 3.22% of respondents engage mostly with health and fitness content focused on well-being and physical health has a relatively minor presence in the daily lives of students, potentially indicating either a lower prioritization of fitness-related content or a preference for accessing such information through other channels. In summary the data reveals a

predominantly entertainment-focused engagement on Instagram among undergraduate students with a notable but smaller interest in lifestyle and educational content. Health and fitness content while present plays a minor role in their Instagram usage. These patterns provide valuable insights into how Instagram influences the lifestyle and priorities of undergraduate students emphasizing the platforms role as a key source of entertainment while also serving as a secondary tool for lifestyle and educational engagement.

Figure 6. Frequency of Instagram use among respondents

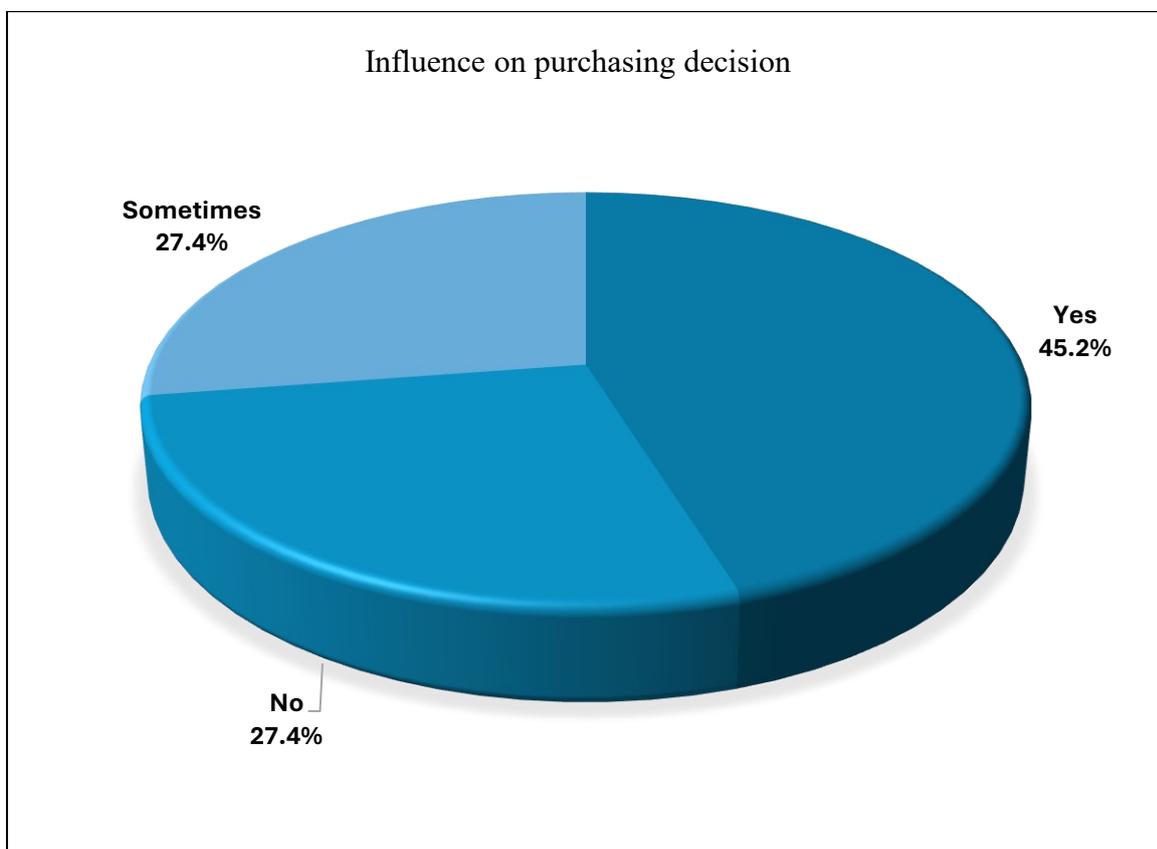


Source: Primary Data

The data analysis reveals that a significant majority of respondents, 90.3% report using Instagram daily. This highlights the platform's pervasive influence on the lifestyle of undergraduate students, indicating that Instagram plays a central role in their daily routines and social interactions. In contrast, a smaller yet noteworthy segment, 9.7% of respondents, indicated that they do not use Instagram daily. This suggests that while Instagram is a dominant force in the lives of most undergraduates, there is a subset that either chooses not to engage

with the platform frequently or is less influenced by it. The findings suggest that the vast majority of undergraduate students are heavily engaged with Instagram on a daily basis, which could imply a strong influence of the platform on their lifestyle choices and behaviors. However, the presence of a smaller group that is less engaged suggests varying levels of influence, with some students possibly prioritizing other platforms or activities.

Figure 7. Influence of purchasing decision of the respondents

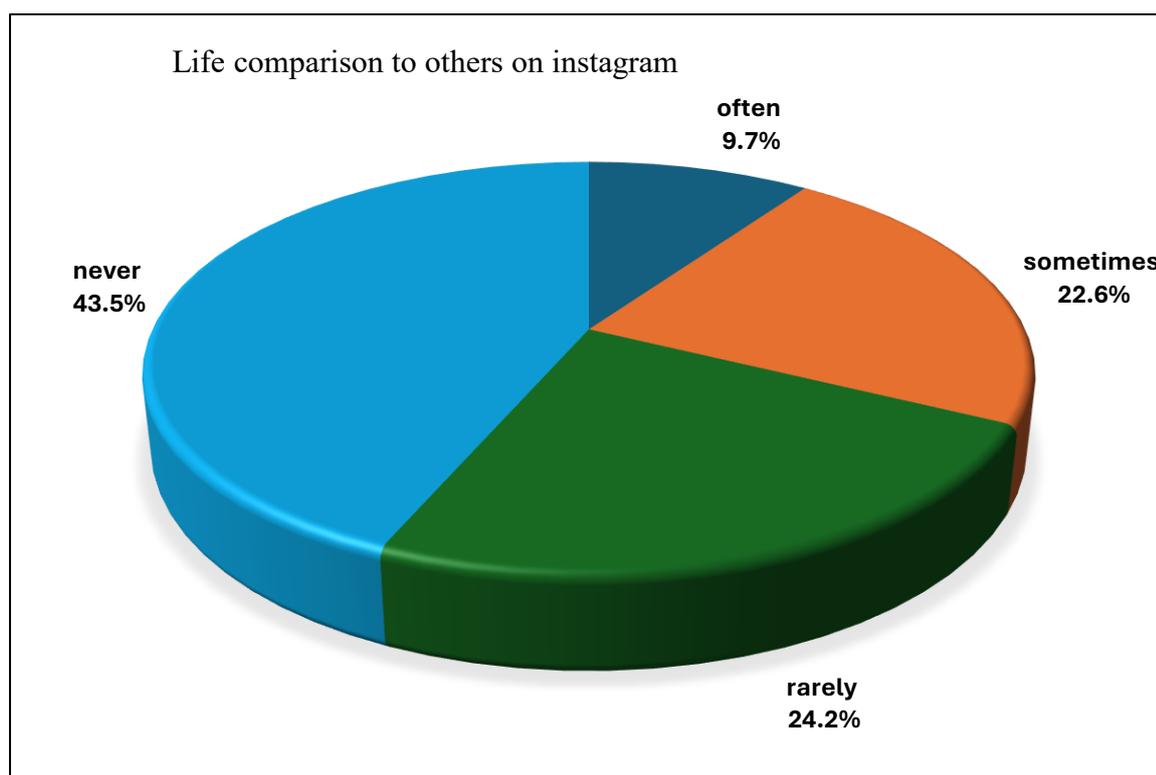


Source: Primary Data

Figure 7 offers valuable insights into how Instagram affects purchasing decisions among the surveyed group of undergraduate students. The data reveals that 27.4% of respondents believe Instagram consistently influences their purchasing decisions. This indicates that over a quarter of the students feel that the platform has a direct and consistent impact on what they choose to buy, likely due to exposure to advertisement and product promotions on Instagram. In contrast, another 27.4% of respondents reported that Instagram does not influence their purchasing decisions at all. This suggests that a significant portion of students are either immune to the

marketing strategies deployed on the platform or perhaps consciously choose not to let it affect their buying behavior. The largest group, comprising 45.2% of respondents indicated that Instagram sometimes influences their purchasing decisions. This suggest that while these students do not always rely on Instagram when making purchases, the platform does play a role in certain context, perhaps depending on the type of product, the effectiveness of the promotion, or their current needs and preferences. In summary, the data highlights a varied landscape of influence that Instagram exerts on the purchasing decisions of undergraduate students. While a substantial portion of students acknowledges a consistent influence, an equally large group remains unaffected by it. However, the largest group falls in between showing that Instagram’s impact is situational, influenced by specific factors and contexts. These findings underscore the nuanced role that Instagram plays in shaping consumer behavior among young adults.

Figure 8. Respondents compare life to others on Instagram

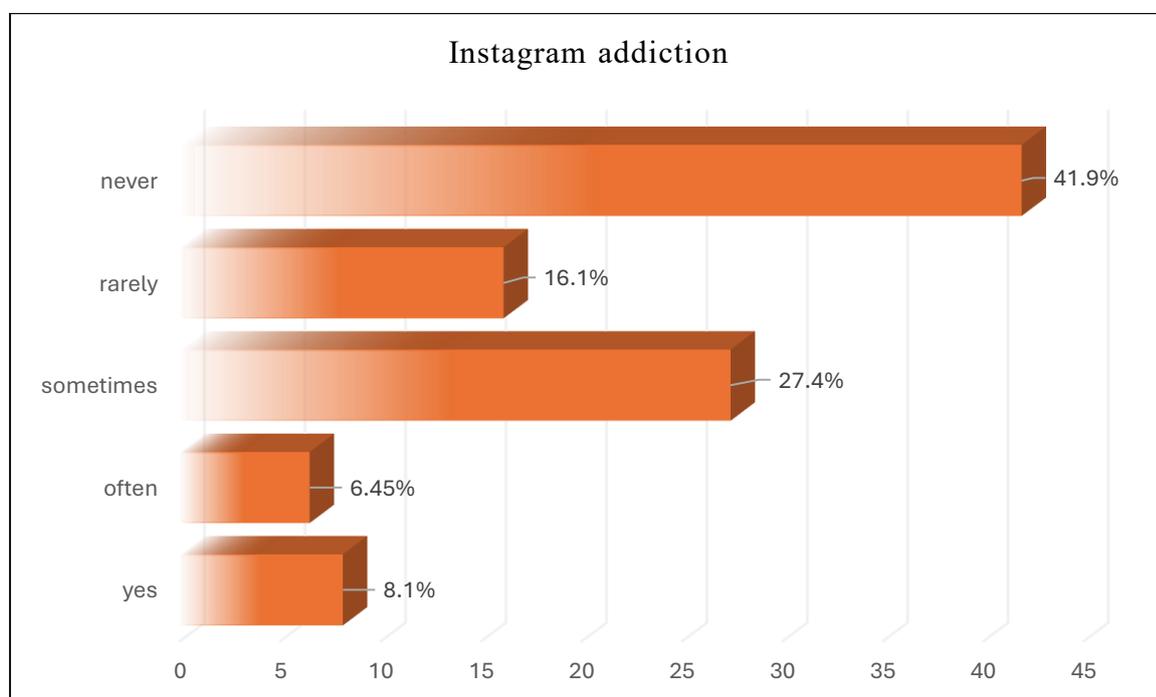


Source: Primary Data

Figure 8 sheds light on the extent to which undergraduate students compare their lives to others on Instagram, offering insights into the platform’s impact on their self-perception and social comparisons. The data indicates that a significant portion of students, 43.5% never engage in

such comparisons, suggesting that nearly half of the population maintains healthy detachment from the often idealized portrayals of life on social media. Conversely, 24.2% of students rarely compare their lives to others, which points to occasional moments of comparison that do not dominate their Instagram experience. However, a considerable, 22.6% of students sometimes find themselves comparing their lives to others on the platform reflecting a more frequent engagement in this behaviour, which could potentially influence their self-esteem and satisfaction with their own lives. A smaller yet notable group, 9.7%, often compares their lives to others on Instagram, indicating a more persistent impact of social media comparisons on their daily lives and potentially contributing to feelings of inadequacy or envy. Overall, these findings highlight the varied experiences of undergraduate students in relation to social comparison on Instagram. While a majority either never or rarely engage in these comparisons, a significant minority does so with greater frequency, suggesting that for some, Instagram can be a source of social comparison that influence their perception of their own lives relative to others.

Figure 9. Instagram addiction among respondents

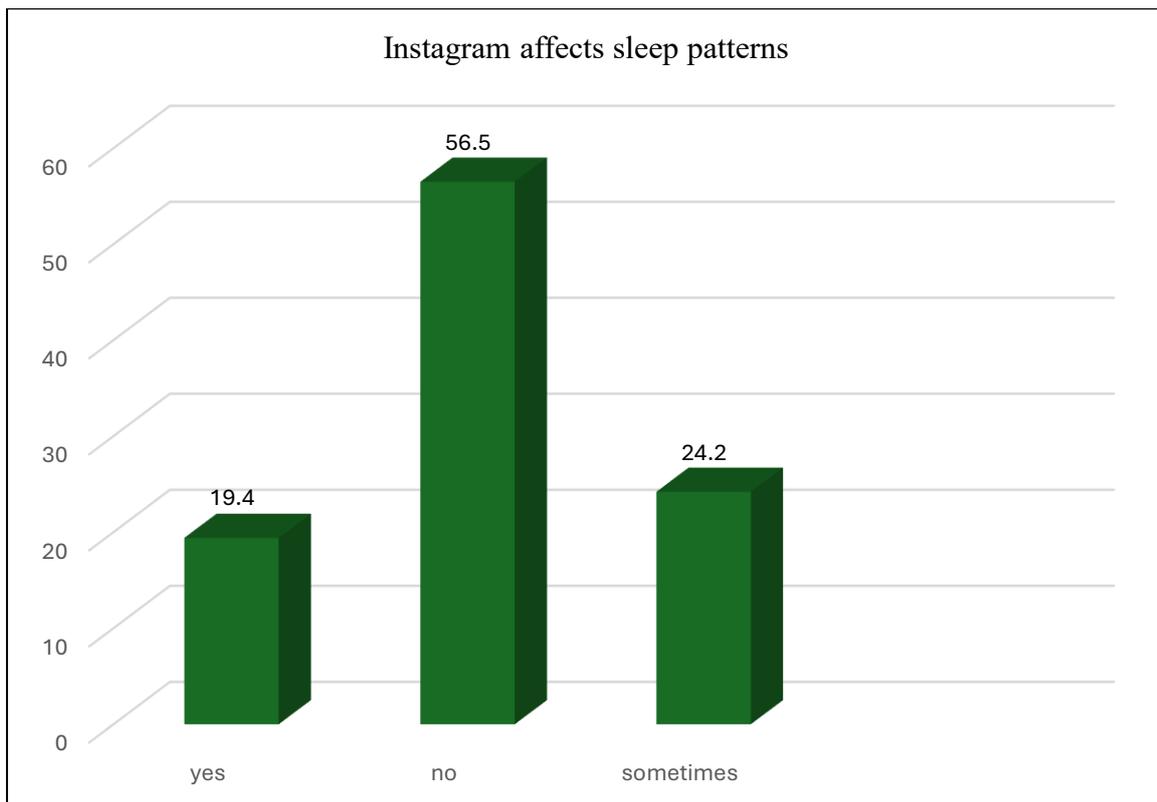


Source: Primary Data

Figure 9 provides critical insights into the self-reported feelings of addiction to Instagram among undergraduate students. The most significant portion of the population, 41.9% reported

that they never feel addicted to Instagram, indicating a substantial group of students who maintain control over their usage. Conversely, a smaller segment, 8.1% acknowledged feeling addicted, suggested that a minority experiences significant difficulty in moderating their Instagram use. Students who often feel addicted constitute 6.45% of the group, while a larger percentage 27.4% sometimes struggle with these feelings, reflecting occasional but notable challenge in managing their Instagram habits. Additionally, 16.1% of students rarely feel addicted, indicating they might experience mild dependency but generally do not perceive it as a significant issue. Collectively, these findings highlight diverse range of experience with Instagram addiction among the student population, with the majority not perceiving themselves as addicted, yet a considerable portion experiencing varying degrees of dependency.

Figure 10. Instagram usage affects respondents sleep patterns

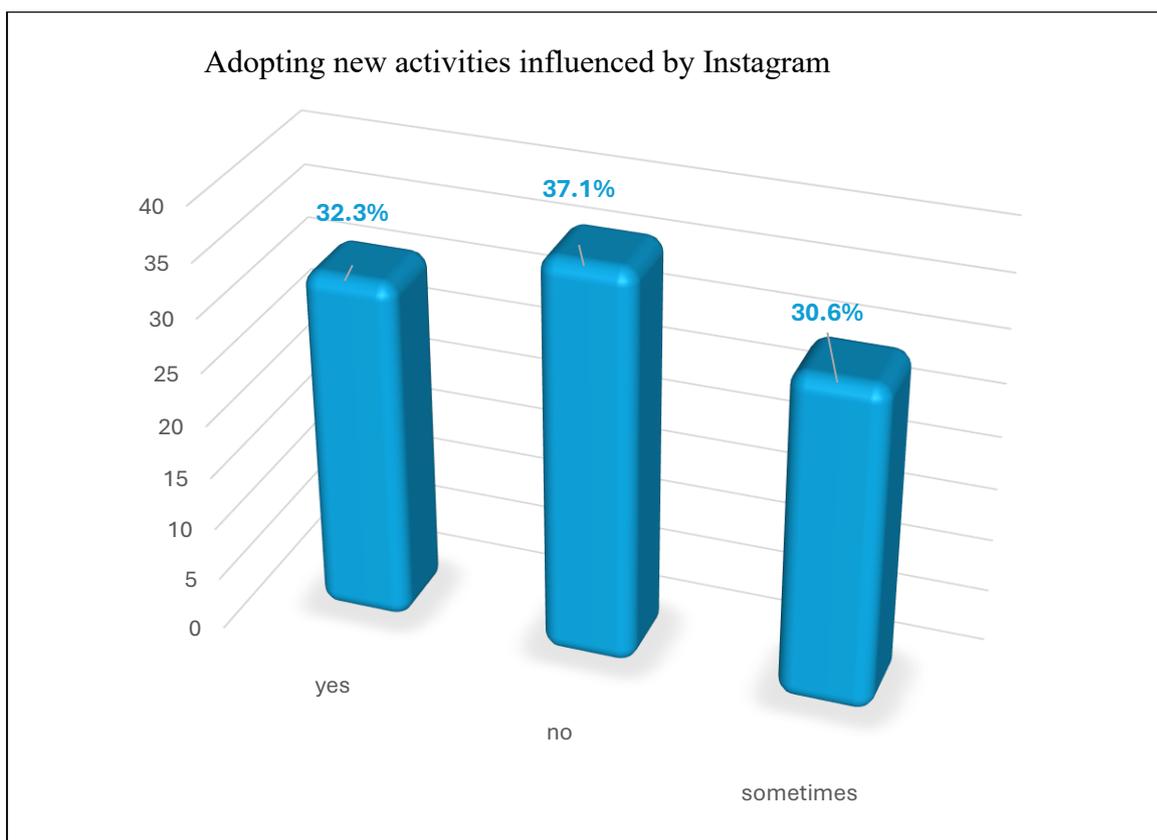


Source: Primary Data

The data analysis suggests that a significant majority of respondents, comprising 56.5% of the surveyed group, reported that their sleep patterns are not affected by Instagram usage. This observation underscores the perception among these individuals that their time spent on the

platform does not interfere with their ability to maintain regular sleep routines. In contrast, a noteworthy segment of respondents, constituting 19.4% of the total, indicated that Instagram usage does impact their sleep patterns. This may suggest that this subset of students' experiences disturbances or challenges in maintaining healthy sleep due to their engagement with the platform. Furthermore, approximately 24.2% of respondents adopted a middle ground, indicating that Instagram sometimes affects their sleep patterns. This highlights a degree of variability in its impact, suggesting that the influence of Instagram on sleep may fluctuate depending on various factors.

Figure 11. Effectiveness of Instagram in inspiring respondents to try new activities or hobbies

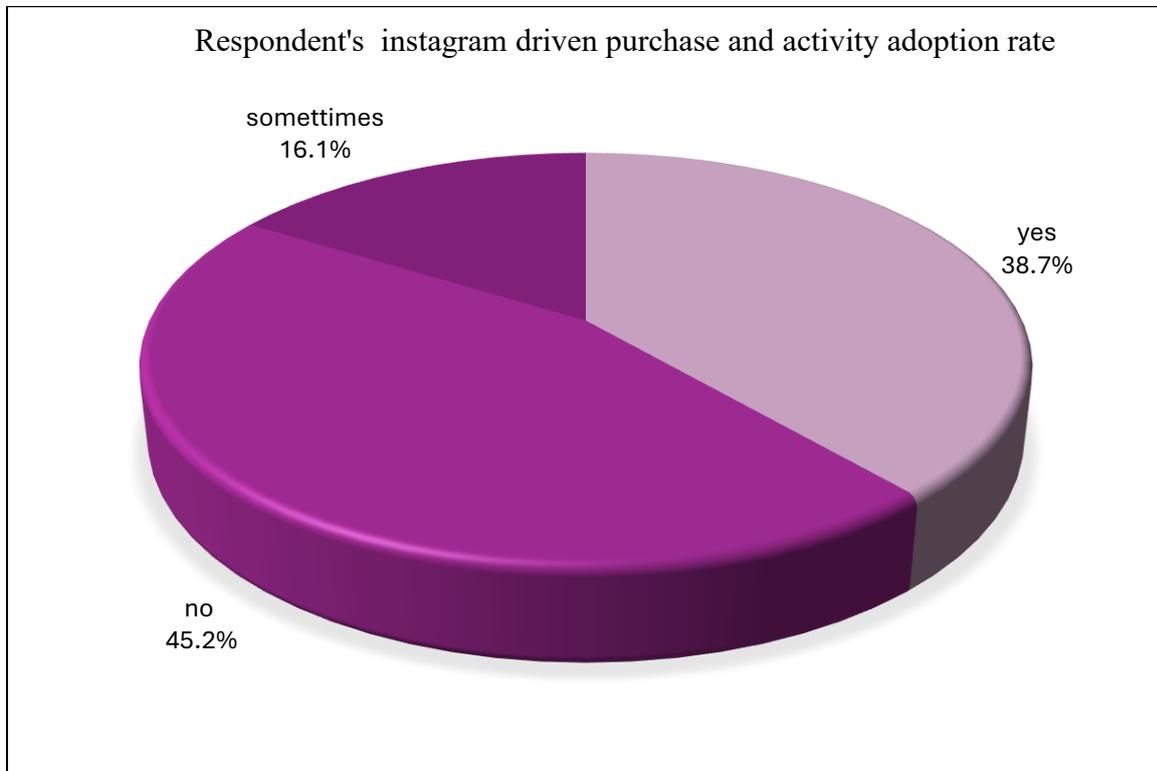


Source: Primary Data

Figure 11 provides valuable insights into how Instagram influences undergraduate students' decisions to engage in new activities or hobbies, illustrating the platform's role in shaping lifestyle choices. The data shows that a notable portion of the group, 32.3% has indeed tried a

new activity or hobby because they encountered it on Instagram. This suggest that for nearly one third of the students, Instagram serves as a significant source of inspiration, motivating them to explore new interests and potentially enrich their lives with new experiences. On the other hand, 37.1% of students reported that they have never tried a new activity or hobby based on what they saw on Instagram. This group likely perceives Instagram as a space for observation rather than action, where content consumption does not translate into personal engagement or lifestyle changes. These students may view Instagram content with a degree of detachment, appreciating it without feeling compelled to integrate it into their daily lives. Meanwhile, 30.6% of students indicated that they sometimes try new activities or hobbies they discover on Instagram. This group demonstrate a selective engagement, where Instagram occasionally sparks their interest in new pursuits, but not consistently. This intermittent influence suggests that Instagram is one of several factors that contribute to their decisions to take up new activities or hobbies, alongside other influences such as personal interests or current trends. In summary these findings underscore the varied impact of Instagram on the lifestyle of undergraduate students. While a significant proportion is actively inspired by the platform to try new things, a similar number remains unaffected, and a substantial group engages selectively. This highlights the diverse ways in which social media can influence behaviour, with Instagram acting as both a catalyst for new experiences and as a passive backdrop to everyday life, depending on the individual. The data suggest that while Instagram has the power to shape lifestyle choices for some, it is not universally persuasive, reflecting the complex and individualized nature of social media influence within this demographic.

Figure 12. Effectiveness of Instagram in shaping respondents' consumption and leisure habits

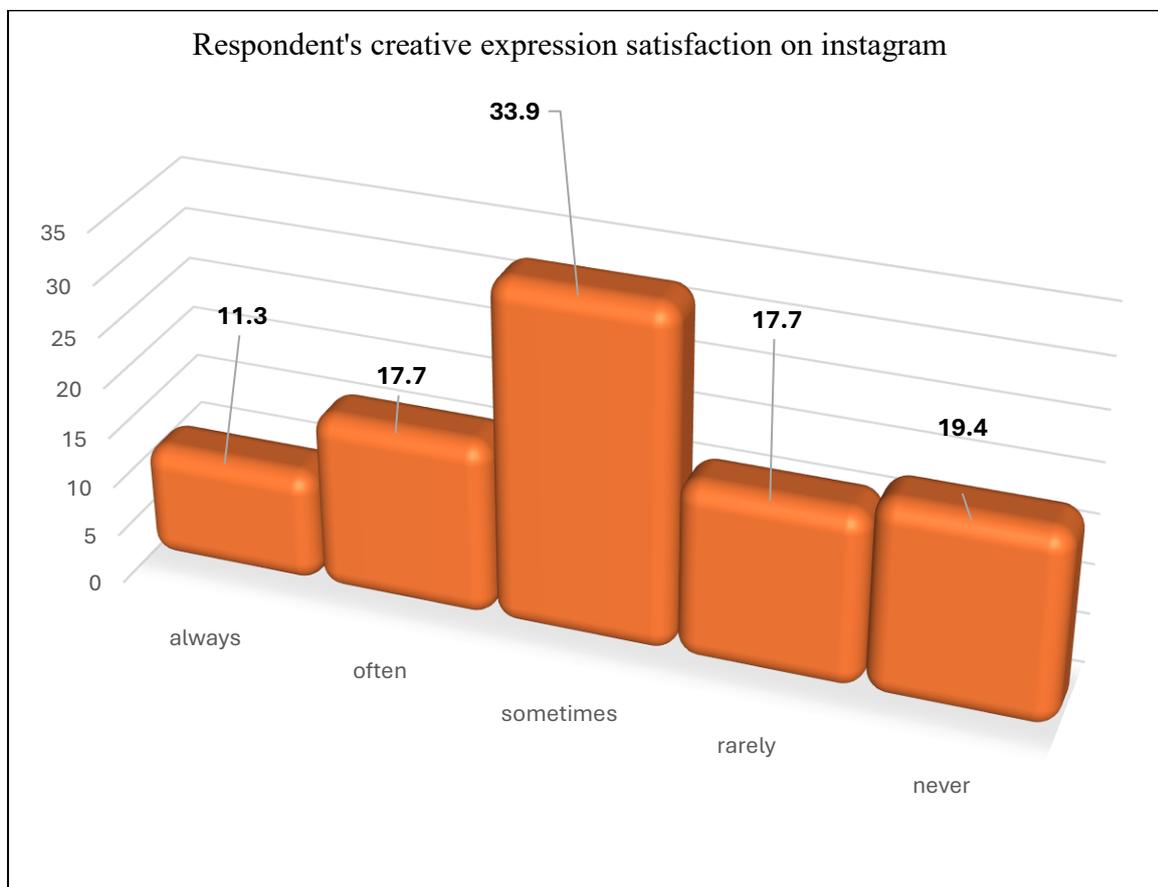


Source: Primary Data

Figure 12 presents significant insights into the impact of Instagram ads on the purchasing decisions of undergraduate students. Among the total population, 45.2% reported that they have not purchased a product or service because of an Instagram ad, indicating that nearly half of the students remain resistant to the persuasive power of advertisement on this platform. These individuals may either not find Instagram ads compelling enough or perhaps prioritize other sources of information when making purchasing decisions. In contrast, 38.7% of students indicated that they have purchased a product or service as a result of an Instagram ad. This substantial proportion of the group highlights Instagram's effectiveness as a marketing tool, showing that for a significant number of students, the platforms advertisements are influential in driving consumer behavior. This group likely finds value in the targeted ads they encounter, which resonate with their interests and needs, ultimately leading to a purchase. Additionally, 16.1% of the students reported that they sometimes make purchases influenced by Instagram ads. This group represents a middle ground, where Instagram ads play a variable role in their purchasing decisions. They may be selective, choosing to act on ads that particularly appeal existing desires or needs, while ignoring others. In summary, the data reveals a diverse response

to Instagram advertising among undergraduate students. While a significant portion remains unaffected by these ads, a considerable group is directly influenced, resulting in purchases. Another segment shows occasionally susceptibility to these ads, highlighting the mixed effectiveness of Instagram as a platform for driving consumer behavior. These findings suggest that while Instagram ads are powerful for some, their influence is not universal, reflecting the varied nature of consumer engagement with social media advertising within this demographic.

Figure 13. Respondents level of creative self-expression on Instagram

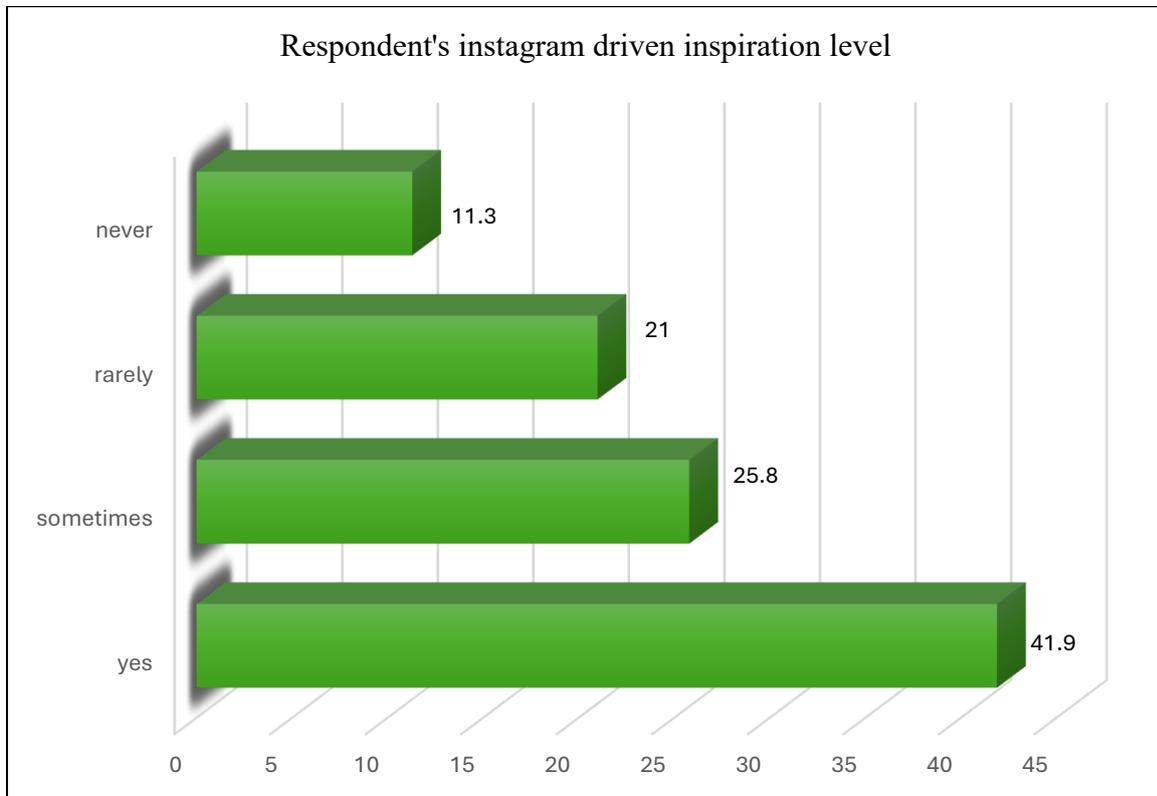


Source: Primary Data

Figure 13 presents key insights into how students use Instagram as a platform for self-expression. Among the total population, 33.9% of students reported that they sometimes use Instagram to express themselves, indicating that for a significant portion of the group, the platform serves as an occasional outlet for sharing their thoughts, creativity and personal experiences. These students might use Instagram intermittently to showcase aspects of their

lives or to engage with others through creative content. A smaller but still 19.4%, reported that they never use Instagram for self-expression. This suggests that nearly one fifth of the students do not view Instagram as a medium for personal or creative expression, perhaps preferring other platforms or forms of communication for such activities. On the other end of the spectrum, 17.7% of students often use Instagram to express themselves, reflecting a more consistent engagement with the platform as a space for creative and personal expression. Additionally, another 17.7% of students reported rarely using Instagram for self-expression, indicating that while they do engage in such activities, it is infrequent and not a primary use of the platform for them. Finally, 11.3% of students always use Instagram as a means of self-expression, suggesting that for this group, the platform is a vital part of their identity and how they communicate with the world. These individuals likely see Instagram as an integral tool for sharing their creativity and personal experiences consistently. In summary, the data reveals that undergraduate students have varied levels of engagement with Instagram as a tool for self-expression. While a substantial number use it intermittently, a smaller group relies on it heavily, and others engage only rarely or not at all.

Figure 14. Respondent's level of inspiration from Instagram to try new things

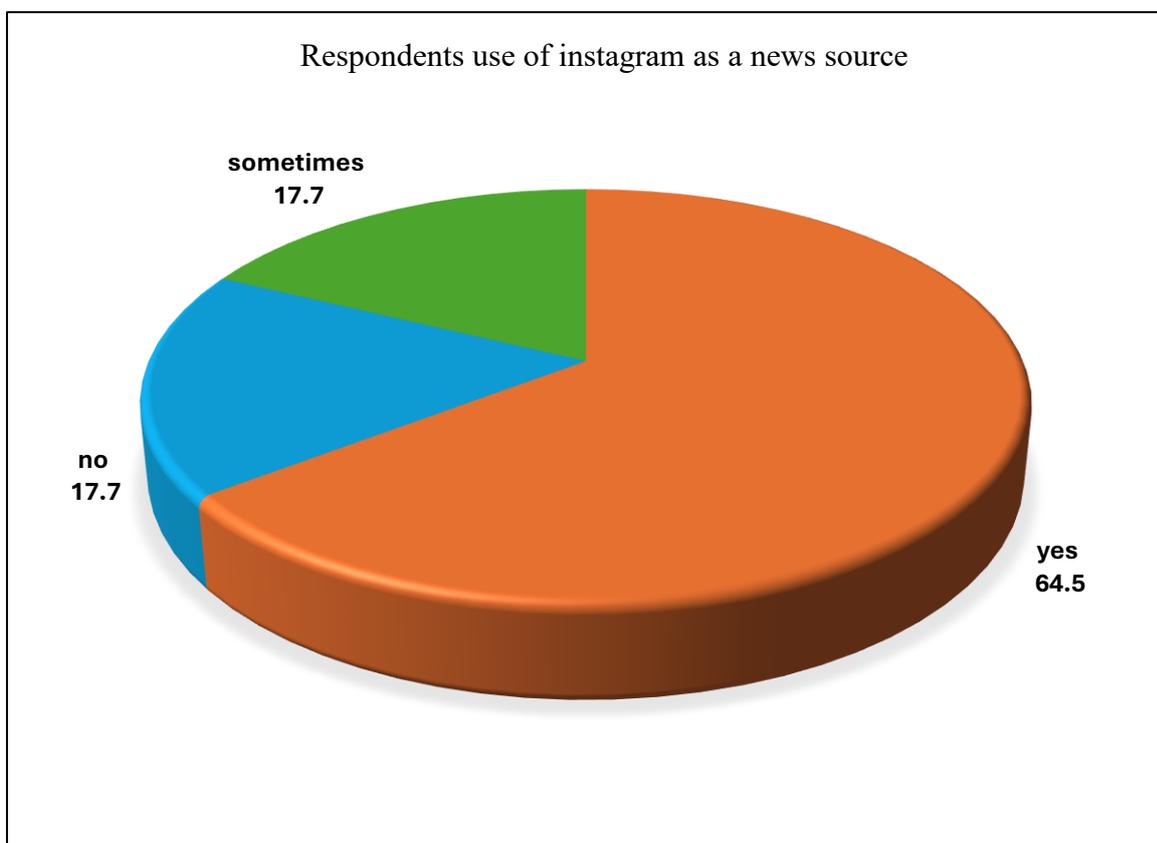


Source: Primary Data

Figure 14 provides valuable insights into the influence of Instagram on the inspiration levels of undergraduate students. The data reveals that 41.9% of the students reported that Instagram has indeed inspired them to try something new. This suggests that nearly half of the population is highly engaged with the content they encounter on Instagram, finding it motivating enough to prompt them to take action, whether it be a new activity, hobby or experience. This highlights Instagram's role as a platform not just for social interaction, but also as a source of inspiration that drives behavior and lifestyle changes among students. Additionally, 25.8% of the students indicated that Instagram sometimes inspires them to try new things. This group reflects a moderate influence where certain content resonates with them, depending on their interests or current trends. While not consistently inspired, these students still experience moments where Instagram content sparks their curiosity or desire to explore new opportunities. 21% of students reported that they rarely find inspiration from Instagram, while 11.3% stated that they have never been inspired by the platform. This suggests that for a notable portion of the population, Instagram does not serve as a significant source of motivation or creativity. These students might use the platform primarily for social or entertainment purposes, with little to no impact on their

personal pursuits or lifestyle changes. In conclusion, the data illustrates the varied degrees to which Instagram influences undergraduate students in trying new things. While a substantial portion is inspired frequently, others find only occasional or no motivation from the platform. These findings underscore the diverse ways in which Instagram content impacts the lifestyle choices and behavior of students.

Figure 15. Respondents' reliance on Instagram for staying informed about current events

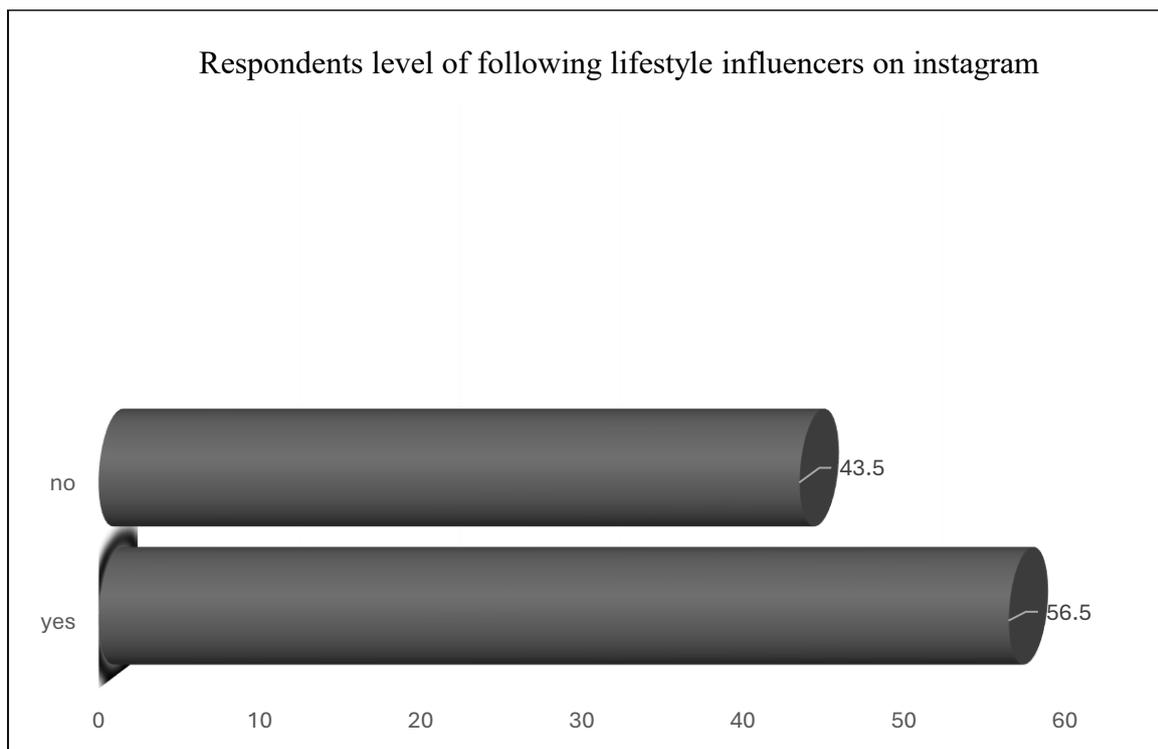


Source: Primary Data

Figure 15 provides important insights into how undergraduate students use Instagram to stay informed about current events and news. The data reveals that a significant majority, 64.5% of students, use Instagram as a primary source for staying updated on news and current events. This indicates that Instagram plays a crucial role in how these students consume information, positioning the platform as a vital tool for accessing timely and relevant updates in their daily lives. This reliance on Instagram suggests a shift in how young people engage with news, favoring social media platforms over traditional news source. Additionally, 17.7% of the

students reported that they sometimes use Instagram to stay informed. This group demonstrate a more selective engagement with news content on the platform, perhaps turning to Instagram for updates when it aligns with their interests or when significant events occur. Their use of Instagram for news may be situational, depending on the context or nature of the events. Conversely, 17.7% of the students do not use Instagram to stay informed about current events or news. In summary, the findings illustrate Instagram’s substantial role as a news source among undergraduate students, with the majority relying on the platforms to stay informed. However, a portion of the population remains selective or avoids using Instagram for news, highlighting varied preferences in news consumption habits within this group.

Figure 16. Respondents’ involvement with lifestyle influencers on Instagram

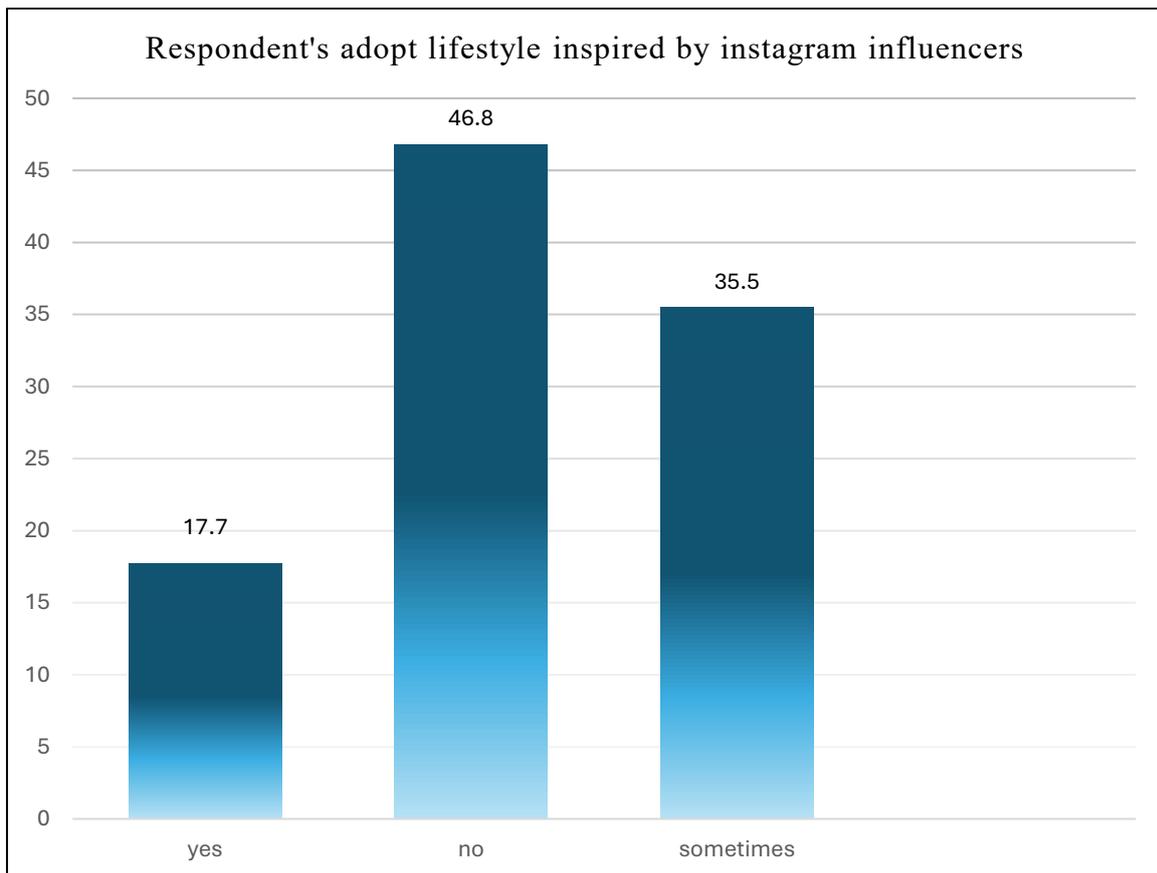


Source: Primary Data

The data represents an analysis of respondents’ engagement with lifestyle influencers on Instagram and their preferences regarding following such accounts. Among the 56.5% of respondents who follow lifestyle influencers, a significant portion of the undergraduate population shows a clear interest in content that potentially shapes their lifestyle choices and daily habits. This group likely engage with and is influenced by trends, products, and behaviors

promoted by these influencers. On the other hand, 43.5% of respondents indicated that they do not follow lifestyle influencers on Instagram. This suggests that a substantial segment of students either prefer to avoid influencer driven content or may not find it relevant to their personal lifestyle. The division in following habits reflects diverse attitudes among undergraduate students toward the influence of Instagram and its role in shaping their lifestyle choices. Overall, the data reveals that while a majority of undergraduates are influenced by lifestyle content on Instagram, a significant minority remains disengaged, highlighting the varied impact of social media on different segments of the student population.

Figure 17. Respondent's tendency to emulate influencer lifestyles on Instagram

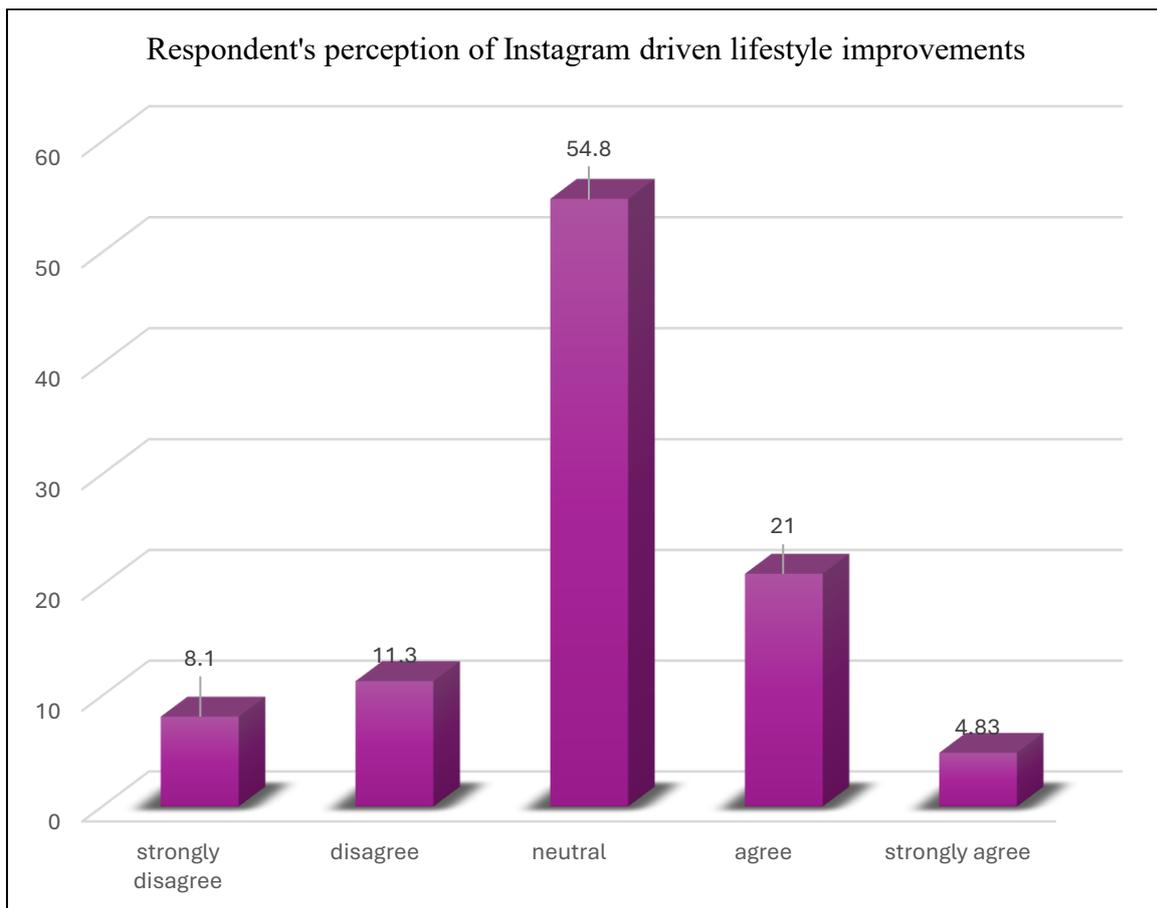


Source: Primary Data

The data reveals that an analysis of undergraduate students attempts to adopt a lifestyle inspired by Instagram influencers and their varying levels of engagement with such content. Among the respondents, 17.7% indicated that they actively try to adopt a lifestyle inspired by Instagram

influencers. This group of students is likely more receptive to the trends and behaviors promoted by influencers, integrating these influences into their daily lives. In contrast, 46.8% of respondents stated that they do not attempt to adopt a lifestyle inspired by Instagram influencers. This suggests that nearly half of the surveyed students either do not find influencer content relevant to their lifestyle choices or consciously choose not to let such content shape their personal habits. In conclusion the data reveals that while a significant minority of undergraduate students are consistently influenced by Instagram influencers in their lifestyle choices, a larger proportion either rejects or only occasionally adopts such influences. This variation underscores the diverse impact that Instagram influencers have on different segments of the student population.

Figure 18. Instagram's impact on lifestyle enhancement among respondents

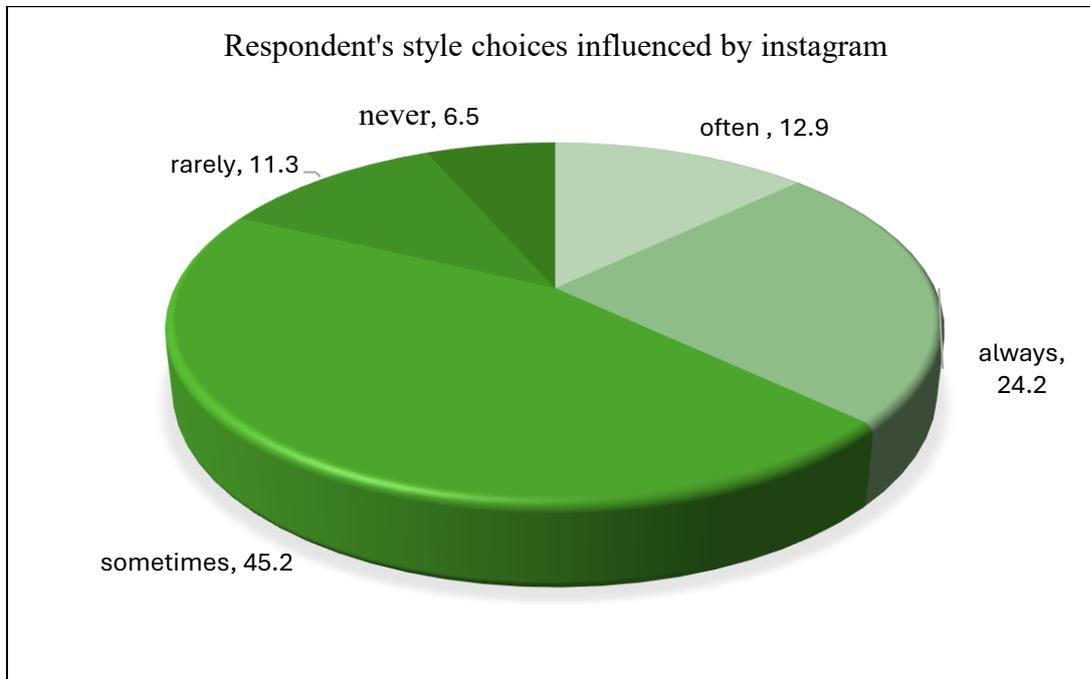


Source: Primary Data

Figure 18 provides significant insights into the perceptions of undergraduate students regarding Instagram's influence on improving their lifestyle. The data reveals a diverse range of opinions

within the surveyed group. The most prevalent response was neutral with 54.8% of respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing that Instagram helps improve their lifestyle. This suggests that over half of the students are undecided or indifferent about the platform's role in enhancing their quality of life. They may recognize some benefits but do not see Instagram as a major contributor to their overall lifestyle improvement. A smaller but notable group, 21% agreed that Instagram does help improve their lifestyle. This indicates that around one-fifth of the students believe the platform has a positive impact, likely due to exposure to new ideas, trends, health tips and motivational content that may influence their daily habits and choices. Conversely, 11.3% of respondents disagreed and 8.1% strongly disagreed suggesting that approximately one-fifth of the students do not see Instagram as beneficial to their lifestyle. These students might view the platform as a source of distraction, pressure, or unrealistic standards that do not contribute positively to their lives. On the other end of the spectrum, a smaller subset 4.83% strongly agreed that Instagram significantly improves their lifestyle. This group likely finds value in the content they engage with on Instagram. In summation, the data underscore a wide spectrum of perceptions regarding Instagram's role in improving lifestyle among undergraduate students. While, a majority remain neutral a significant portion recognizes its positive impact, whereas others view it less favorably. These findings highlight the varied experiences and perspectives students have with Instagram, reflecting its complex influence on their daily lives and lifestyle choices.

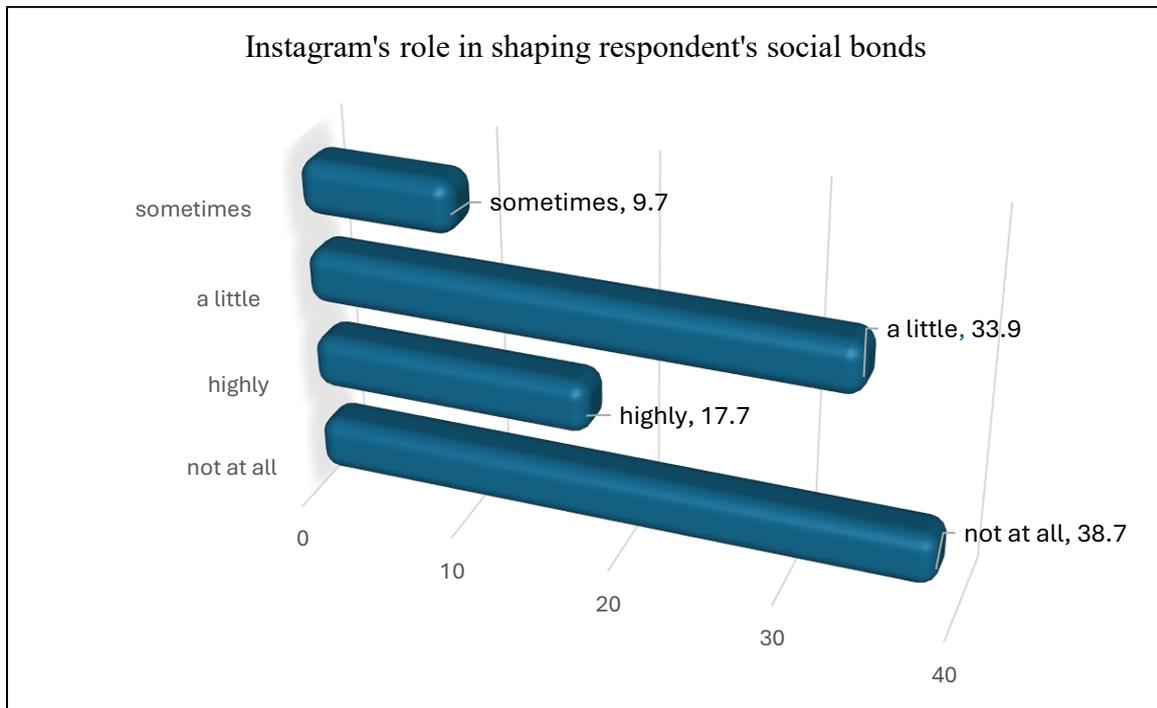
Figure 19. Instagram's influence on fashion decisions among respondents



Source: Primary Data

Figure 19 sheds light on how Instagram influences the fashion sense and style choices of undergraduate students. The data reveals that a significant portion of students are impacted by Instagram when making style decisions. 24.2% of students indicated that Instagram always influences their fashion choices, suggesting that nearly a quarter of the population consistently looks into to the platform for inspiration. 12.9% of students reported that Instagram often guides their lifestyle, further highlighting the platform's frequent role in shaping their fashion decisions. The majority of the students 45.2% stated that Instagram sometimes affects their style choices This imply that while not constant Instagram plays a recurring role in their fashion decisions. 11.3% of students mentioned that Instagram rarely influences their fashion sense, indicating that for some the platform is only a minor source of inspiration. A smaller portion 6.5% claimed that Instagram never affects their style choices, showing that a minority of students do not rely on the platform for fashion inspiration. The data illustrates a spectrum of influence that Instagram has on the fashion choices of undergraduate students. While a significant number of students are regularly influenced by Instagram others are less affected or not at all. The platform plays a pivotal role in the fashion and style decisions of the majority of the sampled group.

Figure 20. Instagram's impact on interpersonal connections among respondents

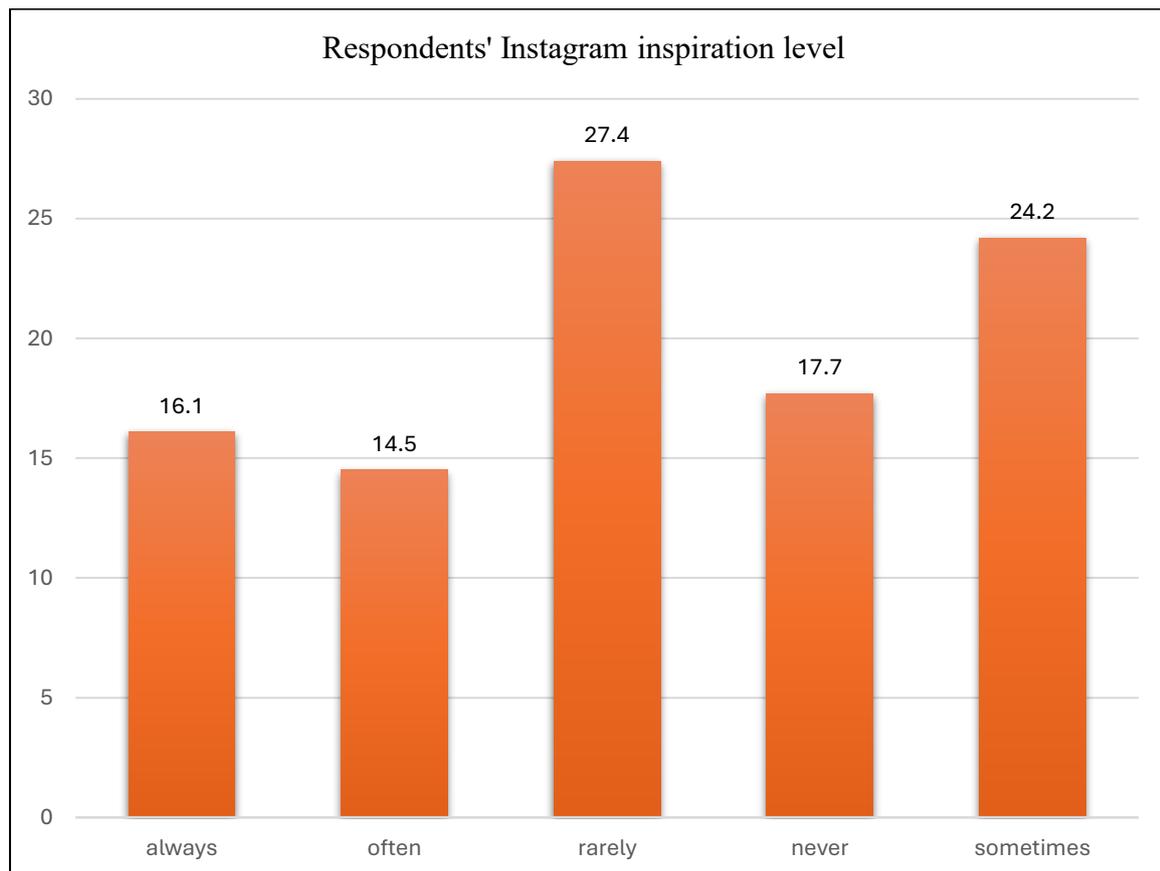


Source: Primary Data

Figure 20 delves into the impact of Instagram on undergraduate students' relationships and social connections, revealing diverse levels of influence across the student population. A significant 38.7% of respondents state that Instagram does not influence their relationships and social connections at all. This suggests that for a substantial portion of students, the platform plays a minimal or non-existent role in shaping how they interact with others or maintain their relationships. These individuals might either limit their use of Instagram in this context or consciously separate their online activities from their real-life relationships. Conversely, 33.9% of respondents feel that Instagram influences their relationships a little. This group acknowledges some degree of impact, albeit limited, suggesting that while Instagram does play a role in their social connections, it is not a dominant force. These students might find that Instagram subtly shapes their interactions or expectations, but it does not drastically alter the nature of their relationships. A smaller percentage 17.7% report that Instagram highly influence their relationships and connections. For these students, the platform plays a significant role in how they manage and perceive their social lives. Instagram might affect how they communicate, the way they present themselves in social settings or their expectations of relationships. This group is likely more attuned to the social dynamics presented on Instagram

and may use the platform as a key tool in maintaining or evaluating their social connections. Finally, 9.7% of respondents say that Instagram influences their relationships and social connections sometimes. This indicates a moderate level of influence, where the platform impacts their social life under certain conditions or in specific contexts. These students might find that Instagram occasionally shapes their views or interactions but this influence is not consistent across all aspects of their social lives. These findings highlight a varied impact of Instagram on undergraduate students' relationships and social connections. While a significant portion reports little to no influence from the platform, others experience moderate to high levels of impact. This variation reflects the differing ways in which students integrate Instagram into their social lives, with some using it as a key tool in their relationships and others maintaining a more detached approach.

Figure 21. Instagram's inspirational impact among respondents

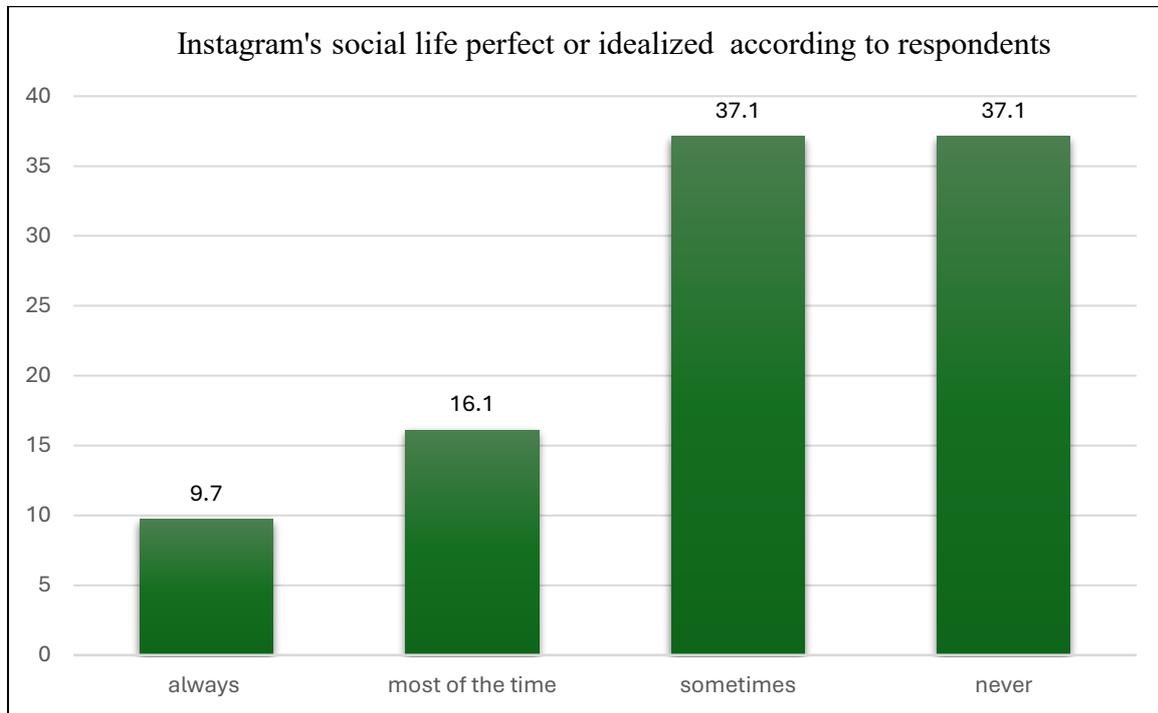


Source: Primary Data

The data presented offers valuable insights into how undergraduate students experience inspiration from Instagram posts. It is evident that a wide range of responses exists within the

sampled group, reflecting the varying degrees to which Instagram influences their sense of inspiration. A significant portion of students 16.1% reported that they always feel inspired by someone's post on Instagram. This finding underscores that for a notable segment of the population, Instagram consistently serves as a source of inspiration potentially influencing various aspects of their lifestyle, including personal goals, aesthetics and creative pursuits. Another 14.5% of students indicated that they often feel inspired by Instagram posts. This suggests that for these individuals, inspiration is a frequent outcome of their interactions with content on the platform reinforcing Instagram's role as a regular contributor to their ideas and motivation. The majority of students 24.2% stated that they sometimes feel inspired by posts on Instagram. This reflects a scenario where inspiration is an occasional experience, depending on the content they encounter. It suggests that while Instagram can be a source of inspiration, it is not a constant influence but rather one that fluctuate based on the type of content and context. A larger proportion 27.4% reported that they rarely feel inspired by Instagram posts. This indicates that for these students, inspiration from Instagram is infrequent suggesting that while they may engage with the platform it does not often translate into a significant impact on their thoughts and actions. Finally, 17.7% of students indicated that they never feel inspired by posts on Instagram. This highlights a segment of the population that does not derive inspiration from the platform at all, suggesting that they may use Instagram for other purposes or that the content they engage with does not resonate with them in a way that inspires action or reflection. In summary, the data reveals a diverse range of experiences regarding the influence of Instagram on students' inspiration. While a significant number of students consistently or often find inspiration through the platform, others experience it only occasionally or not at all. This spectrum of influence highlights the varying roles that Instagram plays in the lives of undergraduate students, with some relying on it heavily for inspiration while others are less affected or entirely unaffected. The findings illustrate the platform's potential to shape ideas and motivations though its impact is far from uniform across the population.

Figure 22. Respondents' views on Instagram's idealized social life

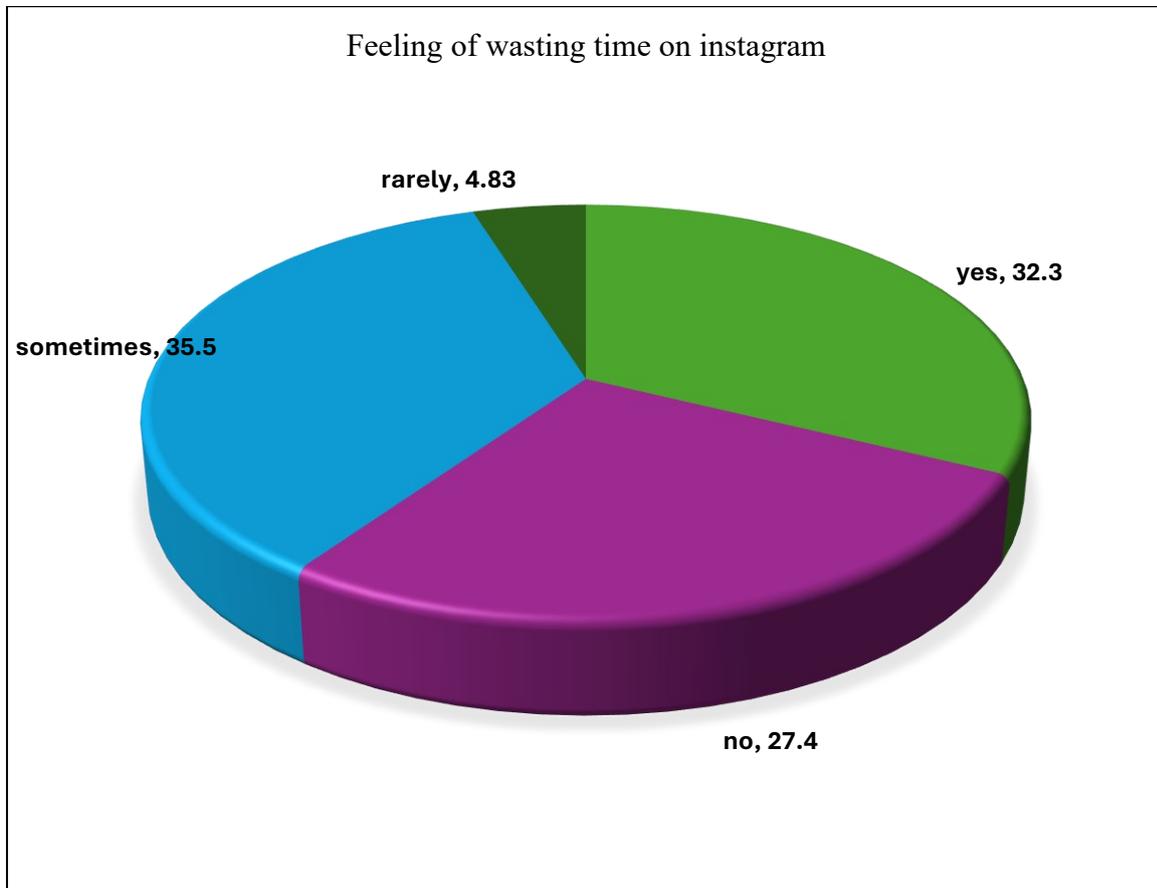


Source: Primary Data

Figure 22 highlights how Instagram shapes the perception of an ideal social life among undergraduate students. The data reveals a complex relationship between Instagram and social life perceptions, with significant implications for how students view their own social experiences. The most striking finding is that 37.1% of respondents never believe Instagram portrays a perfect social life. This suggests a considerable segment of undergraduate students remains skeptical of the idealized images often displayed on the platform. These individuals may recognize the curated nature of Instagram content and are not easily swayed by the seemingly flawless depiction of social life. This skepticism reflects an awareness of the platform's tendency to highlight only the most glamorous or exciting aspects of life, thus challenging the notion of a universally perfect social life. On the other hand, 37.1% of respondents also indicated that Instagram never shows what they consider a perfect social life, reflecting a persistent belief that the content presented does not align with their personal experiences or expectations. This cohort might feel that Instagram's portrayal of social life is disconnected from the reality they encounter, reinforcing a sense of authenticity about their own social circles compared to the often idealized online representations. In contrast, a smaller segment 16.1% feels that Instagram frequently portrays a perfect social life, suggesting that

these students might be more influenced by the platform's content. This group might be more prone to comparing their lives to the curated images seen on Instagram, potentially impacting their self-perception and social expectations. The frequent exposure to these idealized images can create pressure to conform to these standards which can affect students' self-esteem and social aspirations. The 9.7% of respondents who believe Instagram almost always reflects a perfect social life represent a minority highlighting that while Instagram's influence is significant it does not dominate the perceptions of all students. This group might be more susceptible to the platform's portrayal of perception and could experience greater pressure to align their social experience with these ideals. Overall, the data underscore a nuanced influence of Instagram on undergraduate students' perceptions of social life. While there is a clear recognition among many students that Instagram does not always present an accurate or attainable depiction of a perfect social life, a substantial minority still feels influenced by the platform's content. This divergence in perceptions highlights the complex role that social media plays in shaping self-image and social expectations among students.

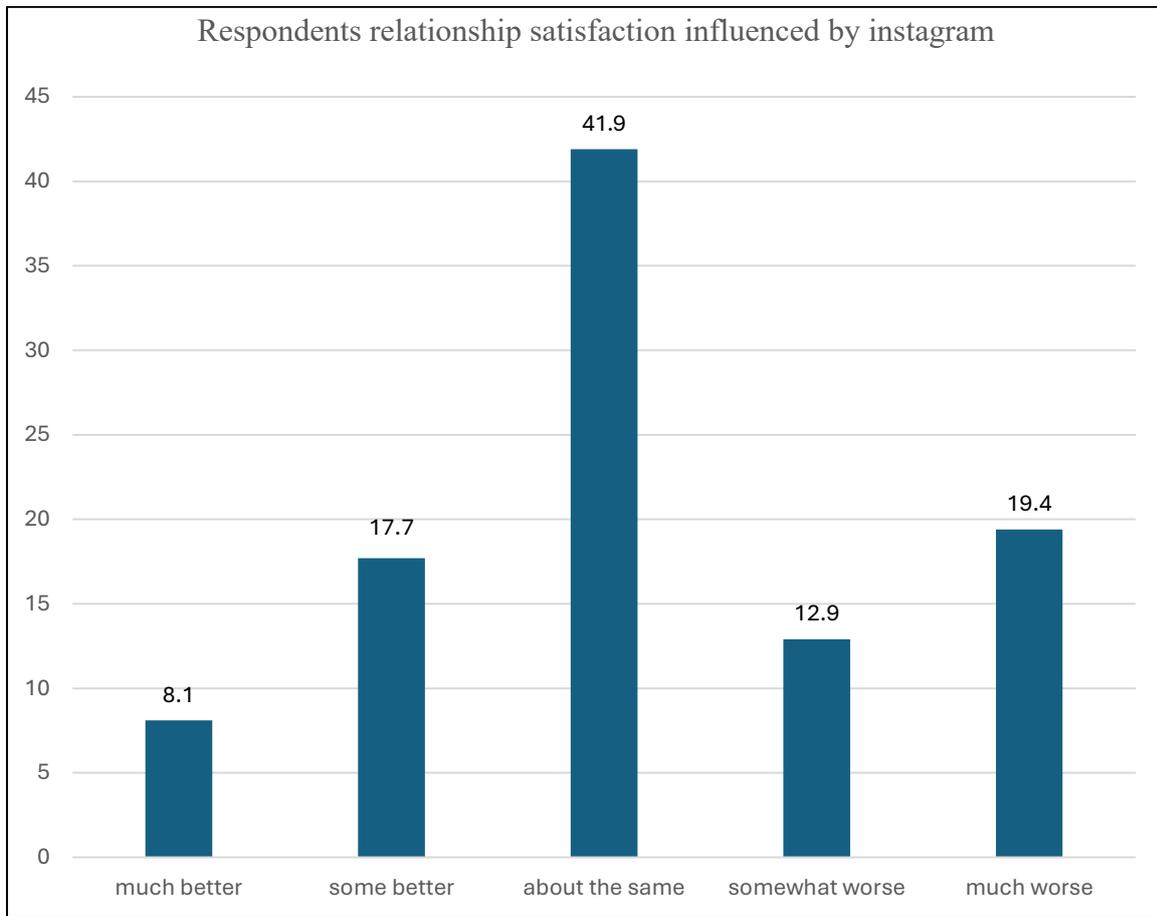
Figure 23. Perception of time wasted o Instagram among respondents



Source: Primary Data

The data represents students' perceptions regarding whether they feel like they're wasting time on Instagram. Among the total population, 32.3% of respondents, equating to 20 individuals, agreed that they often feel like they are wasting time on the platform. This suggests that a significant portion of students perceive their time spent on Instagram as unproductive. Conversely, 27.4% of the population, or 17 respondents, did not feel that using Instagram was a waste of time, indicating that a notable group of students view their usage as either productive or fulfilling. Additionally, 35.5% of respondents, representing 22 individuals, sometimes feel that their time on Instagram is wasted, reflecting a more nuanced or conditional perspective. Lastly, a small segment of 4.8%, or 3 individuals, rarely felt like their time on Instagram was wasted, suggesting that these students generally find value in their Instagram usage. In summary, the data highlights a range of perspectives among students regarding the perceived value or waste of time spent on Instagram.

Figure 24. Respondents' perception of Instagram influencers relationship quality

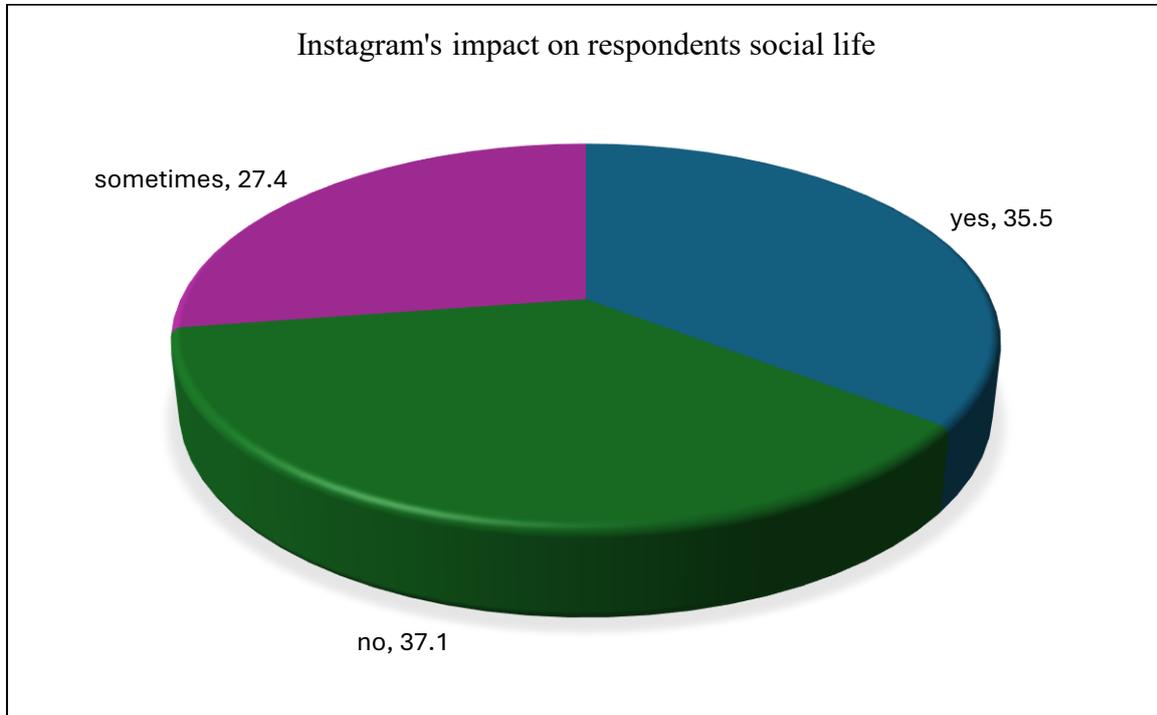


Source: Primary Data

Figure 24 examines undergraduate students' perceptions of Instagram influencers relationships compared to their own. The responses reveal a spectrum of views about the quality of relationships portrayed by influencers versus personal experiences. The largest proportion of respondents 41.9% believe that Instagram influencers relationships are about the same as their own. This indicates that a significant number of students perceive their relationship quality as comparable to what they see online. This group may view influencer relationships as neither exceptionally ideal nor significantly different from their own experiences, reflecting a sense of parity in relationship dynamics despite the often glamorous portrayals. Conversely, a notable percentage 17.7% feel that influencers relationships are somewhat better than their own. This perception might arise from the polished and idealized depictions of relationships often presented by influencers, which can create a sense of inadequacy or aspiration among viewers. These students might be influenced by the frequent showcasing of seemingly perfect

relationship moments, which can set a high standard that feels difficult to match. A smaller portion 8.1% perceive influencers relationships as much better than their own. This group is likely more impacted by the highly curated and attractive representations of influencer relationships leading to a stronger contrast between their personal experiences and the idealized versions seen online. On the other end 12.9% of respondents feel that influencers relationships are somewhat worse than their own. This perspective may reflect a critical view of the authenticity of influencer content. These students might believe that the relationships portrayed by influencers are not as genuine or fulfilling as they appear, leading to a perception that their own relationships are, in fact, better. Lastly, 19.4% of respondents think influencers relationships are much worse than their own. This group might view the idealized representations with skepticism, believing that the real-life relationship of influencers are less satisfactory or authentic compared to their own experiences. The findings indicate that Instagram influencers portrayals of relationship evoke a range of perceptions among undergraduate students. While many see their relationships as comparable to those of influencers, others perceive influencers relationships as either better or worse. These varied perceptions highlight the complex influence of social media on students views of relationships and suggest that while influencers content can shape aspirations and comparisons.

Figure 25. Respondents' perception of social life excitement influenced by Instagram

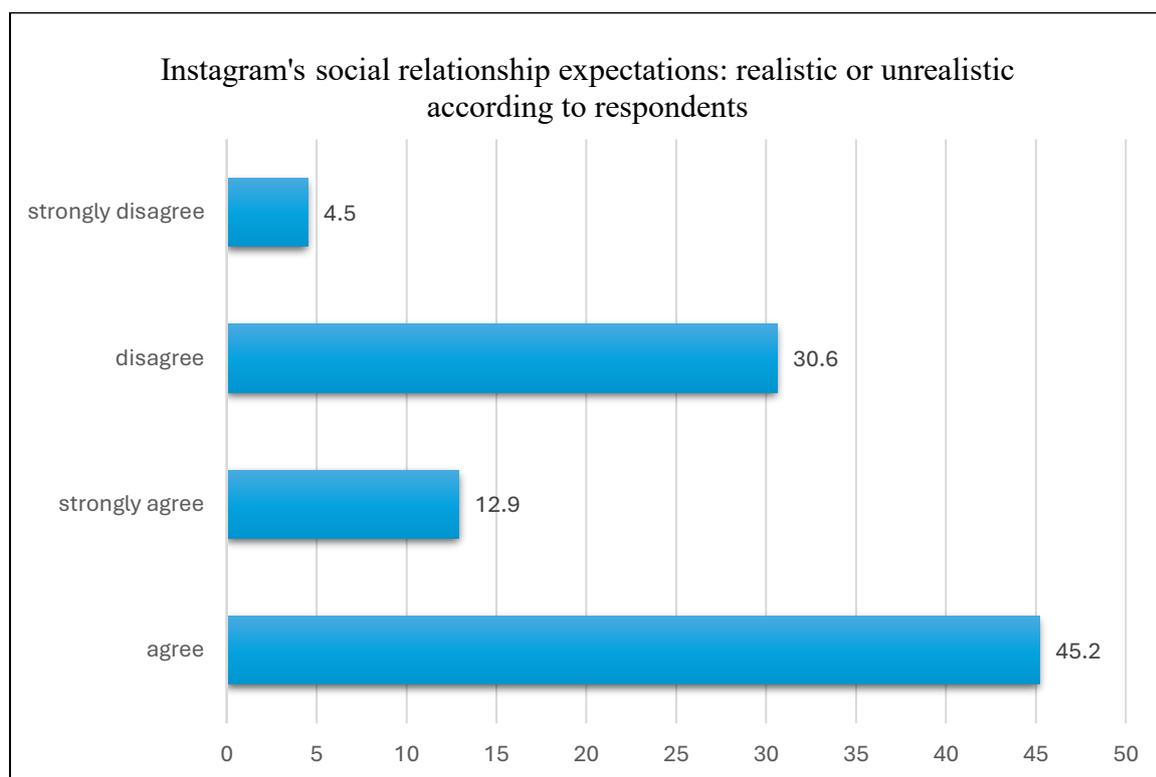


Source: Primary Data

Figure 25 explores whether students have ever felt that their social lives are less exciting than what they observe on Instagram. The responses provide insight into the influence of Instagram on students' perceptions of their own social experiences. A significant portion, 37.1% of respondents indicate that they have not felt like their social life is less exciting than what they see on Instagram. This suggests that these students maintain confidence in their own social experiences, despite the often idealized and glamorous depictions of life on the platform. These individuals might either recognize the curated nature of Instagram content or prioritize their personal experiences over online portrayals, thereby avoiding feelings of inadequacy or envy. Conversely, 35.5% of respondents admit to having felt that their social life is not as exciting as what they see on Instagram. This group represents a considerable number of students who are influenced by the platform's content, leading to comparisons that may diminish their satisfaction with their own social experiences. The polished and carefully curated images on Instagram might create unrealistic standards, making these students feel that their own lives are lacking in excitement or fulfilment. An additional 27.4% of respondents are sometimes whether they have felt this way. This uncertainly reflects the complex and sometimes subtle

influence of Instagram on self-perception. These students might oscillate between contentment with their own social lives and moments of doubt or comparisons triggered by what they see online. The ambiguity in their responses could indicate a fluctuating influence, where the impact of Instagram varies depending on their current mood, context, or the content they encounter. In summary, the findings reveal a diverse range of responses to Instagram's portrayal of social life among undergraduate students. While a substantial portion remains unaffected by the seemingly more exciting lives presented on the platform, a significant number of students experience feelings of inadequacy or doubt about their own social experiences. The presence of uncertainty among nearly a third of respondents further underscores the complex and varied influence that Instagram has on students' perceptions of their social lives, highlighting the platform's potential to both inspire and undermine confidence in personal experiences.

Figure 26. Respondents' perception of Instagram's portrayal of realistic social relationships

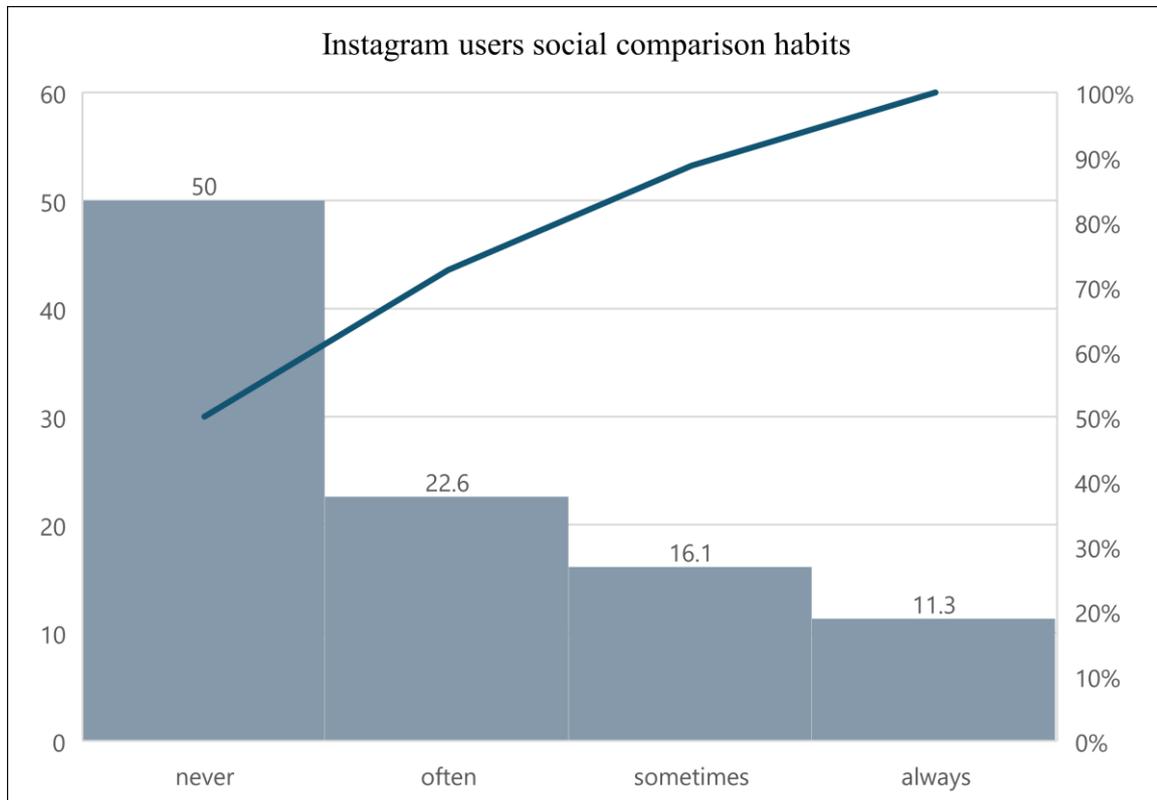


Source: Primary Data

Figure 26 explores undergraduate students' views on whether Instagram sets unrealistic expectations for social relationships. The distribution of responses reflects a nuanced

understanding of how Instagram influences perceptions of social relationships. A significant majority of respondents, 45.2%, agree that Instagram shows unrealistic expectations of social relationships. This indicates that a substantial portion of students perceive the platform's portrayals as setting standards that are difficult to achieve or maintain. These respondents might view the curated and idealized images and narratives shared by influencers and peers as creating a skewed representation of what constitutes a successful or fulfilling relationship. Additionally, 12.9% of students strongly agree with the statement, emphasizing a strong belief that Instagram's content significantly distorts the reality of social relationship. This perspective suggests a high level of critical awareness about the gap between online portrayals and real-life experiences. These individuals likely perceive the polished, often glamorous depictions of relationships on Instagram as highly unrealistic and potentially damaging to viewers expectations. In contrast, a notable 30.6% of respondents disagree with the notion that Instagram sets unrealistic expectations suggesting that they either find the representations on the platform to be more aligned with their own experiences or do not believe that the content has a significant impact on their expectations of relationships. This group might see Instagram's portrayals as more realistic or may not be as influenced by the content they encounter on the platform. A smaller percentage, 4.5% strongly disagree with the idea that Instagram shows unrealistic expectations. This indicates a minority view that either perceives Instagram content as accurate or does not believe it has a substantial effect on their expectations regarding social relationships. The findings reveal that while a majority of undergraduate students acknowledge that Instagram contributes to unrealistic expectations of social relationships, there is a significant portion who either see the portrayals as more realistic or are less affected by them. This distribution underscores the diverse impact of Instagram on students' perceptions of social relationships, highlighting the platform's role in shaping and in some cases distorting expectations.

Figure 27. Respondents' social life comparison habits on Instagram



Source: Primary Data

Figure 27 examines how frequently undergraduate students compare their social lives to those of others on Instagram. The responses illustrate varying degrees of engagement with the platform's content in relation to personal self-assessment. A notable 50% of respondents indicate that they never compare their social life to others on Instagram. This suggests that a substantial portion of students either remains unaffected by or consciously avoids engaging in social comparisons based on Instagram content. These students might be confident in their own social experiences or recognizing the curated nature of Instagram posts, which could mitigate the impulse to compare. Conversely, 16.1% of respondents sometimes compare their social lives to those of others on Instagram. This group likely engages in occasional comparisons, perhaps influenced by specific posts or trends they encounter on the platform. The infrequent nature of these comparisons suggests a more moderate impact of Instagram on their self-perception where occasional exposure to idealized content prompts some level of reflection or comparison. A smaller proportion 22.6% report that they often compare their social lives to others on Instagram. This indicates a more frequent engagement with the platform's content in

the context of self-assessment. For these students the content on Instagram appears to play a significant role in shaping their views of their own social experiences, leading to regular comparisons with the seemingly more exciting or perfect lives presented by others. Only 11.3% of respondents always compare their social lives to those of others on Instagram. This group is highly affected by the platform's portrayals, with a persistent tendency to measure their own social experiences against the idealized images they see online. This constant comparison might have a more pronounced effect on their self-esteem and social expectations. These findings reveals that while a significant portion of undergraduate students do not engage in comparisons of their social life with those of others on Instagram, a notable number still experience varying degrees of comparison. The distribution of responses indicates that Instagram's impact on social comparison is varied with some students frequently comparing themselves to others while others remain largely unaffected. This variation underscores the complex influence of social media on self-perception and the extent to which it shapes individuals' views of their own social lives.

CHAPTER - 5

FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The exploration of Instagram's influence on the lifestyle of undergraduate students serves as a comprehensive examination of the way in which social media shapes individual behaviors, perceptions, and social interactions. Throughout this research, we have investigated the relationship between Instagram usage and the lifestyle choices of students, focusing particularly on how the platform's portrayal of idealized relationships and lifestyles affects their real-life expectations and decisions. This section is dedicated to presenting the empirical findings from the study, offering valuable insights into the impact of Instagram on the daily lives, self-perception, and social connections of undergraduate students.

5.2. MAJOR FINDINGS

Instagram Usage Patterns: A Daily Routine and Source of Entertainment

The study reveals that Instagram has become a deeply embedded part of the daily routine for most undergraduate students. A significant majority of the respondents reported using Instagram every day, with the majority spending between one to three hours per day on the platform. This level of engagement highlights the platform's role as a dominant force in the social lives of young adults.

Instagram serves multiple purposes for students, but entertainment is the most cited reason for its usage. The platform's visually driven content and the ability to instantly connect with peers make it an attractive option for students seeking a break from their academic responsibilities. Entertainment content, including memes, videos, and influencer posts, is the most engaged type of content. Additionally, Instagram also functions as a source of information for some students, with a portion of respondents using the platform to stay updated on news and current events. However, academic use of Instagram remains minimal, indicating that students primarily view the platform as a tool for leisure rather than learning.

The consistent use of Instagram suggests that the platform is a significant part of students' social fabric. It influences not only how they spend their free time but also how they connect

with others, unwind, and even shape their perceptions of the world around them. This high level of engagement also hints at potential issues related to overuse, which are explored further in the findings.

Instagram's Influence on Lifestyle and Behavior Among Undergraduate Students

Instagram's influence extends beyond mere entertainment, significantly affecting student's lifestyle choices and consumer behavior. The platform plays a pivotal role in shaping trends and fashion among undergraduate students. Many respondents admitted that their fashion choices and overall lifestyle are influenced by what they see on Instagram, particularly through posts by influencers and celebrities.

A considerable number of students acknowledge that Instagram affects their buying habits, particularly when it comes to fashion and lifestyle products. This influence is driven by the platform's visually appealing content and targeted advertisements, which often showcase trends and products in an aspirational light. Students are not only exposed to a wide range of products but also to the lifestyles associated with them, leading to a desire to emulate the aesthetics and choices presented by influencers and peers alike. The impact of Instagram on purchasing behavior is not uniform; some students recognize this influence clearly, while others only occasionally acknowledge its effect, suggesting a spectrum of awareness and susceptibility to the platform's persuasive power.

Moreover, Instagram serves as a catalyst for exploring new activities and hobbies. A notable portion of students have tried new things because of what they've seen on Instagram, whether it's a fitness challenge, a new recipe, or a creative project. This aspect of Instagram's influence underscores its role as a source of inspiration and a driver of lifestyle changes. The ability of the platform to introduce new ideas and trends to students' lives can be seen as both positive and negative, depending on the nature of the content and the extent to which it drives meaningful or superficial changes.

The Psychological and Social Impact of Instagram on Undergraduate Students

Instagram also plays a significant role in shaping students' perceptions of themselves and their social lives. The platform's focus on visual content and the portrayal of idealized lifestyles can foster a culture of comparison, where students measure their own lives against the seemingly perfect lives of others. This comparison can lead to feelings of inadequacy, particularly when

students perceive their experiences as less fulfilling or exciting than those depicted on Instagram. While a substantial number of students claim they rarely or never compare their lives to others on the platform, the fact that a significant portion does engage in such comparisons is telling of Instagram's pervasive influence.

The portrayal of relationships on Instagram often sets unrealistic expectations, contributing to a skewed understanding of what constitutes a healthy or desirable social life. Many students are aware that Instagram tends to present an exaggerated or idealized version of reality, yet this awareness does not always mitigate the impact of such portrayals. The belief that others have better or more exciting social lives can lead to dissatisfaction with one's own life. Instagram's role in setting these expectations can also affect how students approach their relationships, potentially leading them to prioritize appearances or social validation over genuine connections. The influence of Instagram on students' self-perception is further complicated by the pressure to conform to the platform's standard of lifestyle. The constant exposure to idealized images can lead to body image issues and a desire to achieve the unattainable standards set by influencers and celebrities. This pressure is not limited to physical appearance but extends to lifestyle choices, career ambitions, and social activities. Students may feel compelled to present themselves in a certain way on Instagram, curating their profiles to reflect a life that aligns with these ideals, even if it does not accurately represent their reality. This curation can create a disconnect between their online persona and their true self, leading to stress and a diminished sense of authenticity. In terms of addiction, a notable proportion of students report feeling addicted to Instagram, with some acknowledging that the platform negatively affects their sleep patterns. The addictive nature of Instagram is linked to its design, which encourages continuous scrolling and engagement with content. The impact on sleep is particularly concerning, as poor sleep can have wide-ranging effects on students' mood, and overall health. The constant need to check Instagram can also lead to distractions during important tasks, reducing students' ability to concentrate and leading to procrastination. Instagram's impact on students' social connections is another critical area of influence. While the platform can facilitate communication and the maintenance of relationships, it can also create a false sense of social connectivity. Some students feel that Instagram has influenced their relationships, often leading to superficial interactions based on appearances rather than meaningful connections. The pressure to present a perfect social life can also lead to feelings of inadequacy when students compare their real-life relationships to those they see online.

Lastly, Instagram's role in shaping students' expectations of social relationships and lifestyle choices cannot be understated. The platform often presents a skewed version of reality, where only the best moments are highlighted, leading to unrealistic expectations of what life should be like. This can result in dissatisfaction with one's own life, as students may feel that their experiences do not measure up to the glamorous lives portrayed on Instagram. The constant comparison to others, whether in terms of social life, fashion, or relationships, can lead to a sense of inadequacy and a distorted view of what is normal or desirable. In conclusion, Instagram has a profound and complex influence on the lifestyle and behavior of undergraduate students. While it offers opportunities for creativity, connection, and inspiration, it also poses challenges related to comparison, consumerism, and the pressure to conform to idealized standards. Understanding these impacts is crucial for students to navigate the platform in a way that enhances their lives rather than detracts from their well-being.

5.3. CONCLUSION

In a digital age where social media platforms shape the contours of modern life, Instagram emerges as more than just a tool for communication; it is a powerful force that intricately weaves itself into the fabric of undergraduate students' lifestyles. This study uncovers a complex narrative that highlights Instagram's role in influencing not only how students spend their time and what content they engage with, but also how they perceive themselves and their social environments.

The findings reveal that Instagram serves multiple purposes for students, primarily as a source of entertainment and a means to stay informed about trends and current events. The amount of time spent on the platform and the type of content consumed underscore Instagram's significance as a daily companion in the lives of students, where visual storytelling and instant connectivity meet. This constant interaction with the platform not only entertains but also subtly shapes students' perceptions of the world around them.

Beyond entertainment, the effects of Instagram on students are profound, affecting everything from their purchasing decisions to their self-esteem. Instagram's visually driven environment creates a space where lifestyle choices are often influenced by what is seen as desirable or fashionable, leading students to align their behaviors and preferences with those portrayed by influencers and peers. This influence extends into areas such as sleep patterns, mental well-being, and overall life satisfaction, demonstrating the far-reaching impacts of continuous social media engagement.

Crucially, the study delves into how Instagram's portrayal of idealized relationships and lifestyles influences students' expectations for their own social lives. The platform's curated images often present an idealized version of life, fostering a culture of comparison that can lead to unrealistic expectations and a distorted sense of reality. This comparison culture is particularly potent in shaping how students view their own relationships and social interactions, often leading them to measure their lives against the polished images and experiences of others.

Moreover, the study reveals Instagram's significant role in influencing consumer behavior, with many students acknowledging the platform's impact on their purchasing decisions, particularly in fashion and lifestyle products. This reflects a broader trend where social media influencers and branded content drive consumerism, often blurring the lines between genuine self-

expression and strategic marketing. In essence, this study uncovers the intricate relationship between Instagram and the lifestyle choices of undergraduate students. It paints a nuanced picture of how digital media influences not just individual behaviors but also broader social norms and expectations. As Instagram continues to evolve, so too will its role in shaping the identities and lifestyles of young adults, making it a critical area of study for understanding the future of social media's impact on society.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Socio-Demographic profile of the students

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Course:
4. How many hours do you spent on Instagram per day?
 - Less than 30minutes
 - 1-2hours
 - 2-3hours
 - 3-4 hours
5. What are the purpose of using Instagram?
 - News and current events
 - Entertainment
 - Academic purpose
 - Trends and fashion
6. What kind of content do you mostly engage with on Instagram?
 - Lifestyle content
 - Educational content
 - Health fitness
 - Entertaining content
7. Do you use Instagram daily?
 - Yes
 - No
8. Do you believe that Instagram influences your purchasing decisions?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes

9. Do you compare your life to others on Instagram?

- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

10. Do you feel addicted to Instagram?

- Yes
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

11. Has Instagram usage affected your sleep patterns?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

12. Do you feel like you're wasting time on Instagram?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
- Rarely

13. Do you use Instagram to relax and unwind?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never
- Rarely

14. Have you ever tried a new activity or hobby because you saw it on Instagram?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

15. Have you ever purchased a product/service because of an Instagram ad?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

16. Do you use Instagram to express yourself creativity?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

17. Has Instagram inspired you to try something?

- Yes
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

18. Do you use Instagram to stay informed about current events/news?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

19. Do you follow lifestyle influencers on Instagram?

- Yes
- No

20. Do you try to adopt a lifestyle inspired by Instagram Influencers?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

21. Do you agree that Instagram helps in improving lifestyle?

- Yes
- No
- A little

22. Does Instagram influence your relationships and social connections?

- Not at all
- Highly
- A little
- Somewhat

23. Has Instagram influenced your fashion sense or style choices?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

24. Have ever felt inspired by someone's post on Instagram?

- Always
- Often
- Rarely
- Never
- Sometimes

25. Do you think Instagram shows what a "perfect" social life looks like?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Never
- Rarely

26. Have you ever felt like your social life isn't as exciting as what you see on Instagram?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

27. Do you think Instagram influencers have better relationships than you do?

- Much better
- Some better
- About the same

- Somewhat worse
- Much worse

28. Do you think Instagram shows unrealistic expectations of social relationships?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree
- Strongly disagree

29. Do you compare your social life to others on Instagram?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

30. Do you think Instagram promotes unrealistic comparisons of social lives?

- Very much
- Somewhat
- A little
- Not very much
- Not at all