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**SPEAKING FOR SOCIAL GOOD: UNDERSTANDING MULTILINGUAL DIGITAL ACTIVISM ON INSTAGRAM USING THE MDSP MODEL**

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**ABSTRACT**

Nowadays, people often turn online to support the causes they care about. Digital activism has become a central mode of social engagement within contemporary networked publics, enabling individuals and groups to frame social issues, mobilise attention, and influence public discourse through digital platforms. Among these platforms, Instagram occupies a distinctive position due to its emphasis on visual storytelling, affective communication, and participatory interaction. Because it encourages interaction, users do not just watch - they join. Scholars have looked closely at how features of apps shape participation. They also study numbers that show what spreads and who leads those conversations. Yet one thing remains underexplored: limited theoretical attention to the role of **multilingual communication** in shaping narrative influence and audience interpretation. When different tongues appear together, meanings shift subtly. Audiences respond differently depending on which language comes first. In places where many languages mix daily, this choice matters deeply. How stories travel across linguistic lines still lacks thorough examination.

This work fills the void using the Multilingual Digital Soft Power (MDSP) Model in analyzing digital activism on Instagram. The MDSP model conceptualises digital communication as a cyclical process involving strategic intent, multilingual message design, platform dynamics, audience interpretation, feedback mechanisms, and perceived social outcomes. Starting not from theory but practice, the MDSP framework treats online communication as looping motion - strategic aim shapes language choices across tongues, which meet platform behaviors, spark varied readings, generate replies, and lead eventually to sensed societal shifts. Born first in digital diplomacy circles, the approach here shifts ground: it explores instead how multiple languages at play serve quietly as tools of story-shaping within activist networks online. Drawing on framing theory (Entman, 1993), soft power theory (Nye, 2004), and cross-cultural communication perspectives (Fisher, 1987), the paper positions multilingualism as a key factor in enhancing inclusivity, emotional resonance, and credibility in activism-oriented communication. Because language shapes reception, multilingual approaches gain relevance in activist messaging - opening paths to inclusion, deeper feeling, and credibility.

The study adopts a quantitative research design using a **5-point Likert-scale audience survey** conducted with **50 Instagram users**. When it comes to spotting societal issues, participants reflect on how well the platform works. Feelings stirred, confidence placed, and readiness to respond - all emerge as measured points. From one post to another, perception shifts quietly beneath surface choices.

Most people surveyed agree that Instagram works well for sharing insights on societal topics. Content in multiple languages tends to feel closer, more welcoming, not just thoughtful but stirring too. Feedback shapes impact - this idea gains strength here, backed by data. Descriptive analysis reveals a strong consensus among respondents that Instagram is an effective medium for spreading awareness about social issues. The findings further indicate that multilingual activism content is perceived as more inclusive and authentic, fostering stronger emotional connections and higher engagement with social causes. The MDSP framework finds real-world footing when listeners shape meaning through response.

By situating multilingual communication within the dynamics of Instagram-based activism, the study demonstrates how narrative change for social good can be understood as a form of digital soft power. The paper contributes theoretically by extending the MDSP framework beyond diplomacy and for those crafting Instagram efforts - activists, storytellers, or community groups this study offers practical insights to design culturally responsive and impactful digital campaigns. What emerges clearly is that using multiple languages in stories on Instagram acts like quiet influence online, nudging perception while supporting collective progress.

**Keywords:** Digital Activism; Multilingual Communication; Instagram; Narrative Change; MDSP Model

**INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, conversations about society often unfold online, where platforms shape how people discuss politics and justice. Because of digital tools, taking part in activism looks different than it did before. Instead of only rallies or meetings, efforts spread through shared posts across networks. A picture on Instagram, paired with words and symbols familiar to certain groups, might shift how others see an issue. Emotions can rise quickly when such content moves from one feed to another. Over time, these moments add up, quietly changing what communities care about.

Digital activism has thus emerged as a defining feature of contemporary public discourse, enabling individuals, movements, and organisations to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for social good within networked environments (Castells, 2012). Though often linked to online tools, digital activism stands out as a key way people now voice concerns, push for reforms, or question mainstream views without relying on established institutions. According to Castells (2012), networked communication shifts influence by letting users skip intermediaries and shape public discourse themselves. Still, despite much research into how platforms function and amplify messages, little attention has gone toward the underlying ways activists communicate - and why those methods work.

What stands out in these frameworks is how language holds a central but poorly examined role. Far from just carrying facts, it shapes and reflects cultural roots, personal identity, and hierarchies of influence. Take Bharat (India) - one example among many - where picking a particular tongue can silently mark inclusion, credibility, status, or closeness. Still, research on online political engagement tends to act as if everyone speaks the same way, leaning heavily on English-based views that miss everyday language diversity.

Instagram, originally conceived as a visual-sharing platform, has evolved into a significant space for social advocacy, narrative framing, and participatory politics. Its affordances visual storytelling, captions, hashtags, reels, and algorithm-driven visibility enable activists to communicate complex social issues in accessible and emotionally resonant ways (Manovich, 2017). What drives engagement on Instagram is less about polish, more about raw connection. Because it blends images with words, the platform turns personal stories into shared experiences. While posts unfold through captions or brief clips, meaning builds slowly across layers. When activists speak in multiple languages, they do not just translate - they reshape context for different users/listers/viewers. Movements around gender fairness, climate care, inner well-being, and social hierarchy in Bharat (India) now shift between languages to widen their reach. Though it still missing, a deeper look at how people understand these mixed-language messages.

This research tackles the existing void through use of the Multilingual Digital Soft Power (MDSP) Model within Instagram-driven activist efforts. Though first designed for assessment of multilingual digital diplomacy, the framework views messaging as an ongoing loop influenced by purposeful goals, linguistic selection, features of platforms, how users understand content, responses generated, and resulting societal effects. Because it focuses on storytelling methods and how audiences engage, the approach fits well when studying online activism as a type of non-governmental digital influence (Nye, 2004; Cull, 2019). However, much of the existing research on Instagram-based activism focuses on engagement metrics, influencer dynamics, or platform affordances, often overlooking how **linguistic choices shape meaning-making, trust, and emotional connection**. This gap becomes particularly significant in the context of **Bharat (India)**, one of the world's most linguistically and culturally diverse nations. With 22 officially recognised languages and hundreds of regional and local dialects, language in India functions not merely as a communicative tool but as a marker of identity, belonging, and power (Piller, 2017). Digital activism in India frequently operates across multiple languages, blending English with Hindi and regional languages to reach diverse audiences. Campaigns related to farmers' rights, women's safety, mental health, and environmental awareness have demonstrated how multilingual communication can expand reach, enhance cultural resonance, and foster inclusivity. Yet, despite its prevalence, multilingual digital activism remains insufficiently theorised within mainstream communication research.

Theoretical approaches to digital activism have largely been shaped by Western, English-dominant contexts, often assuming linguistic homogeneity in digital publics. Framing theory, for instance, emphasises how issues are constructed through selective emphasis, language, and symbolism to shape audience interpretation (Entman, 1993). While framing scholarship acknowledges the importance of language, it rarely accounts for multilingual framing and its implications for narrative reception. Similarly, network society theory highlights the role of digital networks in redistributing communicative power but pays limited attention to how linguistic diversity mediates participation within those networks (Castells, 2012). This theoretical oversight restricts our understanding of how digital activism functions in multilingual, postcolonial contexts.

Soft power theory offers another valuable lens for examining digital activism. Nye (2004) conceptualises soft power as the ability to influence others through attraction, values, and culture rather than coercion. In digital environments, narratives, symbols, and language play a central role in generating such attractions. While soft power has traditionally been applied to state-led diplomacy, recent scholarships have extended the concept to non-state actors, including civil society organisations and social movements (Cull, 2019). Digital activism, particularly when it relies on emotionally compelling and culturally grounded narratives, can thus be understood as a form of **digital soft power** aimed at shaping public attitudes and social norms.

Building on these theoretical foundations, the **Multilingual Digital Soft Power (MDSP) Model** offers an integrative framework for analysing how language operates within digital communication processes. The MDSP model conceptualises digital communication as a cyclical and dynamic process involving strategic intent, multilingual message design, platform affordances, audience interpretation, feedback, and perceived social outcomes. Unlike linear communication models, MDSP foregrounds the role of language and culture in mediating meaning and influence across digital spaces. Although originally developed in the context of multilingual digital diplomacy, the model's emphasis on narrative construction, audience reception, and discursive feedback makes it highly applicable to digital activism.

Applying the MDSP model to Instagram-based activism enables a deeper understanding of how multilingual narratives function as tools of persuasion, inclusion, and engagement. Language choice on Instagram does not merely determine accessibility; it shapes emotional tone, credibility, and perceived authenticity. A message framed in English may signal global relevance or institutional authority, whereas a message in Hindi or a regional language may evoke cultural intimacy and local trust. Such distinctions influence how audiences interpret activist messages and whether they choose to engage, share, or support a cause. Understanding these dynamics is essential for analysing narrative change for social good.

This study adopts a **practitioner-informed yet theoretically grounded approach** to examine audience perceptions of multilingual digital activism on Instagram. Through attention to what audiences feel, instead of just counting likes or shares, this work explores how speaking multiple languages shapes emotion, belonging, credibility, and story impact within activist posts on Instagram. While grounded in real user experiences, the study adds nuance to conversations about media's role in shaping narratives for justice - pushing thinking forward while staying useful for those working in online campaigns.

Using a small-scale (Likert-scale) survey of Instagram users in Bharat (India), the study explores perceptions of Instagram's effectiveness as a platform for social awareness and examines how multilingual communication influences emotional engagement, inclusivity, trust, and willingness to interact with social causes. By situating the analysis within the Indian digital ecosystem, this research makes three key contributions. First, it extends the MDSP model beyond its original diplomatic context, demonstrating its relevance to digital activism and advocacy. Second, it foregrounds multilingualism as a central analytical variable in digital activism research, addressing a critical gap in existing literature. Third, it offers practical insights for activists, content creators, and social organisations seeking to design culturally responsive and impactful Instagram campaigns. In doing so, the study aligns with broader scholarly and practitioner-oriented efforts to understand how media, communication, and narrative strategies can drive social innovation and contribute to the public good.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Digital Activism as a Communicative Practice

Now seen as central to communication in today's connected world, digital activism is no longer viewed as just an extra or minor way people get involved. At first, some called it slacktivism; thinking clicks and shares did little compared to real-world protests. (Morozov, 2011). Still, later research pushed back, showing how online efforts help shape what we talk about, what issues matter, and how groups understand events together (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013)

Instead of fixed chains of command, digital activism thrives on loose connections between people who act together through stories they make their own, gestures full of meaning, and shifting alliances. Communication takes center stage - how words are used, what symbols mean, how tales get shaped. Outcomes like new laws matter less than the slow transformation of how people see themselves, what they believe, and how they understand shared reality.

Communication scholars argue that digital activism should be analysed through the lens of meaning-making rather than mobilisation alone. This shift foregrounds the role of language, symbols, and cultural references in constructing activist messages and influencing audience interpretation (Couldry, 2012). Yet, despite this turn

toward communicative analysis, much of the literature continues to treat language as a neutral conduit, rather than as a strategic and culturally situated resource. This oversight becomes particularly evident in multilingual contexts, where language choice can significantly affect reach, resonance, and legitimacy.

Still, most writings fixate on tech features along with counting who joins in - missing how people make sense of activist efforts. What gets lost stands out sharply when many languages mix: picking one tongue over other changes everything about grasp, belief, feeling.

## 2. Platform-Specific Activism and the Rise of Instagram

The platformisation of social life has necessitated platform-specific analyses of digital activism. Each social media platform shapes communication practices through its unique affordances, algorithms, and user cultures (van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal, 2018). When people connect more online, researchers pay closer attention to how activism works on specific apps. Because each app shapes how messages spread - through design choices, image styles, hidden rules, and typical user behavior - one stands out clearly. With its focus on pictures, emotional impact, and creative layout, Instagram became a key space where digital advocacy takes shape. How users share stories visually defines much of what gains traction there. Pictures take center stage on Instagram, unlike apps built mostly around words. Short texts tag along beneath images, alongside sounds and clips. Hashtags weave through posts like quiet signposts. Emotion runs deep in these visual stories, pulling viewers close. Personal tales mix with urgent messages, blurring private and public lines. This closeness gives advocacy a familiar, human shape. Some say it makes struggles easier to recognize, even feel. Others worry hard truths get smoothed over, turned pretty. Complex causes might shrink into moments too small to carry weight. What feels moving could also be fleeting, lacking depth.

Scholars have noted that Instagram activism often blends personal narratives with political messaging, resulting in hybrid forms of advocacy that are both intimate and public (Abidin, 2021). This fusion allows activists to humanise social issues and foster parasocial connections with audiences. However, critics argue that the visual-centric nature of Instagram risks prioritising aesthetics over substance, potentially diluting complex social issues into consumable content (Duffy, 2017). These debates highlight the need for nuanced analyses that consider not only platform affordances but also how messages are framed and interpreted.

Within the Indian context, Instagram has become a key platform for addressing issues such as gender-based violence, environmental activism, mental health awareness, and caste discrimination. Regional influencers, grassroots activists, and non-profit organisations frequently use Instagram to reach audiences that may be less accessible through traditional media. Despite this growing relevance, what stands out is how little attention goes to language itself when studying Instagram activism in Bharat (India).

Most studies fixate on who sees what, follower counts, or how posts spread. Yet meaning - how words shape understanding - is rarely probed. Frameworks stuck only on features miss the bigger picture. Instead of just counting likes, looking at expression might reveal deeper layers (i.e. language use and cultural framing).

## 3. Framing, Narrative, and Meaning-Making in Digital Communication

Reality gets sorted through frames people build when sharing ideas. One scholar sees it as spotlighting parts of truth to push specific views, judgments, or fixes. How a cause is presented online changes if others see it as pressing, familiar, or valid.

Framing theory has long served as a foundational framework for understanding how media messages shape audience interpretation. Entman (1993) defines framing as the process of selecting certain aspects of reality and making them more salient in communication texts. Frames influence how audiences define problems, assign responsibility, and evaluate solutions. In the context of digital activism, framing determines whether social issues are perceived as urgent, relatable, or worthy of engagement.

Narrative theory further complements framing by emphasising storytelling as a mode of persuasion. Stories help people understand ideas better than facts alone. Fisher said back in 1987 that we think of tales, not just logic. When online movements want to be heard, they often tell personal experiences instead of numbers. Emotion grows stronger when data becomes someone's lived truth.

Though framing and narrative ideas agree on language mattering, they seldom address speaking more than one tongue. Many real-world investigations act as if everyone uses the same words, missing that picking a language can shape perception just like any frame does. Where people speak different languages, choosing which one reveals closeness, power, belonging - quietly guiding how listeners feel about protest speech. In multilingual societies, language choice itself becomes a framing device, signaling cultural proximity, authority, or

inclusivity. This gap underscores the need for theoretical models that integrate multilingual communication into analyses of digital activism.

#### 4. Multilingualism Identity and Digital Communication

Starting mid-thought, research on multiple languages online leans heavily into how speech shapes who people feel they are, along with influence and place in society - Piller noted that back in 2017. Platforms built for sharing messages allow shifting between tongues, mixing phrases in new ways, while also tailoring words based on who might be listening; these moves mirror deeper give-and-take seen when cultures meet in connected digital worlds.

Nowhere is voice shaped more by history than in Bharat (India), where words hold weight beyond meaning. Not just a tool for communication - speech ties people to identity, memory, place. Depending on choice, a tongue can signal access: English opens doors to institutions, cities, wider networks. Yet comfort lives in mother tongues - the ones spoken at home, in markets, during festivals. Activists online shift between them, aware that power sits in both fluency and familiarity. One mode pulls attention across borders, the other roots message in soil. Meaning changes when accent shifts. (Kachru, 2006).

One study found people tend to trust information more when it comes in a language they know well, feeling a stronger emotional connection too. (Kraljević et al., 2021). Even so, using multiple languages still plays only a small role in most theories about communication, especially when looking at online activism. Because of this gap, researchers often miss how different audiences understand messages in their own ways.

#### 5. Soft Power and Digital Influence Beyond the State

Soft power theory provides a valuable conceptual lens for understanding how narratives influence attitudes and behaviour. According to Nye (2004), soft power works by drawing others in, not forcing them. Instead of pressure, it relies on appeal. First used for countries, its reach now stretches further. While initially applied to state actors, scholars have increasingly recognised that soft power operates across multiple levels, including civil society, media, and popular culture (Cull, 2019). Culture becomes a channel where minds meet without orders.

Storytelling shapes influence online, not rules or force. When people push for change digitally, they lean on meaning, not control. Words become tools, quietly steering how ideas land in minds. Meaning shifts through symbols, spread wide by those outside official channels. Influence grows not from authority, but from shared feelings carried out in speech. How things are said matters more than who says them.

Still, most uses of soft power ideas skip over how multiple languages work online. Because of that, the concept struggles to explain what happens in places like Bharat (India), where picking a language shapes who listens and who connects. What spreads depends on which tongue you speak. Digital activism can thus be understood as a form of non-state digital soft power, where activists seek to influence public opinion and social norms through compelling narratives. Language plays a crucial role in this process, shaping how values are articulated and received. Hence, integrating soft power theory with multilingual communication frameworks offers a more comprehensive understanding of digital influence.

#### 6. The Multilingual Digital Soft Power (MDSP) Model

A fresh look at digital influence shows language matters more than old studies claimed. Instead of treating words as just tools, this approach places them front and center online. What begins as purposeful messaging twists through translation choices shaped by speakers' native patterns. Platforms then shape how those messages land - some speed them up, others block their path entirely. Readers do not simply absorb; they reshape meaning based on context. Responses loop back, shifting future attempts. Outcomes feel social, though calculation runs beneath. Meaning grows unevenly across borders. The Multilingual Digital Soft Power (MDSP) Model addresses many of the gaps identified in existing literature by foregrounding language as a central component of digital communication. The model conceptualises communication as a cyclical process encompassing strategic intent, multilingual message design, platform affordances, audience interpretation, feedback, and perceived outcomes. Unlike linear models, MDSP emphasises interaction, interpretation, and discursive circulation.

One way to look at MDSP is how meaning gets shaped through back-and-forth exchange, not just one-way delivery. While it began as a tool for understanding online diplomacy, ideas behind it come from broader fields like cultural dialogue and media flow. Because of that mix - communication patterns, subtle persuasion, shared understandings - it fits situations beyond its original use. What matters most is how people make sense together, not simply sending messages out

While the MDSP model has primarily been applied to digital diplomacy, its theoretical foundations draw from communication, soft power, and cross-cultural studies, making it adaptable to other domains of digital influence. Digital activism shares several characteristics with diplomacy, including the strategic use of narratives, reliance on public engagement, and emphasis on legitimacy and trust. Applying the MDSP model to Instagram activism thus represents a theoretically coherent extension. Storytelling shapes both online protests and quiet talks between nations, where words are chosen like chess moves. Public backing matters just as much when posting to thousands as it does in treaty rooms behind closed doors. Trust grows slowly, whether built through repeated posts or long negotiations across tables. Because of these shared bones, using the MDSP framework on Instagram campaigns feels less like invention - more like recognizing an old pattern in new light.

### 7. Identifying the Research Gap

One look at past research shows three connected missing pieces. Not enough work on digital activism pays attention to languages beyond English, especially outside Western countries. Studies focusing on Instagram often skip how language shapes activist messages. Current theories do not combine tools for studying how multiple languages affect online reach. What remains unclear is how these factors interact in real use.

This research looks at Instagram activism in Bharat (India) using the MDSP model. Because of that, it helps clarify how stories shift in ways that support social progress. What stands out is its attention to local context when tracking those changes. Instead, it moves beyond generic theories to show real-world impact. One thing becomes clear: methods matter when measuring influence. Even small shifts in messaging can reveal deeper patterns. Through this lens, digital efforts gain new meaning. By applying the MDSP model to Instagram-based digital activism in India, this study addresses these gaps and contributes to a more inclusive and context-sensitive understanding of narrative change for social good.

### 8. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in an integrative theoretical framework that synthesises **soft power theory**, **framing theory**, **narrative theory**, and **cross-cultural communication**, operationalised through the **Multilingual Digital Soft Power (MDSP) Model**. Together, these perspectives provide a structured lens for examining how multilingual digital activism on Instagram functions as a mechanism of narrative influence and social innovation.

Soft power theory conceptualises influence as the ability to shape preferences and attitudes through attraction, values, and culture rather than coercion (Nye, 2004). In digital contexts, soft power is exercised through communicative practices that generate emotional resonance, credibility, and voluntary engagement. While traditionally applied to state-led diplomacy, soft power has increasingly been recognised as relevant to non-state actors, including activists and civil society organisations. Instagram-based digital activism can thus be understood as a form of **digital soft power**, wherein narratives are strategically crafted to shape public awareness and social norms.

Framing theory further informs this framework by explaining how meaning is constructed through selective emphasis, linguistic representation, and symbolic cues (Entman, 1993). In digital activism, frames influence how social issues are defined, interpreted, and evaluated by audiences. Language choice plays a central framing role, particularly in multilingual environments, where different languages evoke distinct cultural associations and emotional responses. Multilingual framing enhances accessibility and signals inclusivity, thereby shaping audience interpretation and engagement.

Narrative theory complements framing by emphasising storytelling as a persuasive mode of communication. Narratives organise information into coherent structures that enable audiences to emotionally identify with social issues and actors (Fisher, 1987). On Instagram, narratives are constructed through the interplay of visuals, captions, hashtags, and language, allowing activism messages to move beyond information dissemination toward emotional and moral engagement.

Cross-cultural communication theory highlights the importance of linguistic familiarity and cultural context in shaping trust, interpretation, and participation (Piller, 2017). In linguistically diverse societies such as India, multilingual communication reduces interpretive distance between message creators and audiences, fostering inclusivity and cultural resonance.

The MDSP model integrates these theoretical strands into a cyclical communication process encompassing strategic intent, multilingual message design, platform affordances, audience interpretation, feedback, and perceived social outcomes. By applying the MDSP model to Instagram-based digital activism, this study conceptualises multilingual storytelling as a form of narrative soft power, offering a comprehensive framework

for understanding how digital communication contributes to social awareness, engagement, and narrative change for social good.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study is to examine **how audiences perceive multilingual digital activism on Instagram** using the **Multilingual Digital Soft Power (MDSP) model**, with a focus on social awareness and narrative impact.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Understand audience perceptions of Instagram as a platform for spreading awareness about social and public issues.
2. Examine how multilingual communication influences engagement, inclusivity, and trust in digital activism content.
3. Apply the MDSP model to analyse audience interpretation and feedback in Instagram-based activism.
4. Identify the perceived role of multilingual storytelling in promoting social good.

### **Research Questions**

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Do audiences perceive Instagram as an effective platform for social and public issue awareness?
2. How do audiences respond to multilingual digital activism content on Instagram?
3. Does multilingual communication enhance emotional engagement and inclusivity in activism narratives?
4. How relevant is the MDSP model in explaining audience perceptions of Instagram-based digital activism?
- 5.

## **HYPOTHESES**

Based on the objectives and theoretical framework, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Instagram is perceived as an effective platform for spreading awareness about social and public issues.
- **H2:** Multilingual digital activism content is perceived as more relatable and inclusive than monolingual content.
- **H3:** Multilingual communication increases emotional engagement with social cause-related content on Instagram.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study uses a **quantitative and descriptive research design**. A survey method was chosen to collect audience opinions and perceptions related to multilingual digital activism on Instagram.

### **Sample and Data Collection**

Data were collected from **50 active Instagram users** using a **convenience sampling method**. A structured online questionnaire was created using Google Forms. Participation was voluntary, and responses were collected anonymously for academic purposes only.

### **Research Instrument**

The questionnaire consisted of **15 statements** measured on a **5-point Likert scale**, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*. The statements were designed in line with the MDSP model and the study objectives.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The data were analysed using **simple descriptive statistics**. Responses were coded numerically and analysed using mean scores and percentage agreements. Statements were grouped according to key MDSP dimensions to understand overall trends. Advanced statistical tests were not used, as the study is exploratory in nature.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The survey data were collected from **50 Instagram users** to understand how audiences perceive multilingual digital activism on Instagram using the MDSP model. The analysis was conducted using **descriptive statistics**, mainly mean scores and percentage agreement, to identify overall trends in audience perception, engagement, and awareness.

### **Instagram as a Platform for Social Awareness**

The findings clearly show that **Instagram is perceived as an effective platform for spreading awareness about social and public issues**. A large majority of respondents agreed with this statement, indicating that Instagram plays an important role in exposing users to social causes and public discussions. Many participants also reported that they regularly come across posts related to social issues on Instagram, suggesting that activism-related content has become a visible part of everyday digital consumption.

This confirms that Instagram is not viewed only as an entertainment platform, but also as a meaningful space for social communication and awareness-building.

### **Role of Language and Multilingual Content**

Language emerged as an important factor in how audiences understand and connect with activism content. Most respondents stated that they **notice the language used in captions and messages**, especially when the topic relates to a social or public issue. Posts written in familiar languages were found to create a stronger sense of comfort and understanding.

Participants also agreed that **multilingual captions make activism content feel more inclusive**, allowing people from different linguistic backgrounds to relate to the message. Emotional connection was reported to be higher when content was presented in a language the audience understood well. This suggests that multilingual communication helps reduce distance between the message and the audience.

However, responses related to the authenticity of regional language use were mixed. Some respondents felt that regional languages add authenticity, while others remained neutral. This indicates that language alone does not guarantee authenticity; how naturally and contextually it is used also matters.

### **Emotional Engagement and Message Framing**

A strong finding from the survey was the importance of **tone and style of language**. Most respondents agreed that the way a message is written affects how seriously they take a social issue. Simple, respectful, and culturally familiar language was seen as more effective in conveying meaning and emotion.

Respondents also agreed that language choice influences how emotionally connected they feel to a cause. When messages were framed in a relatable manner, audiences were more likely to pay attention and reflect on the issue. This highlights the role of language as more than just information delivery—it shapes interpretation and emotional response.

### **Engagement and Interaction**

When it came to actions such as liking, sharing, or commenting, the responses were more moderate. While some respondents were more likely to engage with posts written in familiar languages, many remained neutral. This suggests that **language supports engagement but does not automatically lead to action**. Multilingual hashtags were found to slightly increase interest, but they were not a strong deciding factor for engagement. Overall, respondents felt that language plays a role in engagement decisions, but it works along with other elements such as visuals, issue relevance, and personal interest.

### **Perceived Impact and Outcomes**

Many respondents agreed that Instagram activism has increased their awareness of social and public issues. Multilingual content was also seen as helping improve trust and overall impact, though at a moderate level. More than half of the participants felt that using multiple languages strengthens the effectiveness of digital activism for social good. These results align with the MDSP model, particularly its focus on **audience interpretation, feedback, and perceived outcomes**.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study show that audiences clearly recognise Instagram as a useful platform for social awareness and digital activism. The visibility of social issues on Instagram indicates that the platform has become part of everyday public discourse, especially among younger and digitally active users.

One of the most important findings is the role of **language in shaping understanding and emotional connection**. Respondents consistently indicated that multilingual content helps them relate better to social

issues. This supports the idea that language functions as a bridge between content creators and audiences, particularly in a multilingual country like Bharat (India).

The results also show that **tone, style, and cultural familiarity** matter more than simply using multiple languages. Audiences respond positively to messages that feel respectful, clear, and culturally grounded. This highlights the importance of thoughtful message design rather than mechanical translation.

While multilingual communication improved emotional and cognitive engagement, its effect on behavioural engagement (likes, shares, comments) was moderate. This suggests that digital activism works in layers: awareness and understanding come first, while visible actions depend on additional factors. This finding strengthens the MDSP model's view that digital influence is a process, not a single outcome.

Overall, the findings support the idea that multilingual digital activism acts as a form of **soft influence**, shaping attitudes and awareness rather than forcing action. The MDSP model effectively explains how language choice, audience interpretation, and feedback interact in Instagram-based activism.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored how audiences perceive multilingual digital activism on Instagram using the MDSP model. Based on responses from 50 Instagram users, the findings show that Instagram is widely seen as an effective platform for spreading awareness about social and public issues.

The study highlights that language plays a key role in how audiences understand, relate to, and emotionally connect with activism content. Multilingual communication makes messages feel more inclusive and relatable, especially in a linguistically diverse context like India. Tone, clarity, and cultural familiarity were found to be particularly important in shaping audience response.

While multilingual content does not always lead directly to actions such as liking or sharing, it clearly strengthens awareness and emotional engagement. This suggests that digital activism should be understood as a gradual process of influence rather than immediate mobilisation.

By applying the MDSP model to Instagram-based activism, this study shows that multilingual storytelling functions as a form of digital soft power. It helps shape narratives, build trust, and promote social awareness in networked digital spaces.

In conclusion, multilingual digital activism on Instagram is a meaningful communication strategy for social good. The study offers practical insights for activists and content creators and contributes to a better understanding of narrative change in digital media.

## LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study is limited by its **small sample size of 50 respondents**, which restricts the generalisation of findings. The use of **convenience sampling** and **self-reported survey data** may also introduce response bias. Additionally, the study focuses only on **Instagram**, and results may differ across other social media platforms. Future research can address these limitations by using larger and more diverse samples, applying mixed methods such as content analysis or interviews, and conducting comparative studies across multiple platforms. Longitudinal research may further examine the long-term impact of multilingual digital activism on social attitudes and behaviour.

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