

# **WHY PEOPLE USE INSTAGRAM: STUDY OF INSTAGRAM CONTENT AND USER TYPES**

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## **Abstract**

Social Media has become an integral part of today's generation. Instagram is one of the fastest growing Social Media Platform and has gained instant popularity since its launch in 2010. This paper is a quantitative analysis of 120 people to gather why people use Instagram, what kind of photo content they share and what motivates them to use Instagram. It was concluded that most (95%) of the Social media users use Instagram. Another conclusion drawn was that people has major two motivations for using Instagram. The most valued motivation was to stay connected and the second most important was to share their photo content. Based on the photo content they share, instagram users were classified in five popular distinct categories: Self Pictures, friends, food, quotes and activities. The study further highlights that people think Instagram has more personal touch than any other Social Networking Site (SNS). It was also revealed in the study that many people tend to their compare their lives with others simply on the basis on the Instagram posts of other people. The study also suggested that Instagram is addictive in nature.

**Keywords:** Instagram, Social Media Sites, Motivations, Photo content, users, Pictures.

## **Introduction**

The use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) has been prevalent since early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Websites/apps such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, LinkedIn have become an integral part of individual's life. Especially in youngsters these sites have become almost like a habit (90% of people ages 18 to 29 use at least one form of social media). According to Statista as of October 2017, there were 3.03 billion active social media users. The surfacing of Social media has changed the way how people interact and socialize. Most of the people prefer to socialize through networking sites over face to face communication. Social media initially was a tool that people used to interact with friends and family but lately it is being adopted by businesses. The global reach of social networking sites has made social media the most effective means of marketing. It is the most convenient and profitable way to reach a wider range of audience in a limited budget. Why do people use social media platforms? The answer to this question is very straight, yet very limited; to build social connections. The reasons why people use SNSs differs according to the platform used along with social dynamics.

Instagram is relatively new social media platform, basically a mobile photo and video capturing and sharing network. People know Instagram as Photo sharing social media hub. The site started off its journey in October, 2010. Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger created the app, laying out their vision for a photo sharing app. Ever since Instagram came into existence, it has been on a constant rise. In June 2018, Instagram announced that currently there are about 1 Billion monthly active users with around 500 Million daily active users. Over 95 million photos are uploaded everyday on Instagram. US teens have cited Instagram as their favourite social networking site. It is one of the most popular mobile social app worldwide with high levels of user engagement. The Social media platform is dominated mostly by young users below the age of 35. The astonishing growth of Instagram validates the report which states that photos and videos have become the key social currencies online (**Rainie, Brenner, and Purcell, 2012**).

**Sykes, T.(n.d.) and Carbone, A(n.d)** says Instagram is much more than a social network for sharing photos. It is the perfect platform for online marketers to reach their target audiences

directly. Psychologists from scientific and psychological analysis, Harvard says, “Your images can reveal if you’re popular, conscientious or even depressed.”

The present study aims to find answers to Basic questions such as, why people use Instagram? What kind of content people usually post on Instagram? What motivates a user to share content on Instagram? Having a thorough understanding of Instagram is necessary as it will let us know about human psychology behind using Instagram and why Instagram became popular in short span of time. The research will categorize the diversified users of Instagram. This will be achieved by studying them on the following parameters: the frequency of their posts, type of photos they share and the motivation which drives a user to share any content. Parameters are defined to make the categorization easier. Respondents were asked about their preferences in posting a photo and their thoughts while doing so.

**Frequency of the posts** is important to identify the extent of influence of Instagram on user’s daily life.

Knowing **Type of Photos** users’ share will assist in their categorization based on their likes & dislikes, which will further be useful for the marketers to define their target audience.

**Motivation behind an Instagram post** will let us know the psychology of Instagram users and will provide a better understanding to day-by-day increase in this social media platform. This will to aid the marketers in their strategy planning, as they will be able to identify their target audience accordingly.

### **Rationale of the Research**

This research paper study’s the diversified users of Instagram. The study assesses the users through the nature of content they upload and their aspirations for the same. This will let us know the reason behind user’s behaviour on instagram and also help the marketers to target their audience specifically.

## **1. Objectives**

The present study aims at exploring the following questions:

1. To know why do people use instagram?
2. To find out what kind of content they share on instagram?
3. To know the motivations which make them upload content on Instagram?

## **Review of Literature**

Review of Literature was conducted to know about the results of various researchers about the usage of Instagram. The data was gathered from internet.

**Hallikainen,P(n.d)[1]** developed a research model on the motivations and consequences of the usage of social media platforms. For describing the user needs he used a set of five value categories. It was assumed that users aim to obtain social capital from their social networks and achieve their goals. He says that his aim is to shed light on what drives the use of social media platforms. His analysis was based on the concept of user's perceived value of using these platforms.

**Brandtzaeg,P.B and Heim,J (2009), [2]** in their research conclude that people have many motivational reasons for using Social Networking Sites. The most important motive they found was to get in touch with new people (31%). While keeping in touch with friends (21%) was second important reason. General socializing (14%) was the third most valued aspect of using social networking site. Overall they identified 11 discrete reasons that provided a vision on motivations that lead people to use SNSs.

**Jang,J.Y, Han,K, Patrick C. Shih, and Lee,D(n.d) [3]** in their paper explored how teens use and engage in Instagram compared to adults. The study used textual and facial recognition methods to detect the age of user from user profiles. They observed that teens tend to post fewer photos but add more and more tags in order to receive more Likes and Comments on their posts. Also, teenagers post more selfies and express themselves more and tend to remove photos more than adults every day.

**Hu,Y, Manikonda,L, Kambhampati,S(n.d)[4]** in their study analysed the users and photos shared on instagram. On the basis of their results they concluded 8 broad distinct photo categories on instagram: self-portraits, friends, activities, captioned photos, food, gadgets, fashion, and pets, and 5 distinct user types based on the content they upload. The study also

showed that that there is no direct relationship between the number of followers and the type of users characterized in terms of their shared photos.

**Whiting,A, William,D(2013)[5], in their study** sought to demonstrate the importance of uses and gratifications theory in context of social media. They applied the theory to explore and discuss uses and gratifications consumers receive from using social media. Their aim was to provide a better understanding of why consumers use social media. The ten uses and gratifications were found in the study: social interaction, information seeking, pass time, entertainment, relaxation, communicatory utility, expression of opinions, convenience utility, information sharing, and surveillance & watching others.

## **Research Methodology**

In order to know why Instagram is used, user's motivation of using instagram and type of content they upload, the study was conducted with the following means:

**Research Design:** The research design is Exploratory in nature.

**Sampling Technique:** Since the sampling area was chosen according to my own convenience, the type of sampling technique carried out for the research is Non-probability, Convenience sampling design.

**Type of data:** A survey was conducted to collect the data so type of data for the current research is Primary.

**Sample Size:** The Sample Size for the study was 120 respondents of age group 17-28.

**Sample Area:** The sample area for the present study is Kharar, Mohali and Chandigarh.

**Data Collection Tool:** The data for this research is collected by using online survey. Therefore, a questionnaire mostly comprising of close ended questions is used for data collection.

**Data Analysis:** The data is analyzed manually. Results are presented and discussed in percentage using charts.

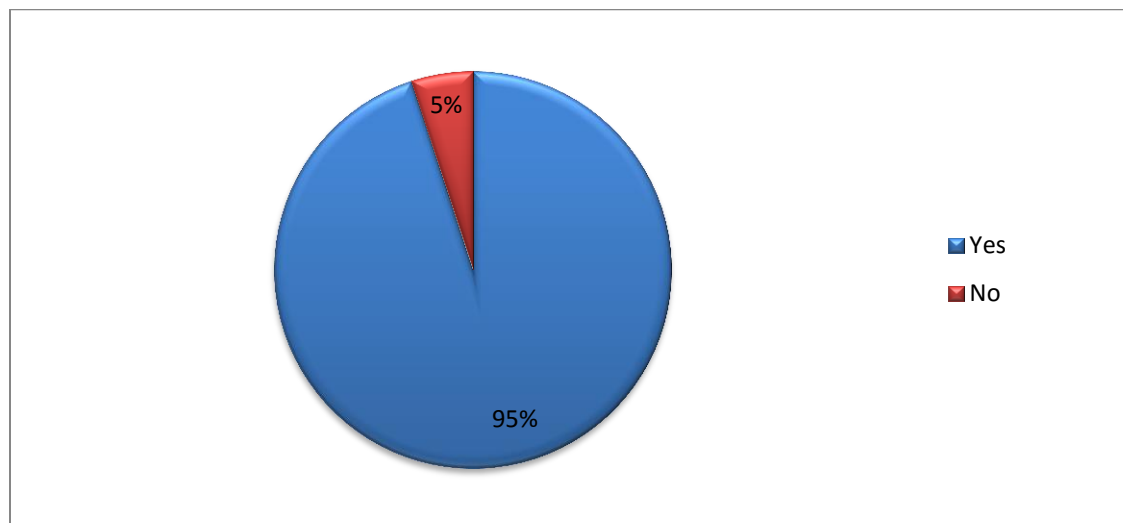
## **Results and Discussion**

With the objective of knowing why and how much Instagram people use, a survey was conducted on 120 respondents (75 Female, 45 Male) of age group 18-25. The study was done to know Instagram usage among youngsters and categorizing them on the basis of type of content/pictures they share on Instagram and their motivation behind doing so.

**Ques1:** Are you an instagram user?

☐ Yes

☐ No



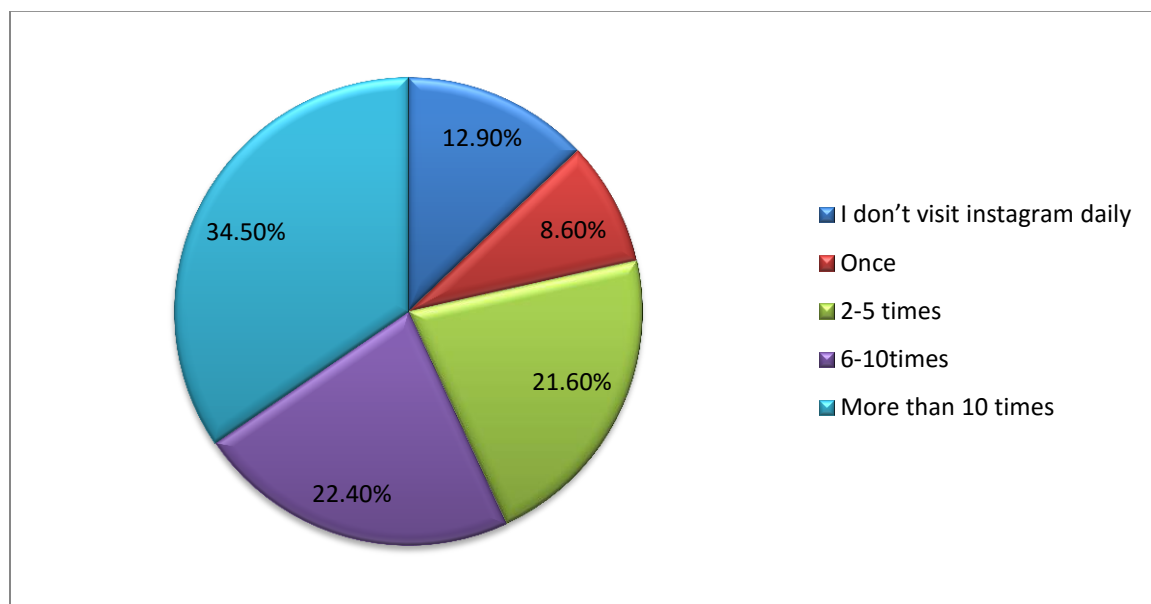
*N=120*

The above chart defines if the people use instagram or not. 95% of the respondents gave a positive response, stating that they are Instagram users. Only 5% of the respondents were non-instagram users.



**Ques2:** How often do you visit instagram in a day?

- ☐ I don't visit instagram daily
- ☐ Once
- ☐ 2-5 times
- ☐ 6-10times
- ☐ More than 10 times

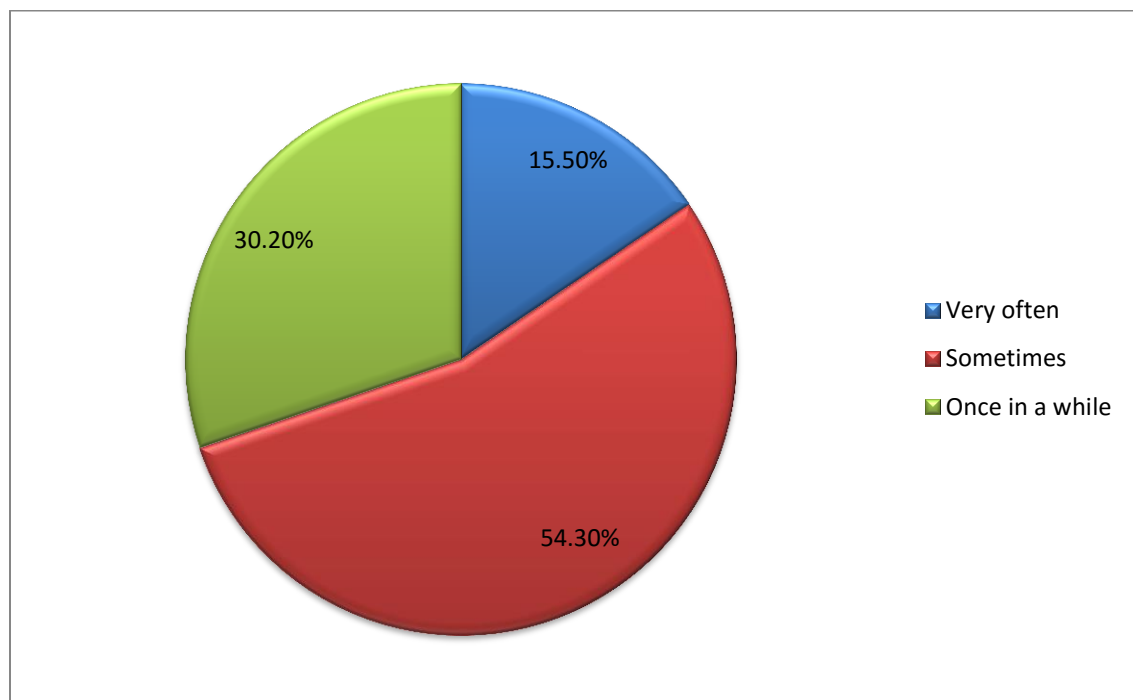


***N=114***

The above chart defines how often people visit Instagram in a day. 34.5% of the respondents stated that they use instagram more than 10 times per day. 22.4% visit the social media platform 6-10times, 21.5% users 2-5 times while 8.6% only once. Also, 12.9% users claimed that they don't visit Instagram on daily basis.

**Ques3: How often do you post on Instagram?**

- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Once in a while

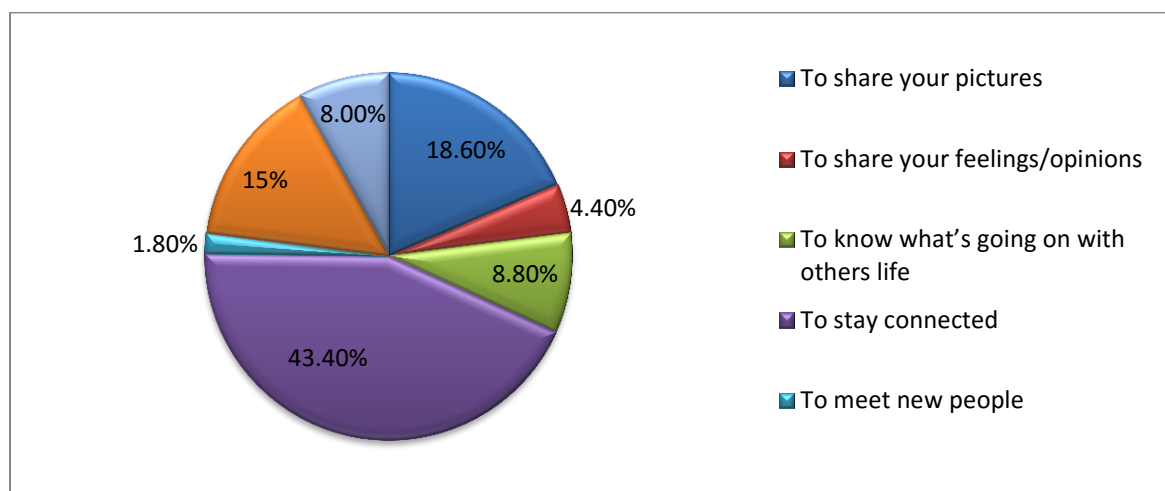


***N=114***

The above chart depicts the frequency at which the users post on Instagram. 15.5% respondents post frequently while 54.3% post sometimes only. 30.2% users claimed that they just post once in a while.

**Ques4:** For what purpose do you use instagram?

- ☐ To share your pictures
- ☐ To share your feelings/opinions
- ☐ To know what's going on with others life
- ☐ To stay connected
- ☐ To meet new people
- ☐ To escape from reality and relax
- ☐ Others (Specify)

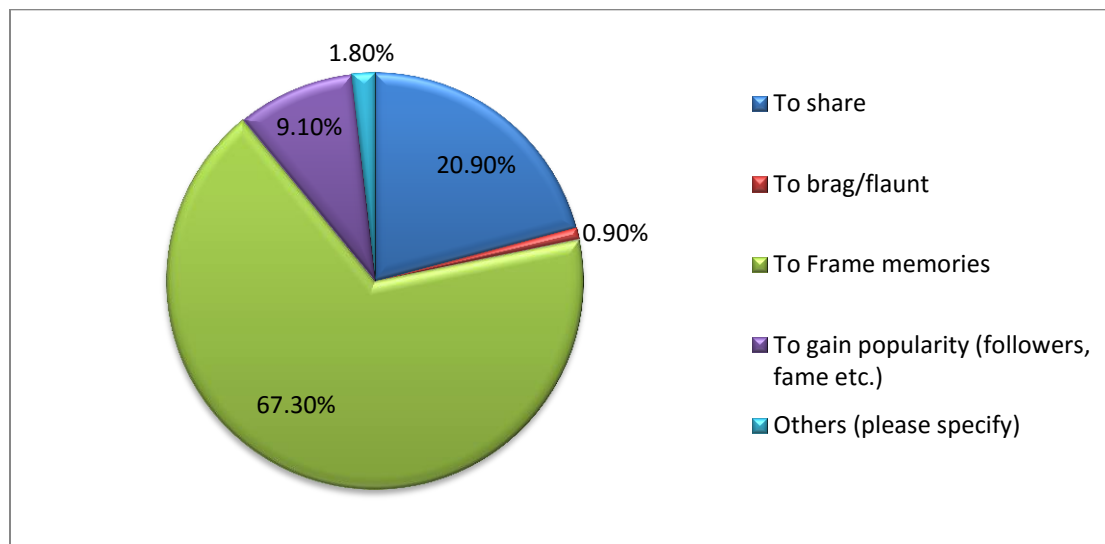


***N=114***

The above chart classifies the Instagram Users on the basis of why they use Instagram. 43.4% of the respondents use Instagram to stay connected with others, while 18.6% users utilize Instagram to share their pictures. 4.4% of the users share their feelings/opinions through Instagram. 15% of the users find escape from the reality and relax on the social media site. 1.8% of the users utilize it to meet new people and 8.8% users use it as a source to know what's going on in other people's life. The rest of 8% use Instagram for other purposes such as to explore DIY techniques & new fashion trends, to know what's happening around, to read memes or simply just for time pass.

**Ques5:** Why do you post pictures on instagram?

- ☐ To share
- ☐ To brag/flaunt
- ☐ To Frame memories
- ☐ To gain popularity (followers, fame etc.)
- ☐ Others (please specify)

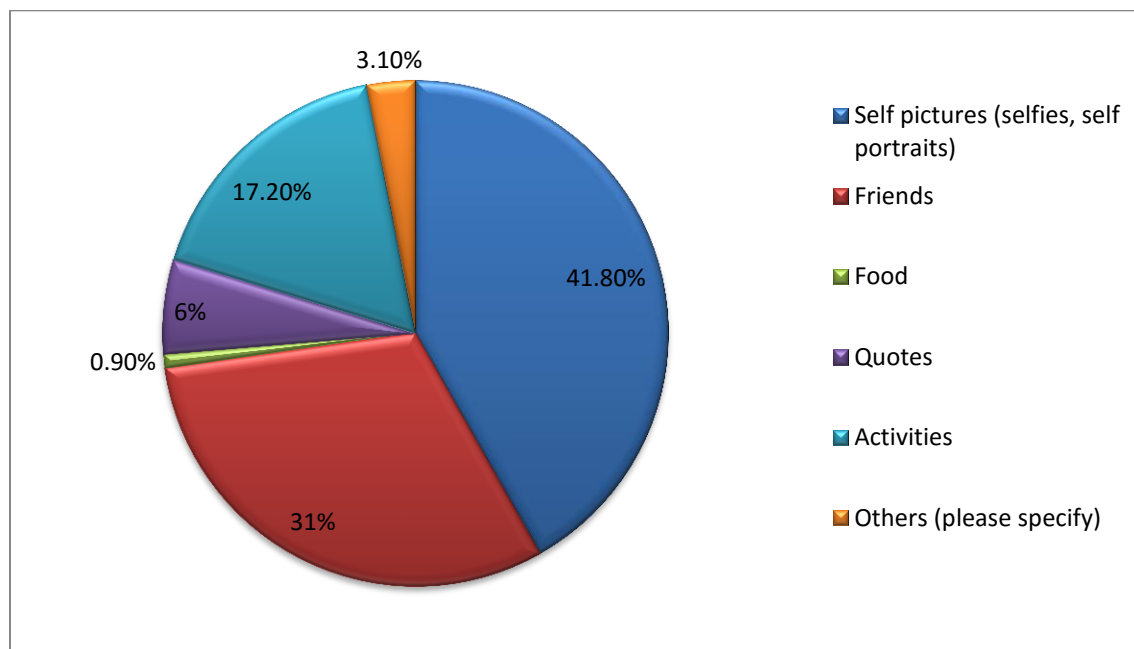


***N=114***

The above chart categorizes the users on the basis of why they post pictures on Instagram. Majority (67.30%) of the respondents post pictures to frame memories. 20.9% users post pictures to share them with friends and family. 9.10% of the users use it as a means to gain popularity/fame and 0.9% users showcase/flaunt their lifestyles, achievements etc. While, 1.80% users responded that they feel good after posting their pictures, that's why they upload pictures on Instagram or just for time pass.

**Ques6.** What kind of pictures do you generally share on instagram?

- ☐ Self Pictures (Selfies, self-portraits)
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Quotes
- ☐ Activities
- ☐ Others (please specify)



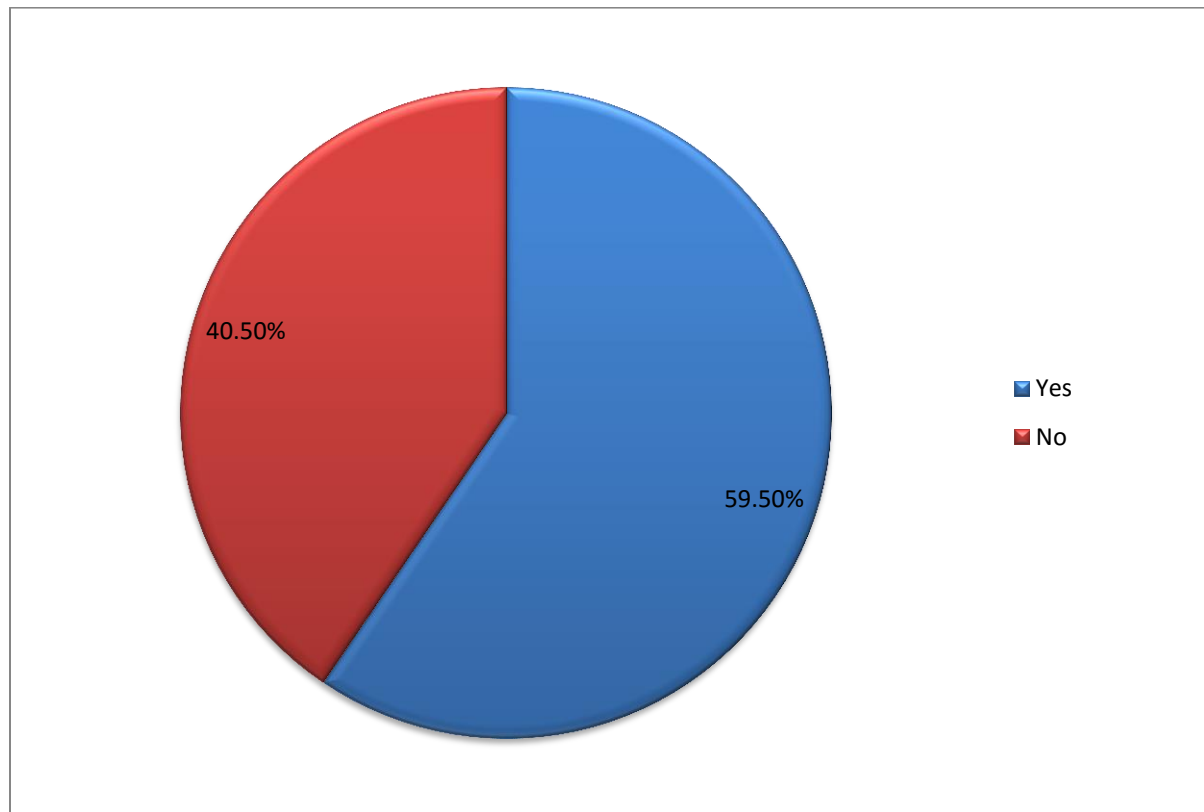
***N=114***

The above chart depicts what kind of pictures people generally share on Instagram. 41.8% of the people post self pictures while 31% share pictures with their friends. 17.2% people notify about their activities through Instagram and 6% of users share quotes. The remaining 3.10% post pictures of pets or nature etc.

**Ques7:** Do you think that instagram has more of a personal touch than any other social networking sites?

☐ Yes

☐ No

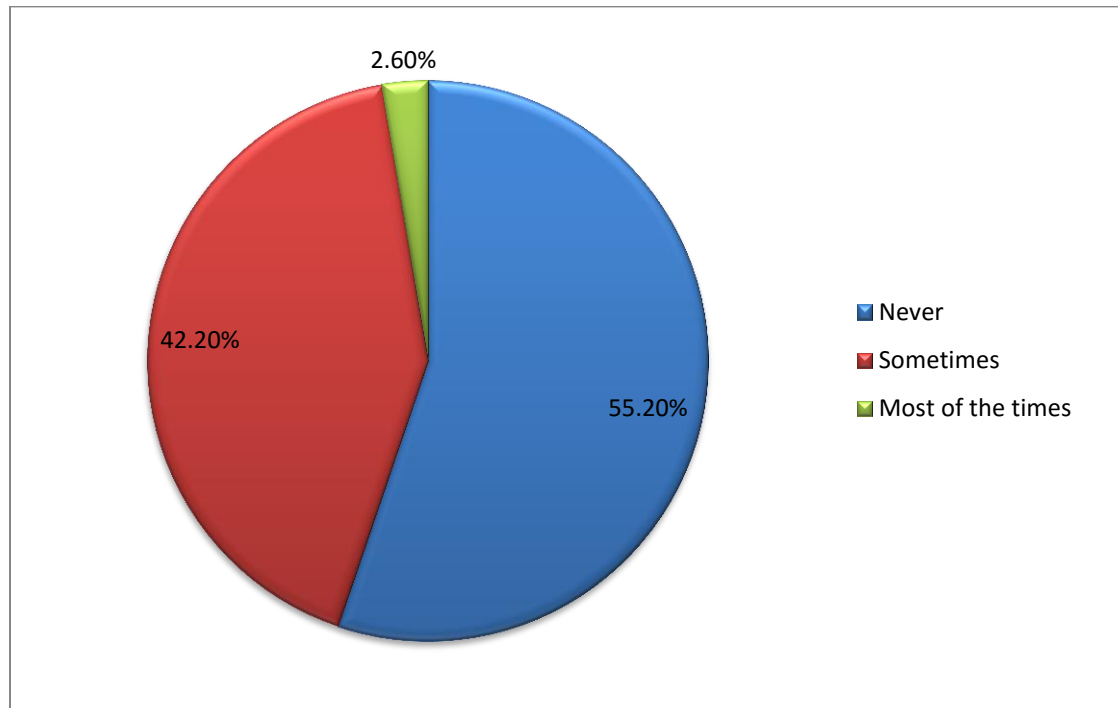


*N=114*

The above table distinguishes that whether people think instagram has more of a personal touch than any other social networking sites or not. Majority (89.5%) of the respondents believe the statement to true while the rest of 40.5% contradicts it.

**Ques8:** How often do you compare your life with the life of other people by looking at their posts?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Most of the times

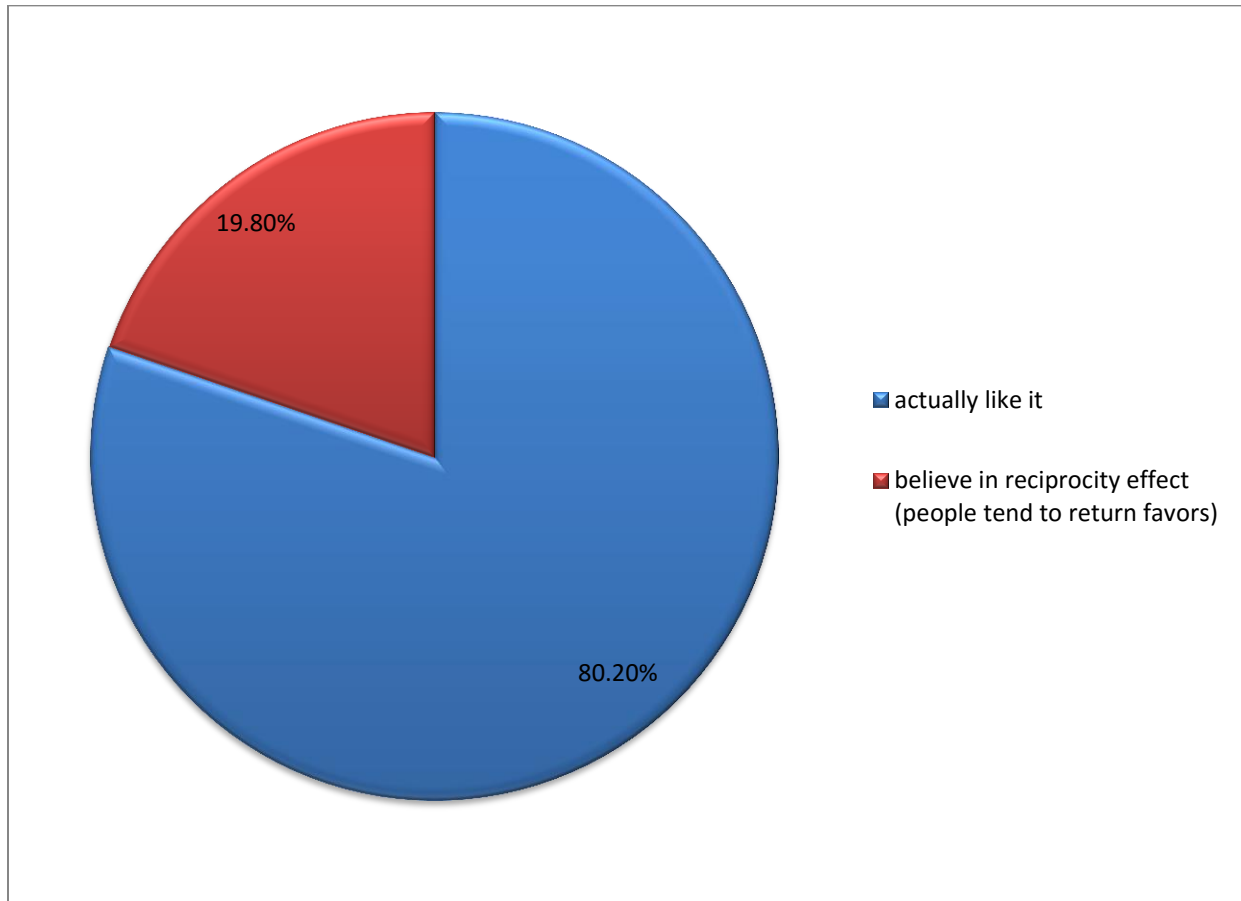


***N=114***

The above table depicts how often people compare their life with others by looking at their posts. 55.2% of the respondents claimed that they never compare their lives with others on the basis of their posts on Instagram. While, 42.2% stated that they do so sometimes whereas 2.60% users do this most of the times.

**Ques 9.** You like the posts of your friends because you \_\_\_\_

- ☐ actually like it
- ☐ believe in reciprocity effect (people tend to return favours)



***N=114***

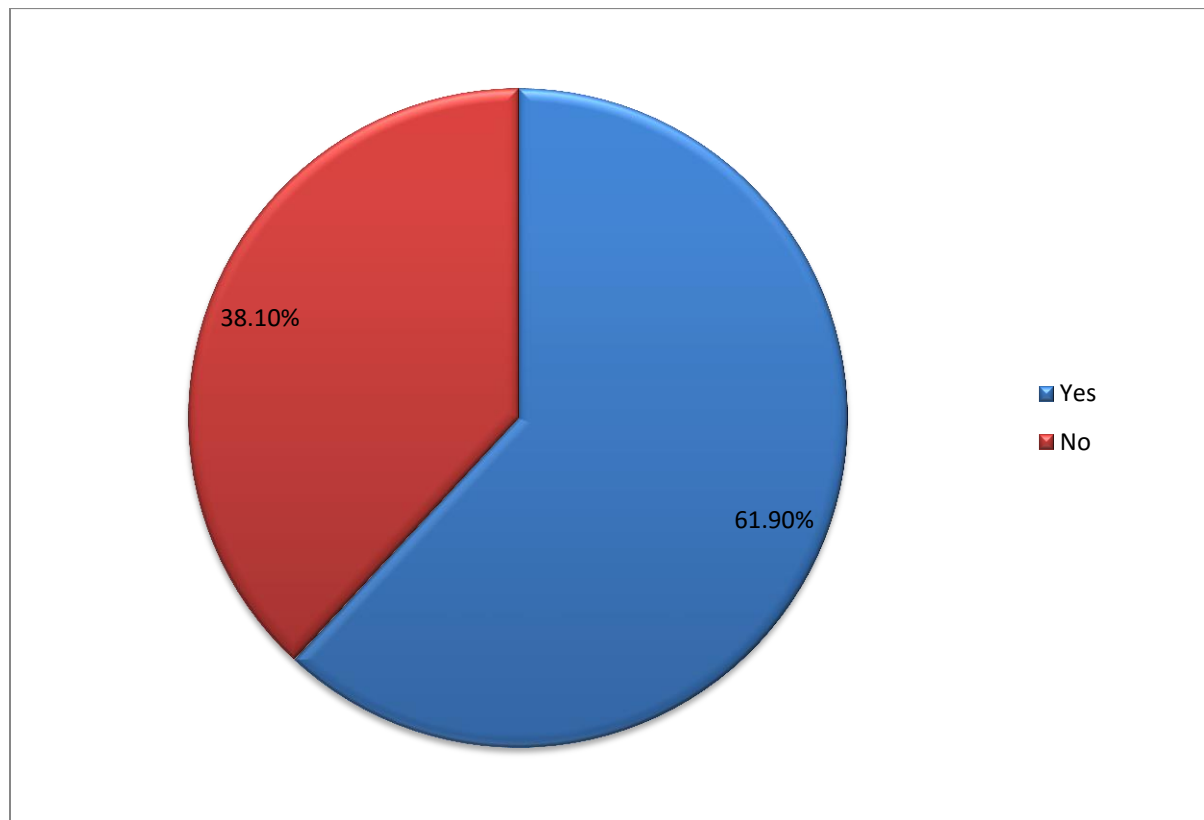
The above table describes if the people like the posts of their friends because they actually like it or because they believe in reciprocity effect. Most of the respondents (80.2%) claimed that they actually like the post they like. 19.8% users believe that people tend to return favors, which suggests that they expect the likes back on their posts.



**Ques10:** Do you think instagram is addicting?

☐ Yes

☐ No



***N=114***

The above chart describes whether people find Instagram addictive or not. 61.9% users stated that they find Instagram addictive while 38.1% does not agree that Instagram is addictive.

## 5. Findings

- Now a day's majority of the internet users of the target age group, i.e., 17-28 years are Instagram users.
- Youngsters' utilize Instagram as a medium to frame their memories.
- Most of the users visit Instagram more than 10 times a day.
- Users visit Instagram frequently but post content only sometimes.
- Users mainly upload self-pictures or group pictures along with their friends on Instagram.
- Instagram is an effective means to stay connected.
- Users believe that Instagram has a more personal touch than other social network.
- Almost half of the users compare their social lives with others.
- People consider instagram as an addiction.

## **6. Conclusion**

The research reveals that most of the internet users in the target age-group (17-28years) are Instagram users. Majority of them visit Instagram every now and then. The analysis of the study show that people use Instagram mostly to share their photos and to stay connected with people. It was also found that the motive of maximum users for posting pictures is to frame their memories and there is not much number of users who upload pictures to flaunt, which is a perception of many people. On the basis of results obtained Instagram can be categorized according to their photo content in 4 broad categories: Self Pictures, friends, quotes and activities. Majority of the users post pictures in one of these categories. The study also found that more than half of the users believe that Instagram has more personalized touch than any other social networking site. Therefore, this is also one of the factors which contribute toward making Instagram the fastest growing social media platform. It was also highlighted that some users tend to compare their social life with others by looking at the Instagram posts of the people they follow. It was also proved that majority of the users consider Instagram as an addiction.

In brief, the research concluded that the most of the Instagram users are active users and constantly upload content on the social media platform. In majority of the users, framing the memories is the strongest motivation to share pictures. Instagram has diversified users based on their photo content. It isn't a hidden fact that Instagram is gaining its users day-by-day. But also, as observed in the current study, Instagram is also becoming an addiction.

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