

Instagram Animal Welfare Communication Among Young Adults: A Community of Practice Approach

Sharmila H¹, Dr V R Revathy²

Abstract

Instagram has become an important visual and participatory platform where young adults encounter, share and respond to animal welfare content. In India, young adults use Instagram to circulate adoption appeals, rescue updates, lost and found alerts, feeding support, treatment requests and success stories. However, limited research has examined how the platform supports animal welfare engagement, online community formation and youth participation. This study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design among Instagram users aged 18 to 34 years in Chennai and Tamil Nadu. A total of 422 valid responses were analysed. The questionnaire measured Instagram use, animal care background, content exposure, perceptions of Instagram, participation behaviour, Community of Practice, PALS positive attachment and perceived impact. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, multiple response analysis, Spearman correlation, Mann Whitney U tests, chi square tests and multiple regression. The findings showed that respondents were active users, with 76.3% using Instagram daily and 75.1% having used it for at least four years. Most followed animal welfare pages, and 78.0% saw related content at least sometimes. Respondents reported strong positive perceptions of Instagram, Community of Practice and PALS positive attachment, while participation remained moderate. Participation was significantly higher among users who were more frequently exposed to animal welfare content. The regression model explained 62.5% of participation variance, with exposure as the strongest predictor, followed by Community of Practice and PALS positive attachment. The study concludes that Instagram can support animal welfare engagement by increasing visibility, emotional connection, trust and community-based participation. Stronger participation depends on repeated exposure, transparent information, clear instructions and trusted updates from animal welfare pages.

Keywords: Instagram, animal welfare communication, digital participation, Community of Practice, pet attachment

Introduction

Instagram is an important platform for visual communication, public interaction and cause-based participation among young adults. In India, young people aged 18 to 34 form a major part of Instagram's user base, making it relevant for studying youth participation in animal welfare communication (World Population Review, 2026; Dixon, 2025; Kemp, 2025). Its features, including posts, reels, stories, hashtags, comments and direct messages, help users create, share and respond to content around shared concerns (O'Reilly, 2005; boyd and Ellison, 2007; Hu et al., 2014; Arvio, 2022; Thomas et al., 2020).

Animal welfare communication on Instagram includes adoption appeals, rescue updates, missing pet alerts, feeding support, treatment requests, fundraising, cruelty awareness and reunion stories. Users may support these posts through small actions such as liking, sharing, commenting, tagging, reporting sightings or contacting rescuers. These actions can improve visibility and mobilisation, especially in time-sensitive rescue, lost animal and medical cases (Garrett, 2006; Lopes, 2014; Aji, 2019; Arathoon et al., 2024; Allen et al., 2022; Venaktramanan and Roberts, 2024).

This study views Instagram animal welfare spaces as online communities. Community of Practice theory explains shared concern, repeated interaction and practical action (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger Trayner et al., 2023), while the Pet Attachment and Life Impact Scale helps explain how emotional attachment to animals may associate with responses to animal welfare content (Cromer and Barlow, 2013).

¹Research Scholar, Department of Media Sciences, Anna University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India; Email: sharmishermis97@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Department of Media Sciences, Anna University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India; Email: revathycbe@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author: Sharmila H

*Email: sharmishermis97@gmail.com

Research Objectives

1. To examine young adults' Instagram use, animal care background and exposure to animal welfare content in Chennai and Tamil Nadu.
2. To assess young adults' perceptions of Instagram as a platform for animal welfare communication, awareness creation, trust building and participation.
3. To analyse how Instagram animal welfare spaces function as online communities of shared concern, information exchange, emotional support and collective action through a Community of Practice approach.
4. To identify the relationship between animal welfare content exposure, Community of Practice, PALS positive attachment and Instagram-based animal welfare participation.

Literature Review

Instagram and Digital Participation

Social media has shifted communication from one-way information sharing to active user participation, where users create, comment, repost and circulate content across networks (O'Reilly, 2005; Benkler, 2006; Ito et al., 2008; Larsson, 2015; Humphreys, 2016). Instagram is relevant because its visual and interactive features, including reels, stories, hashtags, comments, location tags and direct messages, support awareness, emotional engagement and practical action among young adults (Alhabash and Ma, 2017; Arvio, 2022; Thomas et al., 2020; Ito et al., 2008; Palfrey and Gasser, 2008). In animal welfare communication, photographs, videos and captions can show rescue urgency, missing locations, animal condition and recovery outcomes, while hashtags and direct messages support local coordination (Belk, 2016; Leaver et al., 2020; Jun, 2022; Rogers, 2021; Arathoon et al., 2024).

Community of Practice

Community of Practice theory explains how people with a shared concern interact regularly, learn from one another and develop common practices over time (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger Trayner et al., 2023). In this study, the domain is animal welfare, the community includes Instagram users, animal lovers, rescuers, feeders, adopters, donors and volunteers, and the practice includes sharing alerts, commenting, reporting sightings, supporting adoption, fundraising and circulating welfare information (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger Trayner et al., 2023). This framing moves the study beyond follower counts, as community becomes visible through shared concern, knowledge exchange, mutual support and repeated animal welfare practices (Wenger, 1998; Kozinets, 2015; Wenger Trayner et al., 2023).

Digital Storytelling and Visibility

Digital storytelling helps turn local animal welfare concerns into public issues through personal stories, images and updates (Rheingold, 2008; Ouya et al., 2025). In rescue and missing animal cases, posts often carry urgency, hope and fear, encouraging users to share and respond (Arathoon et al., 2024). Photographs, descriptions, location details and hashtags can increase sightings or leads, while trust, credibility and clear information are needed for users to act (Allen et al., 2022; Arathoon et al., 2024; Ouya et al., 2025; Lee et al., 2015). These cases also reflect collective intelligence, where small actions such as sharing, recognising, reporting or connecting with rescuers can support a common outcome (Smith, 1992; Lévy, 2001; Rajiv, 2013).

Animal Welfare and Digital Advocacy

Animal welfare includes physical health, safety, behaviour, emotional wellbeing, sentience, responsible care, protection from suffering and public awareness (Duncan, 2006; Carenzi and Verga, 2009). In India, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960 gives a legal foundation for preventing unnecessary suffering and places responsibility on people who care for animals (Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960). Digital advocacy can support animal welfare by spreading awareness, promoting adoption, discouraging cruelty, sharing rescue information and connecting people who can help (Garrett, 2006; Shirky, 2011; Lopes, 2014).

Human Animal Bond and PALS

The human animal bond explains why animal welfare content can create strong emotional responses. Companion animals are often viewed as family members, attachment figures and sources of emotional support (Johnson et al., 1992; Zilcha Mano et al., 2011; Cromer and Barlow, 2013; Albert and Bulcroft, 1988; Greenebaum, 2004; McConnell et al., 2019). The Pet Attachment and Life Impact Scale explains attachment through emotional support, love, regulation, personal growth and negative impact (Cromer and Barlow, 2013). Lost animal communication also involves uncertainty, fear and grief, while recovery and reunion stories can create relief, hope and community encouragement (Boss, 2000; Kennedy et al., 2019; Venaktraman and Roberts, 2024; Allen et al., 2022). Therefore, PALS is useful for understanding how emotional attachment may associate with online participation and support for animal welfare content. Together, these studies show that Instagram animal welfare participation can be understood through the combined role of platform visibility, online community practices and emotional attachment to animals.

Literature Gap

Existing studies have examined Instagram use, youth digital participation, online communities, animal

welfare, pet attachment and lost pet search behaviour separately. However, limited research explains how young adults use Instagram to participate in animal welfare and form cause-based online communities. This study addresses that gap by applying Community of Practice theory to Instagram-based animal welfare participation and using PALS positive attachment to examine the role of emotional connection with animals.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Community of Practice theory and supported by the PALS positive attachment framework. Community of Practice theory explains how people learn and participate through shared concern, regular interaction and common practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). In this study, Instagram animal welfare spaces are viewed as digital communities where users exchange information, provide emotional support and take part in collective action.

The framework is applied through three elements: **domain**, the shared concern for animal welfare; **community**, the Instagram users, animal lovers, rescuers, feeders, adopters, donors and volunteers; and **practice**, the repeated actions such as sharing rescue posts, reporting sightings, supporting adoption, commenting, tagging and circulating welfare information (Wenger, 1998; Wenger et al., 2002).

The study is also supported by the Pet Attachment and Life Impact Scale (PALS), which explains emotional attachment in human animal relationships (Cromer and Barlow, 2013). Here, PALS positive attachment helps explain how emotional connection with animals may be associated with users to respond to rescue, recovery, adoption and animal care content on Instagram.

Hypotheses

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

H1: Animal welfare content exposure on Instagram is positively associated with participation behaviour.

H2: Community of Practice is positively associated with Instagram-based animal welfare participation.

H3: PALS positive attachment is positively associated with Instagram-based animal welfare participation.

H4: Respondents who follow animal welfare pages differ significantly in participation behaviour compared with respondents who do not follow or are unsure.

H5: Animal owners or caregivers differ significantly from non-caregivers in PALS positive attachment, Community of Practice and participation behaviour.

Methods

This study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine how young Instagram users engage

with animal welfare content, online animal welfare communities, and animal-related participation. Data were collected through an online questionnaire circulated among Instagram users aged 18 to 34 years in Chennai and Tamil Nadu. A non-probability snowball sampling approach was used because the study focused on young Instagram users who were accessible through online networks. Participation was voluntary, and only respondents who gave consent, were aged 18 to 34 years and used Instagram were included in the final analysis.

The survey method was suitable because the study aimed to measure respondents' perceptions, exposure, participation behaviour, sense of online community, emotional attachment to animals, and perceived impact of Instagram in a structured way. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, multiple response analysis, Spearman correlation, Mann Whitney U tests, chi square tests, and multiple regression.

Participants

The final sample included 422 valid respondents aged 18 to 34 years, all of whom were Instagram users and had given consent. Of these, 57.8% were aged 18 to 24 and 42.2% were aged 25 to 34. Female respondents formed the largest group (56.6%), followed by male respondents (38.9%). Most respondents were undergraduates (51.9%) and postgraduates (31.8%) qualifications. In terms of residence, 70.6% were from Chennai and 29.4% were from other parts of Tamil Nadu.

The sample was relevant to the study because respondents were active Instagram users. 76.3% used Instagram daily, 75.1% had used it for at least four years, 64.5% followed animal welfare pages and 78.0% saw animal welfare content at least sometimes.

Measurement Scales

The questionnaire covered demographic profile, Instagram use, animal care background, exposure to animal welfare content, perception of Instagram, participation behaviour, Community of Practice, PALS positive attachment and perceived impact.

Most items were measured using five-point scales. Agreement based items ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, while participation and impact items used five-point effectiveness-based response options. Higher scores indicated stronger agreement, participation, attachment and perceived impact.

The perception scale measured views on Instagram's role in animal welfare awareness, trust, urgency and support. The participation scale measured actions such as liking, sharing, tagging, saving, contacting, donating and supporting animal welfare content. The Community of Practice scale measured shared concern,

interaction, knowledge sharing, emotional support and collective action. The PALS positive attachment scale measured emotional connection, responsibility, compassion and comfort related to animals. The perceived impact scale measured Instagram's role in reach, rescue support, adoption support, trust building and connecting people who can help.

Data analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the respondent profile, Instagram use, animal care background and animal welfare content exposure. Multiple response analysis was applied to survey items that allowed more than one response, in order to identify the most common forms of content exposure and participation among respondents. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the main scales. Spearman's rho correlation examined relationships between key scale variables. Mann Whitney U tests compared differences between two respondent groups, while chi square tests examined associations between categorical variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to identify Instagram based animal welfare participation. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the main scales. The reliability values ranged from $\alpha = .666$ to $\alpha = .780$, with the highest

reliability recorded for PALS positive attachment ($\alpha = .780$). Although some values were slightly below .70, they were retained because the study is exploratory in nature and the "Cronbach's alpha if item deleted" results showed that removing individual items did not improve reliability. Therefore, the scales were considered sufficiently consistent and suitable for further statistical analysis.

Results

Participant Profile and Instagram Exposure

A total of 422 valid responses from young Instagram users aged 18 to 34 were analysed. The sample included 244 respondents aged 18 to 24 years (57.8%) and 178 respondents aged 25 to 34 years (42.2%). Female respondents formed the largest group ($n = 239$, 56.6%), followed by male respondents ($n = 164$, 38.9%). Most respondents were from Chennai ($n = 298$, 70.6%), while 124 respondents (29.4%) were from other parts of Tamil Nadu.

The respondents were active Instagram users. A majority used Instagram daily ($n = 322$, 76.3%), and 317 respondents (75.1%) had used Instagram for four years or more. Animal welfare exposure was also strong, as 272 respondents (64.5%) followed animal welfare pages and 329 respondents (78.0%) saw animal welfare content at least sometimes. In addition, 337 respondents (79.9%) had some form of animal care connection, either through pet ownership, community animal care or both.

Table 1. Participant profile and Instagram exposure

Variable	Category	n	%
Age	18 to 24	244	57.8
Age	25 to 34	178	42.2
Gender	Female	239	56.6
Gender	Male	164	38.9
Gender	Other	10	2.4
Gender	Prefer not to say	9	2.1
Residence	Chennai	298	70.6
Instagram use	Daily	322	76.3
Instagram experience	4 years and above	317	75.1
Follows animal welfare pages	Yes	272	64.5
Sees animal welfare content at least sometimes	Yes	329	78.0
Any animal care connection	Yes	337	79.9

Descriptive Scores and Reliability

The highest mean score was found for perception of Instagram as an animal welfare communication platform ($M = 4.166$, $SD = 0.289$), followed by Community of Practice ($M = 4.066$, $SD = 0.285$), PALS positive attachment ($M = 4.041$, $SD = 0.477$), and perceived impact of Instagram ($M = 3.931$, $SD = 0.328$).

Digital participation showed a moderate mean score ($M = 3.290$, $SD = 0.390$), suggesting that respondents held stronger positive views of Instagram than their level of active participation.

Cronbach's alpha showed acceptable or near acceptable reliability across the main scales. PALS positive attachment showed the strongest reliability (α

= .780), followed by perception ($\alpha = .705$). Participation behaviour ($\alpha = .666$), Community of Practice ($\alpha = .691$),

and perceived impact ($\alpha = .697$) were retained because item deletion did not improve reliability.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and reliability

Scale	Mean	SD	Cronbach's alpha
Perception of Instagram	4.166	0.289	.705
Digital participation	3.290	0.390	.666
Community of Practice	4.066	0.285	.691
PALS positive attachment	4.041	0.477	.780
Perceived impact	3.931	0.328	.697

Animal Welfare Participation and Online Community Perceptions

The multiple response findings show that Instagram animal welfare communication was mainly associated with adoption, rescue, feeding support, lost and found alerts, recovery stories and public awareness. Adoption posts were the most commonly seen content (62.6%), while stories (79.6%) and posts (78.7%) were identified as the most useful Instagram features. The strongest perceived role of Instagram was creating animal welfare awareness (89.8%), followed by promoting adoption (73.5%) and supporting rescue or treatment (64.9%).

Trust was a central finding. Respondents considered clear photos or videos (85.5%), animal condition details

(79.4%), updates after help is received (77.0%), location details (74.9%) and proof of rescue, treatment, adoption or outcome (69.0%) as important elements of trustworthy posts. Online animal welfare communities were mainly understood as people connected by shared concern for animals (78.0%), awareness spaces (71.1%), and spaces that combine support, information and action (67.8%). The most common action taken was sharing animal welfare posts (68.0%), while the strongest motivation was love for animals (73.5%). The strongest barrier was lack of time (44.5%), and the strongest encouragement factor was clear instructions on how to help (76.8%).

Table 3. Key multiple response findings

Theme	Strongest response	n	% of cases
Content seen	Adoption posts	264	62.6
Useful feature	Stories	336	79.6
Activity supported	Creating awareness	379	89.8
Trustworthy post detail	Clear photo or video	361	85.5
Community meaning	Shared concern for animals	329	78.0
Action taken	Shared animal welfare posts	287	68.0
Motivation	Love for animals	310	73.5
Barrier	Lack of time	188	44.5
Encouragement	Clear instructions on how to help	324	76.8

Behavioural findings further showed that 181 respondents (42.9%) had used Instagram to seek help for animal welfare issues, 202 respondents (47.9%) had posted animal welfare content, and 304 respondents (72.0%) had reshared, commented or tagged others to increase reach. These findings show that Instagram participation included both visibility-based actions and practical community support.

Correlations, Group Differences and Regression Results

Spearman correlation analysis showed that animal welfare content exposure had the strongest relationship with digital participation ($\rho = .737$, $p < .001$). Participation was also positively associated with perception of Instagram ($\rho = .610$, $p < .001$), perceived impact ($\rho = .580$, $p < .001$), Community of Practice ($\rho = .443$, $p < .001$), and PALS positive attachment ($\rho = .291$, $p < .001$).

Table 4. Spearman correlation results

Relationship	Spearman's rho	p value
Exposure and participation	.737	< .001
Perception and participation	.610	< .001
Participation and perceived impact	.580	< .001
Participation and Community of Practice	.443	< .001
Participation and PALS positive attachment	.291	< .001

Mann Whitney U tests showed that age and residence did not significantly affect participation, Community of Practice, PALS attachment or perceived impact. However, animal caregivers had significantly higher scores than non-caregivers, especially for PALS positive attachment ($r = .566$). Respondents who followed animal welfare pages also showed significantly higher participation, Community of Practice and perceived impact scores than non-followers or unsure respondents. Chi square analysis showed a significant association between following animal welfare pages and posting animal welfare content, $\chi^2 = 6.272$, $p = .012$, Cramer's $V = .122$. Among followers, 52.6% had

posted animal welfare content, compared with 39.3% among non-followers or unsure respondents.

The multiple regression model was statistically significant and explained 62.5% of the variance in digital participation behaviour, $R^2 = .625$, Adjusted $R^2 = .618$, $F = 85.35$, $p < .001$. The strongest predictor was animal welfare content exposure ($\beta = .610$, $p < .001$), followed by Community of Practice ($\beta = .218$, $p < .001$) and PALS positive attachment ($\beta = .163$, $p < .001$). Perception, perceived impact, animal care status, following animal welfare pages and age were not significant predictors after the other variables were included.

Table 5. Regression predicting digital participation

Predictor	Standardized beta	p value
Animal welfare content exposure	.610	< .001
Community of Practice	.218	< .001
PALS positive attachment	.163	< .001
Perception score	.044	.361
Perceived impact score	.007	.881
Animal care status	-.037	.351
Follows animal welfare pages	.019	.588
Age	-.009	.770

Overall, the results show that digital participation in Instagram-based animal welfare is mainly linked to repeated exposure to animal welfare content, a sense of shared community practice and emotional attachment to animals. This supports the study's argument that Instagram functions not only as a visual communication platform but also as a participatory space where young adults engage through visibility, trust, emotional connection and community-based action.

Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses were tested using correlation, group difference, association and prediction based statistical tests. Spearman correlation was used for relationships between scale variables, Mann Whitney U tests were used for group differences, chi square was used for categorical associations, and multiple regression was used to identify the strongest predictors of participation. A significance level of $p < .05$ was used to determine statistical support.

Table 6. Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Test used	Key result	Decision
H1: Animal welfare content exposure is positively associated with participation behaviour.	Spearman correlation and regression	$\rho = .737, p < .001; \beta = .610, p < .001$	Supported
H2: Community of Practice is positively associated with participation behaviour.	Spearman correlation and regression	$\rho = .443, p < .001; \beta = .218, p < .001$	Supported
H3: PALS positive attachment is positively associated with participation behaviour.	Spearman correlation and regression	$\rho = .291, p < .001; \beta = .163, p < .001$	Supported
H4: Followers of animal welfare pages differ significantly from non-followers/unsure respondents in participation behaviour.	Mann Whitney U test and chi square	Participation was significantly higher among followers; $\chi^2 = 6.272, p = .012, V = .122$	Supported
H5: Animal owners/caregivers differ significantly from non-caregivers in attachment, community and participation.	Mann Whitney U test	Participation $p = .003$; Community of Practice $p < .001$; PALS attachment $p < .001$; strongest effect for PALS, $r = .566$	Supported

Overall, all five hypotheses were supported. The strongest statistical support was found for H1, showing that repeated exposure to animal welfare content was the strongest factor associated with digital participation. Community of Practice and PALS positive attachment were also associated with participation, while followers of animal welfare pages and animal owners or caregivers showed stronger engagement than their comparison groups.

Discussion

The findings show that Instagram is a relevant platform for animal welfare communication among young adults. Most respondents were active Instagram users, with 76.3% using Instagram daily and 75.1% using it for at least four years. This confirms that the sample was appropriate for examining Instagram-based animal welfare awareness and participation.

The findings show that young adults had strong positive views of Instagram's role in animal welfare and showed strong emotional attachment to animals, but their actual participation was moderate. This suggests a gap between support and deeper action, such as donating, volunteering or direct rescue involvement.

Exposure to animal welfare content was the strongest factor linked to participation. Users who saw such content more often were more likely to like, share, tag, post or support animal welfare actions. This shows that regular visibility through clear visuals, hashtags, local details and follow up updates can increase engagement.

Community of Practice and PALS positive attachment also supported participation. Instagram animal welfare pages were seen as spaces of shared concern, learning, support and collective action, not only as pages for viewing content. This supports the Community of Practice approach because participation included shared concern, information exchange and repeated

support practices. Emotional attachment to animals further encouraged users to respond to rescue, adoption, missing animal and recovery related posts, showing that PALS positive attachment is useful for explaining why animal welfare content receives attention and response in a media and communication context.

Trust was another key finding. Respondents preferred posts with clear photos, animal condition details, regular updates, proof of outcomes, transparent donation details and simple instructions on how to help. Overall, Instagram can work as a participatory communication space for animal welfare when emotional storytelling, trust building and clear action guidance are combined.

Conclusion

Instagram plays an important role in animal welfare communication among young adults in Chennai and Tamil Nadu. The findings show that young adults engage with animal welfare content through awareness, sharing, tagging, posting and support related actions.

The strongest finding is that exposure to animal welfare content is the strongest predictor of participation. Community of Practice and PALS positive attachment were also associated with participation, showing that shared community feeling and emotional connection with animals are important in encouraging engagement.

Overall, Instagram can support animal welfare by increasing visibility, building trust, creating emotional connection and connecting people around a shared cause. For stronger participation, animal welfare pages should provide clear information, regular updates, proof of outcomes, transparent donation details and simple instructions on how users can help. Thus, Instagram can become a more effective participatory

communication platform for animal welfare when emotional appeal, trust, and clear action guidance work together.

Limitations

This study focused on young Instagram users aged 18 to 34 from Chennai and Tamil Nadu, which gave the research a clear youth and regional focus. However, the findings can be strengthened by including other age groups and wider locations. The study also focused only on Instagram, while animal welfare communication may also occur through WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, X and other platforms.

Future Research

Future studies can include respondents from different age groups, cities and Indian states. Longitudinal research can examine whether repeated exposure to Instagram animal welfare content leads to stronger long-term participation and offline action. Further qualitative interviews, case studies or netnography can also explore how animal welfare pages build trust, manage rescue communication and encourage community participation.

Ethical Statement

Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection. No personally identifying information was reported in the study.

Funding

No funding was received for conducting this study.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

1. Aji, A. P. (2019). The role of social media in shaping the animal protection movement in Indonesia. *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi*, 3(3), 389–401. <https://doi.org/10.25139/jsk.v3i3.1666>
2. Albert, A., & Bulcroft, K. (1988). Pets, families, and the life course. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 50, 543–552. <https://doi.org/10.2307/352019>
3. Alhabash, S., & Ma, M. (2017). A tale of four platforms: Motivations and uses of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat among college students. *Social Media + Society*, 3(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117691544>
4. Allen, D., Arathoon, J., & Selby-Fell, H. (2022). Experiences of dog theft and spatial practices of searching. *The Geographical Journal*, 188(4), 518–533. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12474>
5. Arathoon, J., Allen, D., & Hallatt, A. (2024). Too hot to handle: Making lost and stolen pets present in virtual space. *Geoforum*, 152, Article 104013. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2024.104013>
6. Arvio, M. G. (2022). *Building an online community on Instagram: Hausinki* [Bachelor's thesis, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences]. <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:amk-2022121228086>
7. Belk, R. (2016). Extended self and the digital world. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 10, 50–54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.11.003>
8. Benkler, Y. (2006). *The wealth of networks: How social production transforms markets and freedom*. Yale University Press. [https://www.benkler.org/Benkler Wealth Of Networks.pdf](https://www.benkler.org/Benkler%20Wealth%20Of%20Networks.pdf)
9. Boss, P. (2000). *Ambiguous loss: Learning to live with unresolved grief*. Harvard University Press. <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/books/9780674003811>
10. boyd, d. (2007). Why youth heart social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, identity, and digital media* (pp. 119–142). MIT Press. <https://www.danah.org/papers/WhyYouthHeart.pdf>
11. boyd, d., & Ellison, N. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210–230. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x>
12. Carenzi, C., & Verga, M. (2009). Animal welfare: Review of the scientific concept and definition. *Italian Journal of Animal Science*, 8(Suppl. 1), 21–30. <https://doi.org/10.4081/ijas.2009.s1.21>
13. Cromer, L. D., & Barlow, M. R. (2013). Factors and convergent validity of the Pet Attachment and Life Impact Scale. *Human-Animal Interaction Bulletin*, 1(2), 34–56. <https://doi.org/10.1079/hai.2013.0012>
14. Dixon, S. J. (2025). *Countries with the most Instagram users*. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/578364/countries-with-most-instagram-users/>
15. Duncan, I. J. H. (2006). The changing concept of animal sentience. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 100(1–2), 11–19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.applanim.2006.04.011>
16. Feld, S. L. (1981). The focused organization of social ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 86(5), 1015–1035. <https://smg.media.mit.edu/library/Feld.SocialTies.pdf>
17. Garrett, R. K. (2006). Protest in an information society: A review of literature on social movements and new ICTs. *Information, Communication & Society*, 9(2), 202–224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180600630773>

18. Greenebaum, J. (2004). It's a dog's life: Elevating status from pet to "fur baby" at Yappy Hour. *Society & Animals*, 12(2), 117–135. <https://www.animalsandsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/greenebaum.pdf>
19. Hu, Y., Manikonda, L., & Kambhampati, S. (2014). What we Instagram: A first analysis of Instagram photo content and user types. *Proceedings of the Eighth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*, 595–598. <https://doi.org/10.1609/icwsm.v8i1.14578>
20. Humphreys, A. (2016). *Social media: Enduring principles*. Oxford University Press.
21. Ito, M., Horst, H. A., Bittanti, M., et al. (2008). *Living and learning with new media: Summary of findings from the Digital Youth Project*. MacArthur Foundation. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED536072.pdf>
22. Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York University Press. <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/san/waysofbeing/data/communication-zangana-jenkins-2006.pdf>
23. Jenkins, H., Purushotma, R., Weigel, M., Clinton, K., & Robison, A. J. (2009). *Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century*. MIT Press. https://www.macfound.org/media/article_pdfs/jenkins_white_paper.pdf
24. Johnson, T. P., Garrity, T. F., & Stallones, L. (1992). Psychometric evaluation of the Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale (LAPS). *Anthrozoös*, 5(3), 160–175. <https://doi.org/10.2752/089279392787011395>
25. Jun, S. H. (2022). Why do people post photos on Instagram? *Sustainability*, 14(19), Article 12648. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141912648>
26. Kemp, S. (2025). *Digital 2025: India*. DataReportal. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-india>
27. Kennedy, C., Deane, F. P., & Chan, A. Y. C. (2019). In limbo: A systematic review of psychological responses and coping among people with a missing loved one. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 75(9), 1544–1571. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22799>
28. Kligler-Vilenchik, N., & Shresthova, S. (2012, October 2). *Learning through practice: Participatory culture civics* [Case study report working paper]. Media, Activism and Participatory Politics Project, Civic Paths, Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, University of Southern California. https://clalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/files/learning_through_practice_kligler-shresthova_oct-2-2012.pdf
29. Kozinets, R. V. (2015). *Netnography: Redefined* (2nd ed.). Sage. <https://netnographicresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Netnography-Redefined-Kozinets-R.-V.-2015.pdf>
30. Larsson, A. O. (2015). The EU Parliament on Twitter: Assessing the permanent online practices of parliamentarians. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 12(2), 149–166. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2014.994158>
31. Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355>
32. Leaver, T., Highfield, T., & Abidin, C. (2020). *Instagram: Visual social media cultures*. Polity Press.
33. Lee, E., Lee, J. A., Moon, J. H., & Sung, Y. (2015). Pictures speak louder than words: Motivations for using Instagram. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 18(9), 552–556. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2015.0157>
34. Lévy, P. (2001). Collective intelligence. In D. Trend (Ed.), *Reading digital culture* (pp. 253–258). Blackwell. <https://is.cuni.cz/studium/predmety/index.php?do=download&did=29658&kod=JIM085>
35. Lopes, A. R. (2014). The impact of social media on social movements: The new opportunity and mobilizing structure. *Journal of Political Science Research*. https://attfinnasanningen.se/dokument/offentligt/documents/media/brainwashing_mindcontrol_m_kultra/the%20impact%20of%20social%20media%20on%20social%20movements%20the%20new%20opportunity%20and%20mobilizing%20structure%20-%20amandha%20rohr%20lopes.pdf
36. McConnell, A. R., Paige Lloyd, E., & Humphrey, B. T. (2019). We are family: Viewing pets as family members improves wellbeing. *Anthrozoös*, 32(4), 459–470. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08927936.2019.1621516>
37. O'Reilly, T. (2005). *What is Web 2.0: Design patterns and business models for the next generation of software*. O'Reilly Media. <https://www.oreilly.com/pub/a/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html>
38. Ouya, V., Conteh, H., & Kagotho, N. (2025). Examining the role of social media and imagined communities in addressing social welfare gaps in Kenya. *Social Media + Society*, 11(2), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051251345363>
39. Palfrey, J., & Gasser, U. (2008). *Born digital: Understanding the first generation of digital natives*. Basic Books.
40. Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, No. 59 of 1960. (India). https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/Garret/123456789/11237/1/the_prevention_of_cruelty_to_animals_act%2C_1960.pdf
41. Rajiv, A. (2013). *Analyzing user behavior on Facebook's Hurricane Sandy lost and found pets*

- page to improve support for pet matching in crisis informatics applications [Master's thesis, University of Colorado]. https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/graduate_thesis_or_dissertations/7s75dc733
42. Rheingold, H. (2008). Using participatory media and public voice to encourage civic engagement. In W. L. Bennett (Ed.), *Civic life online: Learning how digital media can engage youth* (pp. 97–118). MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/7893.003.0006>
 43. Rogers, R. (2021). Visual media analysis for Instagram and other online platforms. *Big Data & Society*, 8(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517211022370>
 44. Shirky, C. (2011). The political power of social media: Technology, the public sphere, and political change. *Foreign Affairs*, 90(1), 28–41. <https://faculty.cc.gatech.edu/~beki/cs4001/Shirky.pdf>
 45. Smith, J. B. (1992). *Collective intelligence in computer-based collaboration*. Department of Computer Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <https://www.cs.unc.edu/techreports/92-011.pdf>
 46. Thomas, V. L., Chavez, M., Browne, E. N., & Minnis, A. M. (2020). Instagram as a tool for study engagement and community building among adolescents: A social media pilot study. *Digital Health*, 6, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2055207620904548>
 47. Venaktramanan, A., & Roberts, L. (2024). The experiences and needs of dog owners affected by dog theft. *Human-Animal Interactions*, 12, Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.1079/hai.2024.0004>
 48. Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1023947624004>
 49. Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W. M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge*. Harvard Business School Press.
 50. Wenger-Trayner, E., Wenger-Trayner, B., Reid, P., & Bruderlein, C. (2023). *Communities of practice within and across organizations*. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.wenger-trayner.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/24-02-21-CoP-guidebook-second-edition-final-2.pdf>
 51. World Population Review. (2026). *Instagram users by country*. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/instagram-users-by-country>
 52. Zilcha-Mano, S., Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2011). Pet in the therapy room: An attachment perspective on animal-assisted therapy. *Attachment & Human Development*, 13(6), 541–561. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2011.608987>