



Influence of Instagram Reels on Linguistic and Psychological Behavior of Adults

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates how short video content like Instagram reels impact linguistic as well as psychological behavior of adults. This research aims to determine the impact of frequent exposure to short video reels on an adult's attention span assuming that attention span plays a crucial role in engagement, learning retention and academic performance of adults. This research follows mixed methodological approach using questionnaire survey and observational methods. The sampling technique was carried out by purposive sampling of respondents who were suitable for the topic. This research measured the variables of interest including reel consumption, attention span and academic performance and statistically analyzed those variables to determine how they vary in different respondents. The results suggested that respondents experienced significant changes in their linguistic and psychological behavior after watching reels. Further research should investigate long-term impacts, intervention strategies and interviewing methods that can strengthen future research.

1. Introduction

In contemporary World social media platforms play a significant role in shaping human communication and behavior. Out of these platforms Instagram reels become a powerful medium because of their precise, engaging, and easily understandable videos. These Instagram reels are famous between students and young adults, and they have a continuous influence on how language is acquired, experienced, and used in real-life situations.

The linguistic behavior in this case comprises of vocabulary development, pronunciation patterns, code-switching, imitation, confidence in the language use. By being exposed to reels all the time, users can see real-world examples of spoken English, which is often provided by influencers, native speakers or peers.

Consequently, users are also likely to adopt speech styles, accents and expressions, which may make them more fluent, but could also introduce incorrect or informal use in the wrong context.

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Besides the linguistic changes, Instagram Reels can also impact psychological behavior, specifically attention and content consumption preferences. Users are increasingly attracted by shorter and more paced material, which can decrease the capacity of users to peruse longer and more sophisticated material.

However, the increasing popularity of Instagram Reels implies the necessity to take a closer look at their positive and negative impact on linguistic and psychological behavior of Pakistani young adults. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore the impact of Instagram Reels on adults, in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation, imitation and confidence, and attention span.

This research will center around three major questions that aim to investigate the linguistic and psychological impact of Instagram Reels on adults:

1. How does social media, specifically Instagram Reels impact linguistic behavior and allow them to imitate new expressions, pronunciation patterns and acquire new vocabulary confidently even in formal settings?
2. To what extent is short viewing content like reels influencing psychological behavior of Adults?
3. How after watching Instagram reels do young adults prefer short and fast paced content over larger ones?

2. Literature Review

The recent progress in digital media has profoundly changed the way language is learnt and patterns of communication. Video-sharing websites like Instagram, Tik-Tok, and YouTube are more than essential in influencing linguistic behavior, particularly in young adult age groups. Instagram Reels are among them and have become extremely popular since short, engaging, and fast-paced video format offers constant exposure to real-life language use. This exposure provides an informal learning experience in which users learn a language in a natural manner through observation and interaction.

The language acquisition process according to Krashen (1982) Input Hypothesis is determined by the exposure of the learner to meaningful input that is comprehensible. Instagram Reels is a good source of such input as it provides a genuine use of spoken language through influencers, native speakers, and digital creators. Recent studies (Vidani, 2024; Haliti-Sylaj and Sadiku, 2024) point out that the content of short-form video can improve vocabulary acquisition and listening skills due to its repetitive and engaging nature. Trending phrases, idioms and expressions are a common occurrence to users, and this enhances retention of information and results in the application of the same in practice.

Moreover, Bandura Social Learning Theory describes the process of learning by imitating and observing. On social media platforms, such as Instagram Reels, users frequently imitate the pronunciation, accent, and the speaking style of the influencers, which results in a better pronunciation, accent, and speaking style. Nonetheless, this imitation can also lead to the use of informal language, slang, and even wrong grammar, particularly in the absence of formal instructions.

Psychologically, there have been recent studies implying that too much exposure to brief-form content influences attention span and cognitive behavior. Research has shown that users have a preference towards short and visually stimulating content, which can lead to a reduction in the level of focus of users towards longer texts and academic material. This change in consumption pattern of content is a wider change in the learning behavior in the digital age.

In addition, Ophir, Nass and Wagner (2009) posit that the frequent exposure to fast-paced digital media results in reduced ability to maintain attention by users and consequently preference of shorter, more engaging content.

Comprehensively, the current literature represents a twofold approach, where, on the one hand, Instagram Reels allow learning a language, on the other hand, it can negatively affect the development of vocabulary, attention span, and superficial learning. Nevertheless, there is little literature on the effect of Instagram Reels on language and psychology and the impact of these variables on the mental health of Pakistan university students.

This study will apply Bandura's Social Learning Theory to show how users imitate language from Reels. It will also use Krashen's Input Hypothesis to explain learning through exposure. Reels provide engaging input for vocabulary and pronunciation.

There are still some gaps in literature which should be addressed by future researchers. Firstly, there is a need for interviews to understand the impact of video stimuli and short viewing content on language outcomes. Future interviews should try to identify the impact by face then carefully test what they are learning about language from these exposures. Secondly, there is also a need for more detailed observational studies in which more data is collected about the impact of short viewing content on linguistic behaviors of kids and teenagers. The results of this research have also reviewed numerous methodological choices including impact on linguistic as well as psychological behaviour.

3. Research Methodology

This research follows mixed method approach. The researchers have collected two types of data including questionnaire survey and observations to accomplish the objectives of research. The questionnaire survey provides valuable insight into respondents' experiences and opinions. Whereas the naturalistic observation technique is used to collect primary data. The observation is conducted not only by observing people's everyday talk but also by their Instagram accounts.

The participants are selected by using purposive sampling techniques. The reason for choosing this technique is to get responses from those who are suitable for the topic of research. The questionnaires and observations are considered an effective tool to collect data. Before analysis the dataset is checked for missing data, and descriptive analysis is done using statistical software SPSS.

The questionnaire survey consists of 20 questions with a 5- point Likert scale response. Likewise, everyday conversation and Instagram accounts of university students are observed based on their linguistic behavior. To observe the impact which reels have brought in everyday life, adults are targeted to analyze and interpret the value of independent variable. While analyzing the impact their responses are taken into consideration as dependent variables.

The results of questionnaire survey and observations are processed using the mixed methodological approach of data analysis. The researchers have identified the data using Mckernan's five data analysis steps, as cited by Safitri & Khoiriyah (2017). These steps include: 1) gathering the data, 2) coding the data, 3) comparing the data, 4) developing interpretation, and 5) communicating the results. The following is the data analysis process:

The researchers have gathered data by using in-depth questionnaire surveys and observations.

The researchers have classified the data. To condense the data, the researchers have focused on a research question: influence of Instagram reels on linguistic behavior and the changes people have observed in their language after watching reels. The information is organized into themes and coded.

The researchers have identified the data to find the differences and similarities. The information is then presented in a table format.

After the previous stage, the researchers interpret the data, classify it into themes, and analyze student's experience of using new vocabulary and the challenges they face while watching Instagram reels.

The study's findings are presented and concluded to answer the research questions.

The mixed method approach is suitable to evaluate and justify researchers' methodological choices for this research. It further contributes to making readers ponder on the actual impacts of Instagram reels on their linguistic behavior. Even though researchers have not interviewed the people, the observations have outweighed the research. The way researchers have got responses of questionnaires and observed people, and their accounts has made this approach best possible one to answer the research question. Nyoman Adi Jaya Putra, & Ni Komang Arie Suwastini have used the same approach in their research on Instagram reels; an authentic tool to learn English language. They have also got academic and unbiased results as they are in this research.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research is based on Stephen Krashen's Monitor model according to which people learn a language in two ways: either they acquire it or they learn it (Krashen, 1982). Acquiring a language is picking it up naturally without thinking about it like talking to someone involves a random usage of language. Learning a language is thinking about the rules of the language and trying to understand those rules. Stephen Krashen argues that while learning the rules of a language, that knowledge can be used to check and fix what one says but one does not actually use it to create the language.

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory also supports this investigation because this theory highlights how humans gain habits through watching and mimicking others (Bandura 1969a, 1971a). Experts claim that the actions which people observe are managed inside the brain and later shown again during social meetings. Within the environment of Instagram Reels, individuals are constantly shown the word structures, casual talk, speaking sounds, and interaction methods of famous digital figures. Because participants have constant contact with these media elements, participants absorb and repeat these speech arrangements during the daily speech of the participants. This viewpoint assists the visual part of the investigation because Social Learning Theory looks at how social media platforms lead to the usage of relaxed language and electronic talking methods.

For this study, Instagram Reels are a way for people to acquire a language rather than learning it in a classroom. When people watch Instagram Reels they hear language, used in a natural way and they can pick it up without even realizing it. People can learn words from Instagram Reels, and they can learn how to say these words and use Instagram Reels to learn how to use them in sentences without even thinking about the rules. Instagram Reels also let people hear language that's a little bit harder than the language they can understand right now which is important for learning a new language. The videos on Instagram Reels are usually fun to watch and really interesting.

3.2. Sample Size

The study includes 21 participants aged between 18 and 25 years old. The participants have been chosen on purpose because they actively use Instagram Reels. This helps in making sure that the data is relevant to what is being studied.

Although the sample size is small, but it is sufficient for the study based only on adults. Even though these results are not applicable to everyone, hence future research with people from different backgrounds would be helpful to make the results more reliable and widely applicable.

4. Data Analysis

This section includes an analysis of the two sources of data that have been used for this study: the questionnaire responses (Sample 1) and the observations from the two sessions with a new sample of participants (Sample 2). The goal of this section is to characterize how Instagram Reels influence speakers' linguistic and psychological behavior in real life situations.

4.1. Analysis of Sample 1 (Questionnaire Data)

This sample consists of responses from a questionnaire that is administered to 21 participants. A descriptive statistical analysis in the form of frequency distributions and percentages is carried out to obtain further insights into certain aspects of linguistic and psychological behavior for each sample.

The data analyzed of respondents is presented in Table 1, which is analyzed to look for the findings. The research focused on the question; what do u think how Instagram reels have influenced your linguistic behavior? The answers given by respondents are analyzed by researchers in the form of code and theme.

Table 1. Answer to Research question

Code	Theme
Learnt new vocabulary after watching reels	Addition of new vocabulary to previous one
Use slang and casual language even in formal settings	Introducing new ways to talk in formal environment
Reduced my attention span	Prefer short content
Impacted my psychological behavior	My brain is addicted to short content

Table 2 shows the cumulative percentage of respondents' gender who have participated in response to the questionnaire. Researchers have focused on how reels impact language of male and female and the difference.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	16	76.2	76.2	76.2
Gender	1	4.8	4.8	81.0
Valid Male	4	19.0	19.0	100.0
Total	21	100.0	100.0	

In Table 3, researchers have analyzed the age of respondents and found most of them are adults having age in between 20 to 25.

Table 3. Age of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	18-20	5	23.8	23.8	23.8
	21-25	14	66.7	66.7	90.5
	26-30	1	4.8	4.8	95.2
	Age	1	4.8	4.8	100.0
Valid	Total	21	100.0	100.0	

The qualification of respondents is displayed in pie chart. Figure 1 gives cumulative percentage of respondents as 85.7 percent of them are young adults.

Figure 1. Qualification of respondents

Qualification

20 responses

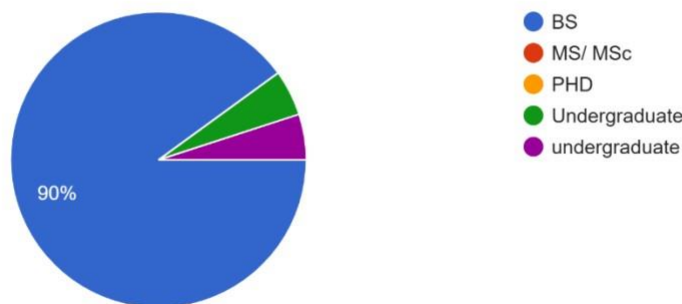


Table 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 signify some random questions from questionnaire and their responses to make the acquaintance of the actual impact of reels on language of people and the addition of new vocabulary in their language.

4.2. Linguistic Behavior (Slang & Vocabulary)

The findings from this research reveal that more than half of the sampled participants incorporated slang and language from Instagram Reels into their normal mode of communication. Specifically, 36.6% of participants have reported strongly agreeing that they often use language from Instagram Reels in their everyday conversation, while an additional 15.8% of participants have admitted to frequently incorporating such language. A total of 52.4% of the participants have combined to form this "often" category, meaning most participants have reported that they frequently utilize language from Instagram Reels. Hence, Instagram Reels appear to be a key driver of the inclusion of informal language into standard communication. The research has found that social media users are more likely to incorporate slang and other colloquialisms into their everyday language, because of mimicking the language patterns they see while watching Reels. This could translate to language used in formal situations too.

Table 4

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2. I often use slang or other expressions I heard in Instagram Reels in my everyday talk.	1	4.8	4.8	4.8
Agree	11	52.4	52.4	57.1
Disagree Valid	2	9.5	9.5	66.7

Neutral	3	14.3	14.3	81.0
Strongly Agree	3	14.3	14.3	95.2
Strongly Disagree	1	4.8	4.8	100.0
Total	21	100.0	100.0	

Table 5

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
16. I prefer stickers and emojis or GIFs over1 texted messages.		4.8	4.8	4.8
Agree	10	47.6	47.6	52.4
Disagree	1	4.8	4.8	57.1
Neutral	6	28.6	28.6	85.7
Strongly Agree	3	14.3	14.3	100.0
Valid Total	21	100.0	100.0	

Table 6

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
7. Have you faced some threats or risks while using Instagram Reels (e.g., addiction to slang language)?	1	4.8	4.8	4.8
Agree	4	19.0	19.0	23.8
Disagree	5	23.8	23.8	47.6
Neutral	8	38.1	38.1	85.7
Strongly Agree	3	14.3	14.3	100.0
Valid Total	21	100.0	100.0	

Table 7

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
11. Instagram Reels have a great impact on my psychological behavior?	1	4.8	4.8	4.8
Valid Agree	9	42.9	42.9	47.6
Disagree	1	4.8	4.8	52.4
Neutral	7	33.3	33.3	85.7
Strongly Agree	2	9.5	9.5	95.2
Strongly Disagree Total	1	4.8	4.8	100.0
	21	100.0	100.0	

B. Psychological Impact (Attention Span)

Furthermore, the study has found that Instagram Reels also has a psychological effect on users. More than 50% of the participants have found it hard to pay attention to long content after watching a lot of Instagram Reels. Many users also prefer short and fast content. A preference for shorter content has become increasingly apparent in recent times, possibly a result of the way people's behavior and thinking has changed over time. Certainly, repeated exposure to short form video content has made audiences addicted to the need for concise yet engaging content.

Table 8

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
14. It is now difficult for me to focus on larger content.	1	4.8	4.8	4.8
Agree	11	52.4	52.4	57.1
Disagree Valid	3	14.3	14.3	71.4
Neutral	1	4.8	4.8	76.2
Strongly Agree	5	23.8	23.8	100.0
Total	21	100.0	100.0	

Table 9

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18. The caption feature of Instagram allows us to 1 practice concise storytelling.		4.8	4.8	4.8
Agree	11	52.4	52.4	57.1
Valid Disagree	2	9.5	9.5	66.7
Neutral	5	23.8	23.8	90.5
Strongly Agree	2	9.5	9.5	100.0
Total	21	100.0	100.0	

Therefore, the results based on the questionnaire indicate that Instagram Reels features significantly and actively shaping users' linguistic behavior, encouraging them to adopt various features of slang and informal language in their everyday communication and, moreover, also promoting visual communication on the platform, with short videos often limited to images with captions. Moreover, the findings reveal that the format has a negative effect on users' attention span and preference for content of a short nature.

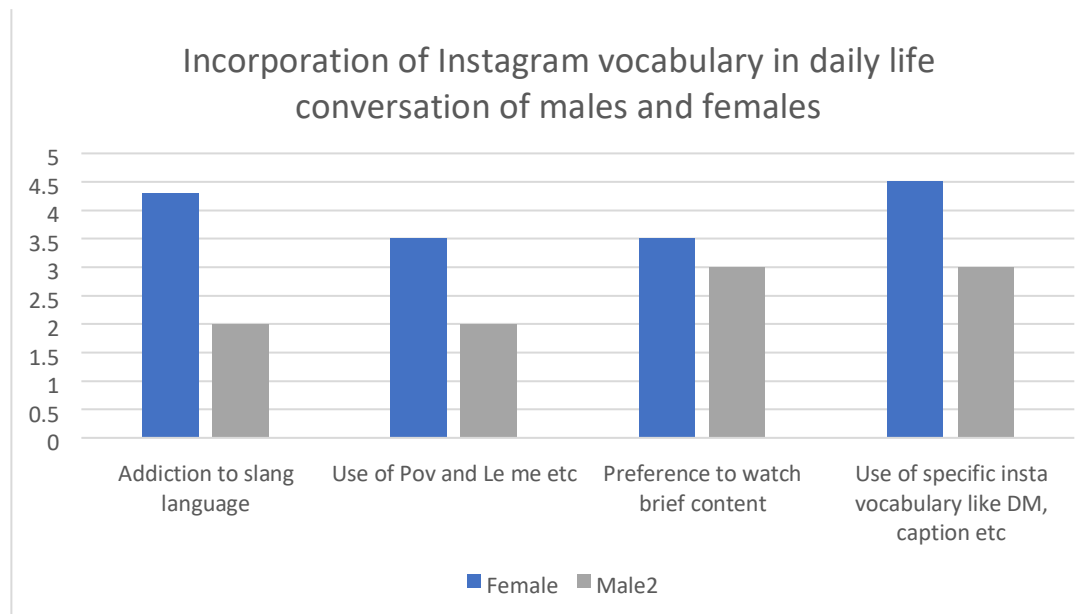
4.3. Analysis of Sample 2 (Observational Data)

For the second data set qualitative data from non-participant observations of everyday conversations and social media postings is analyzed with the purpose of identifying features of language that occur in real life that are affected by Instagram Reels.

A survey into language change has found that people are using words and phrases associated with Instagram in regular conversation. Words and phrases such as "DM" for direct message, "POV" for "point of view", and "caption" are often used by young adults. This research reveals that digital tools are not only having an impact on speech but also on how people organize their verbal communication in face-to-face conversations.

Furthermore, the observations that are made by researchers based on observing daily conversation of males and females are mentioned in Figure 2. It interprets that both male and female experience a change in their linguistic behavior after watching Instagram reels, but female have experienced it to a greater extent.

Figure 2



Hence, in addition to the supporting findings from the accompanying questionnaire survey, evidence from observational studies shows Instagram Reels does indeed influence spoken language distribution, as people even showcase the effects of the app on their speaking on a daily basis.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion

The results of this study reinforce the influence of Instagram Reels on adult's language and psychology. The results reveal that the research participants also use slang and informal vocabulary learned from Instagram Reels in their daily conversations. An explanation for this is Krashen's Monitor Model, which distinguishes between acquisition and learning of language. Acquisition, according to language theorist Stephen Krashen, is a subconscious process that occurs when humans are exposed to understandable input. It is distinct from the conscious activity of language learning. Given this, Instagram Reels can be seen as a tool of language acquisition for the language learners in this study: the automatic way in which respondents pick up, internalize, and deploy elements of real-world, informal language in their everyday lives is obvious in the spontaneous use of Reels-based slang and phrases gained through immersion. Additionally, Krashen's input hypothesis posits that understandable input should be at $i + 1$, meaning slightly more advanced than the present level of the learner. Instagram Reels provide understandable input through new vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence structures presented in a format that is easy to digest. The combination of visual and auditory input encourages language acquisition, and participants in this study are observed to incorporate the target vocabulary into their speech, which supports this explanation.

In addition to discussion around the acquisition vs. learning of informal English slang, another aspect of interrogating Krashen's Input Hypothesis is to think about the extent to which learners use learned grammatical knowledge in a kind of 'monitor' function to edit or revise their spoken language. The focus on Reels here would seem to suggest that learners are acquiring lots of informal English through this channel but may not be able to use this acquired language in more extended spontaneous spoken communication, in fact possibly falling back to learned language patterns that are less appropriate for every day, informal spoken interaction. It appears that in some learners, acquired language is taking precedence over learned knowledge of English grammar in their actual spoken communication. While the post focuses on changes to the language, it also touches on some of the psychological effects observed because of the brief-form shift. The brief nature of Instagram Reels, and the ensuing shift in many users' reading habits to encompass content that is short, repetitive, and bite-sized, seems to have inured viewers to brief- and fast-form input. From a Krashen input perspective, this could condition users to expect or be comfortable with brief form input, at least in the immediate term. Furthermore, the spoken language in Reels typically consists of casual language which may include unaccepted grammar forms, overuse of slang, and the misuse of words that are not appropriate to the situation. Since the process of acquisition is unconscious, learners will generally not be aware of these mistakes unless they are monitoring their own production.

There are still some gaps in literature which should be addressed by future researchers. Firstly, there is a need for interviews to understand the impact of video stimuli and short viewing content on language outcomes. Future interviews should try to identify the impact by face then carefully test what they are learning about language from these exposures. Secondly, there is also a need for more detailed observational studies in which more data is collected about the impact of short viewing content on linguistic behaviors of kids and teenagers. The results of this research have also reviewed numerous methodological choices including impact on linguistic as well as psychological behaviour.

5.2. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights the strong influence of Instagram Reels on the formation of both linguistic and psychological behavior of young adults Through quantitative surveys and qualitative observation.

As results, frequent exposure to Reels results in the adoption of new vocabulary, slang, and informal expressions, reflecting the impact of the digital media on everyday language use. Meanwhile, users are more likely to acquire language naturally by observing and imitating, which will result in increased fluency and confidence.

Nevertheless, the research also shows significant psychological impacts, especially a decrease in the attention span and an increase in the preference towards short and fast-paced material. The change can have a detrimental effect on academic learning and the capacity to process longer and more complex material.

Overall, Instagram Reels act as both a beneficial and challenging tool. Although they support the use of informal language learning and interaction, they also have issues about the accuracy of language and cognitive attention. Thus, it is vital to use such platforms in a balanced and conscious manner to reap the most benefits and minimize the adverse impacts of such platforms.

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Appendix A

Survey Questionnaire: Influence of Instagram Reels on Linguistic and Psychological Behavior of Adults

The questionnaire survey recorded the experience of 20 adults in the form of google form to explore their addiction to Instagram reels and their impact on adult's daily communication and mental disposition.

Section 1: Demographic Information

Name*: _____

Email*: _____

Gender*:

Male

Female

Other: _____

Age*

18-20

21-22

23-25

25-30

Qualification*

BS

MS/MSc

PHD

Section 2: Questionnaire Survey

* Indicates required question

1. Have u learnt new vocabulary from watching Instagram Reels?

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

2. I often use slang or other expressions I heard in Instagram Reels in my everyday talk.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

3. Instagram reels have affected my sentence structures.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

4. Instagram Reels motivate me to learn and use new words.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

5. I tend to copy the accent or tone of influencers in Reels.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

6. Reels have made language learning more fun and engaging.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

7. Have you faced some threats or risks while using Instagram Reels (e.g., addiction to slang language)?

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

8. Reels influence me to use informal or casual language even in formal settings.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

9. The language used in Reels has influenced the way I express myself offline.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

10. Do you believe that the constant exposure to fast-paced content on Reels has influenced your attention span?

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

11. Instagram reels have a great impact on my psychological behavior?

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

12. Do I prefer to watch brief content after watching reels?

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

13. I usually go for short videos instead of movies, which take large amount of time.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

14. It is now difficult for me to focus on larger content.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

15. Instagram reels have largely affected my writing skills.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

16. I prefer stickers and emojis or GIFs over texted messages.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

17. Reading skills also get affected through Instagram reels.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

18. I can't engage myself in large reading material.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

19. I prefer reading or listening to just summary over the whole reading material.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

20. The caption feature of Instagram allows us to practice concise storytelling.

*

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree