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## Employing digital government communication strategies via Instagram to promote the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally

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### Abstract

This study aimed to identify the most essential communication strategies and promotional activities used in the digital communication content of government institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain. It utilized content analysis of several Instagram accounts of government institutions concerned with international promotion, consisting of four dimensions: tourism, trade, public diplomacy, and culture. The analytical study sample covered six months, from November 1, 2023, to the end of May 2024, excluding the month of Ramadan. The most significant study result is that all the government institutions under study sought to build a positive mental image of the Kingdom of Bahrain through their Instagram accounts by focusing on presenting the tourism, economic, diplomatic, and cultural practices that took place across the kingdom. In light of the "International Promotion Model," it was clear that these institutions considered using all types of communication strategies to promote the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally. The "information" strategy ranked first among all the institutions under study. In addition, they employed several promotional mechanisms through their Instagram accounts, such as the "proactive promotion of important tourism and cultural events in the Kingdom of Bahrain" in both the tourism and cultural sectors and "cooperation with influencers and digital ambassadors to promote Bahrain internationally" in the economic and public diplomacy sectors. Overall, the mental image features of all sectors whose accounts were analyzed reflected the Kingdom as an investment destination, a reliable trade and diplomatic partner, a culturally advanced front, and a proponent of honorable political positions on international issues. The study recommended formulating a strategic vision for Bahraini digital diplomacy to be prioritized at the top of Bahraini diplomatic efforts as one of the soft power tools.

**Keywords:** Communication strategies, Content, Digital communication, Government institutions, Instagram, International promotion, Kingdom of Bahrain.

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**Transparency:** The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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## 1. Introduction

The Kingdom of Bahrain is one of the countries that has recognized the importance of digital government communication. The digital transformation strategy implemented by the Kingdom has been reflected in its government institutions employing digital communication to achieve many strategic goals, including the international promotion of the Kingdom of Bahrain [1]. Although this function is often performed by all institutions within the Kingdom of Bahrain, regardless of their specializations, there are government institutions dedicated to promoting the kingdom internationally in a comprehensive manner, including tourist, economic, cultural, and public diplomacy institutions. This approach, in turn, creates a positive image and reputation for the Kingdom of Bahrain among the international community.

International promotion involves several essential elements, including culture, history, heritage, politics, economics, sustainability, values, and other factors that distinguish a country. This helps improve foreign investment, increase tourism rates, and enhance the positive image of a country internationally [2]. International promotion strategies encompass a diverse blend of cultural, economic, tourist, and diplomatic promotion [3].

Figure 1 shows the basic dimensions of international promotion as presented by Alam et al. [4]: “culture, tourism, exports, foreign investment, immigration, and governance”.



**Figure 1.**  
Dimensions of international promotion.  
**Source:** Alam et al. [4].

In light of rapid technological developments, it has become important to integrate digital communication with the international promotional activities used by government institutions involved in the nation's branding. In the same context, it is essential to identify the most appropriate social media strategies for this purpose.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. The Role of Digital Government Communication in Nation Branding

Digital nation branding encompasses many dimensions, such as politics, governance, economics, investment, tourism, culture, and heritage. Based on the current study's aims, the following literature review will focus on the role of digital promotional government communication in four specific dimensions of international national branding:

#### 2.1.1. Touristic Promotion

To identify the role of government communication in promoting tourism in countries, Hamdan [5] aimed to determine the role of digital communication employed by some government institutions to promote tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It concluded that tourism is promoted effectively by using the "X" platform. The same study highlighted that the

"Riyadh Season" came at the forefront of events relied upon to promote tourism in Saudi Arabia. Tiago et al. [6] concluded that focusing on a digital dialogue strategy through government social media platforms had a positive impact on increasing awareness of digital tourism campaigns in Brazil.

Tadic et al. [7] found that the most essential roles of government digital promotion for local tourist destinations in Indonesia focus on various types of tourism, such as medical and festival tourism, which have a significant impact on their economic growth. In the same context, Raadai and Bekader [8] found that government digital communication plays a significant role in influencing international promotion in Algeria through the hotel sector. Papageorgiou et al. [9] emphasized the importance of social media platforms as digital communication tools to enhance the public image of the hotel sector in Cyprus.

#### *2.1.2. Economic Promotion*

Within the framework of the role of government digital communication in achieving effective international promotion of the local economy, Evitha et al. [10] concluded that the government digital communication management in Indonesia has played an effective role in achieving the international promotion of the Indonesian economy during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the same sequence, Kuzior et al. [11] found that government digital communication methods contributed to the international promotion of sustainable development and the recovery of the Chinese economy. Hamaz and Boukerzaza [12] aimed to evaluate the relationship between digital communication in the economic sector in Algeria and its role in enhancing the image of Algerian products in global markets. The study revealed that the Algerian economy heavily relies on digital communication strategies to promote Algeria's image in international markets.

Ramadan [13] found that the Indonesian city of Bekasi implemented several effective digital activities to aid comprehensive and sustainable economic recovery by positioning the city as a smart city, which contributed to the city's effective promotion internationally. Sujittavanich and Ruayngern [14] also found that Indonesia's digital government communication strategies had an effective impact on promoting its economy and enhancing its image internationally. Al-Balushi et al. [15] study confirmed the same previous findings regarding the increased effectiveness of digital communication tools employed by Omani government institutions in promoting the Omani economy as a strong and developed one. Holroyd [16] also emphasized the importance of government digital communication in achieving effective international promotion of the national economy and national industrial policies in Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Hong Kong, which promote the country's economy effectively.

#### *2.1.3. Public Diplomacy Promotion*

Within the framework of studies that addressed the role of digital government communication in promoting any country's public diplomacy, Jamal El-Din [17] concluded that the level of creativity in digital government communication by some political institutions led to a high level of international promotion for Egypt and its foreign policy, both regionally and internationally. Sánchez-Núñez et al. [18] found that using digital communication tools to promote Macedonia played an essential role in shaping its international image and reputation in public diplomacy. Gosling [19] found that digital diplomacy is an effective tool for expressing Russia's soft power, building trust with international audiences, and thereby enhancing the country's reputation.

In the same context, Natarajan [20] found that the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs paid great attention to presenting Indian culture with diverse colors, symbols, and connotations that express Indian cultural identity, which was reflected in its international promotion and image, particularly in public diplomacy. Johnson [21] also demonstrated the essential role of government digital communication in international promotion through public diplomacy and its reflection on the image of Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Scotland, portraying them as countries dedicated to peace and international cooperation.

#### *2.1.4. Cultural Promotion*

Within the framework of studies that aimed to identify the role of digital government communication in promoting cultural heritage in countries, Johnson [21] concluded that digital content provided by some government institutions plays an essential role in promoting Algeria's cultural heritage by highlighting it as a country of cultural and religious coexistence. Ben Salem Safi and Dhikra [22] reached the same previous conclusion that digital government communication tools played an essential role in increasing the external public's perception of Algerian cultural heritage. Hassan [23] concluded that Egyptian cultural institutions play an important role in enhancing the perception of Egyptian culture among international audiences. Djumrianti [24] also confirmed the effectiveness of social media platforms in assisting government agencies in communicating and promoting cultural events internationally.

#### *2.2. Digital Communication Strategies Used in International Promotional Activities*

Within the framework of studies that addressed the importance of digital communication strategies employed in international promotional activities, Diefallah et al. [25] found a positive impact of government digital communication strategies on promoting sustainable tourism in Algeria. Ben Salem Safi and Dhikra [22] found that the communication strategies adopted by the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs (represented by the Saudi embassies in Egypt, the UAE, the UK, and the US) in practicing digital diplomacy contributed to shaping positive attitudes towards Saudi Arabia. These strategies relied on leveraging digital visual effects (images and infographics) as one of the most important digital strategies for the Saudi embassy in communicating with its audience. Masfaoui and Harkas [26] recommended using digital

transformation in presenting Algerian cultural heritage, considering it as an essential step that the Algerian government must take to keep pace with the modernization of its tourism and culture sectors.

Camilleri [27] found that digital communication strategies used by a sample of American companies were highly effective in promoting tourism in the United States. These strategies focused on indirect promotion methods for US tourist destinations, such as influencer marketing and implicit promotion of tourist attractions in American films. Park and Lim [28] found that South Korea and Japan focused on promoting their cultural heritage through text and visual images. The results also indicated that Korean digital diplomacy was more successful than Japanese in attracting a larger number of followers and engaging with foreign audiences.

By reviewing the above-mentioned studies, it becomes clear that the importance of focusing on different dimensions when promoting any country internationally. These dimensions primarily focus on international promotion in tourism, culture, economy, and public diplomacy. Additionally, the importance of relying on various digital strategies for this promotion has become apparent. These strategies include focusing on each country's unique features, paying attention to visual promotion elements, highlighting cultural heritage, relying on social influencers, and implicit promotion.

### **3. The Scope of the Study**

The Kingdom of Bahrain has a significant capacity for strategic planning to utilize its capabilities and direct them toward achieving its current and future goals. Among these goals, which are outlined in the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030, is supporting and enhancing the Kingdom's competitive position [29].

The Kingdom of Bahrain offers numerous investment opportunities for global investors. Therefore, it is important to have clear digital communication strategies to showcase all these opportunities. At the same time, Bahrain possesses numerous distinct tourism, cultural, and investment assets that can be leveraged to promote the Kingdom internationally [30]. Hence, this study aims to identify the communication strategies and promotional activities used in the Instagram communication content of government institutions concerned with the international promotion of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in light of four main dimensions: (tourism, culture, economy, public diplomacy), by analyzing the content of these accounts on Instagram. The importance of the study stems from the limited number of studies that have addressed the digital government strategies for the international promotion of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

### **4. Study questions**

The study questions focus on analyzing the digital content on Instagram of the government institutions under study, concerned with the international promotion of the Kingdom of Bahrain, as follows:

- Q1. What are the characteristics of the digital content on Instagram of the government institutions under study that are concerned with the international promotion of the Kingdom of Bahrain?
- Q2. What is the actual interactivity with the Instagram content of the government institutions concerned with promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally?
- Q3. What digital communication strategies for the Kingdom of Bahrain are used in the communication content on Instagram of the government institutions under study?
- Q4. What international promotional activities for the Kingdom of Bahrain are used in the communication content on Instagram of the government institutions under study?
- Q5. What are the key characteristics of the Kingdom of Bahrain's image portrayed through government institutions' digital communication on Instagram?

### **5. Theoretical Framework**

The current study depends on the "international promotion model" of Fullerton and Kendrick [31] as a theoretical framework. This model explains the dimensions of a country's promotional mix, specifically through digital media. It aims to clarify how digital media can promote the country's image internationally. Based on this model, the four dimensions of international promotion are tourism, economics, culture, and public diplomacy [32].

Based on this model, communication is the core of the promotion process, where various digital communication tools, such as websites, social media, mobile apps, and emails, can be used to reach global audiences [3]. In general, international promotion for countries aims to attract investment, promote tourism, enhance cultural, commercial, and economic exchanges, strengthen a country's position on various issues, and promote its soft power, represented in culture, identity, and heritage [20].

#### **5.1. Tóth [33] and Steenkamp [34] Defined the Four Promotional Dimensions of This Model as Follows**

1. Public diplomacy promotion: it includes two dimensions: popular diplomacy, which promotes people's heritage, customs, traditions, cultural legacy, and civilization. The other dimension is soft power, which utilizes international propaganda and international media production.
2. Economic promotion: it refers to the efforts of government institutions to enhance economic activity, attract foreign investment, boost the country's foreign trade, and highlight the country's popular industries and locally produced products and brands [34].
3. Tourism promotion involves marketing the country as an attractive tourist destination through various promotional strategies, including international tourism promotion campaigns [35] with a media focus on exports, tourism, investment, culture, heritage, and the people's lifestyle [21].

4. Cultural promotion: It includes promoting cultural events in the country, heritage landmarks, archaeological sites, and museums, in addition to international cultural exchange, in which the media also plays an important role [36]. The international promotion model will be employed in this study by analyzing the four basic dimensions of this model (public diplomacy, economy, tourism, culture) of the Instagram accounts of some government institutions concerned with the international promotion of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

**Table 1.**

Description of the analytical study sample.

Institution Name and Account on Instagram	Reason/s for Choosing	Followers Number	Followers' Growth Rate	AVG posts per day	NO. of analyzed posts
Tourism Promotion Dimension					
Ministry of Tourism: @tourismbh	Official accounts specialized in broadcasting tourism marketing campaigns for Bahrain, as well as announcing concerts, festivals, and exhibitions that contribute to promoting Bahrain's tourism sector.	89.1k	1.59%	5	555
Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority: "@bahraintourismauthority		14.1k	5.3%	5	163
Bahrain Calendar: @calendar.bh		57k	2.7%	3	293
Economic Promotion Dimension					
Economic Development Board: @bahrainedb	Official accounts specialized in promoting Bahrain's image as a country with a fertile economic environment suitable for investment and attracting various projects through facilitated economic methods and privileges.	27.7k	0.63%	5	453
Ministry of Commerce and Industry: @bahrainchamber		19.1k	0.46%	2	476
Ministry of Finance and National Economy: @bahrainmofne		19.3k	1.33%	4	293
Public Diplomacy Promotion Dimension					
Ministry of Foreign Affairs: @bahdiplomatic	Official accounts responsible for the Kingdom of Bahrain's public diplomacy communication, in addition to activating international public relations programs to support the Kingdom's reputation and positions on various international issues.	57.6k	1.66%	6	1127
National Contact Center: @nccbahrain		17.7k	0.45	2	406
Culture Promotion Dimension					
Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities: @culturebah	Official government accounts specialized in promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain's culture and heritage by launching various cultural events and promoting them on social media.	86.5k	6.9%	7	936
Spring of Culture: @springofculture		20.7k	0.64%	1	466
Total	5168				

## 6. Methodology

This is a descriptive study. It used the survey method through a content analysis tool for the Instagram accounts of some Bahraini government institutions involved in the international promotion of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Therefore, the unit of content analysis is the Instagram post.

The analytical sample of the study relied on a deliberate sample of a specific number of Instagram accounts involved in the international promotion of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Table 1 shows the analytical sample description, which covers the period from November 1, 2023, to the end of May 2024. The authors selected this period specifically due to the numerous events and festivals that occurred in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The total number of these posts is 5,168.

This study focuses solely on Instagram, as the authors found that Instagram is the most effective platform compared to other platforms used by the government institutions under study. Additionally, the importance of Instagram as a primary platform for international promotion and its increasing usage rates at the Gulf and international levels are noteworthy [37].

In the same context, several previous studies have used official Instagram accounts to analyze their strategic communications related to various topics [38].

**Table 2.**

Description of the formal features of the Instagram accounts under study.

<b>Institution name on Instagram</b>	<b>The most repeated Hashtag</b>	<b>Engagement Rate</b>	<b>AVG repost</b>	<b>AVG Comments</b>	<b>AVG Likes</b>
<b>Tourism Promotion Dimension</b>					
Ministry of Tourism: @tourismbh	#Tourism in Bahrain	0.09%	4.8%	1.5	80.44
Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority: @bahraintourismauthority	#Bahrain is yours.	0.61%	1.18%	2.38	96.50
Bahrain Calendar: @calendar.bh	#Tourism in Bahrain.	0.13%	6.5%	2.11	85.22
<b>Economic Promotion Dimension</b>					
Economic Development Board: @bahrainedb	#Bahrain_ Chamber	0.28%	3.2%	0.69	79.38
Ministry of Commerce and Industry: @bahrainchamber	#bahrainmofne	0.69%	1.18%	0.69	78.94
Ministry of Finance and National Economy: @bahrainmofne	#Manama_week	0.20%	1.89%	1.56	39.19
<b>Public Diplomacy Promotion Dimension</b>					
Ministry of Foreign Affairs: @bahdiplomatic	#Bahrain _ Summit	0.19%	2.19%	0.13	109.38
National Contact Center: @nccbahrain	#Bahrain _ Team	-	0.54	0.00	0.00
<b>Culture Promotion Dimension</b>					
Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities @culturebah	#Bahrain _Authority for Culture_ and Antiquities	0.21	5.9%	1.50	186.38
Spring of Culture @springofculture	#springofculture	0.24	3.8%	0.94	54.00
Total	5168				

## 7. Results

### 7.1. The Formal Features of the Instagram Accounts Under Study

The researchers relied on Social Blade, a website specializing in analyzing social media platforms, to obtain accurate data on the formal features of the analyzed accounts. Generally, all these accounts relied on a combination of Arabic and English in the content provided.

Regarding the formal features of all government Instagram accounts concerned with the international promotion of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Table 2 shows the most repeated hashtag, the engagement rate, the average reposts, the average comments, and the average likes during the study period. In this regard, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry account topped the "engagement rate" category (0.69%). The Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities account topped the "average like rate" category (186.38). The Bahrain Calendar account topped the "average repost" category (5.9%). The Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions account topped the "average comments" category (2.38%).

Regarding the interactivity with the Instagram content of the government institutions concerned with promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally, based on Table 2, It can be concluded that the interactivity rate on the Instagram accounts under study is "low" in light of the low percentages of average likes, comments, and reposts, which are reflected in a low engagement rate with these accounts.

## 7.2. The Substantive Features of the Instagram Accounts Under Study

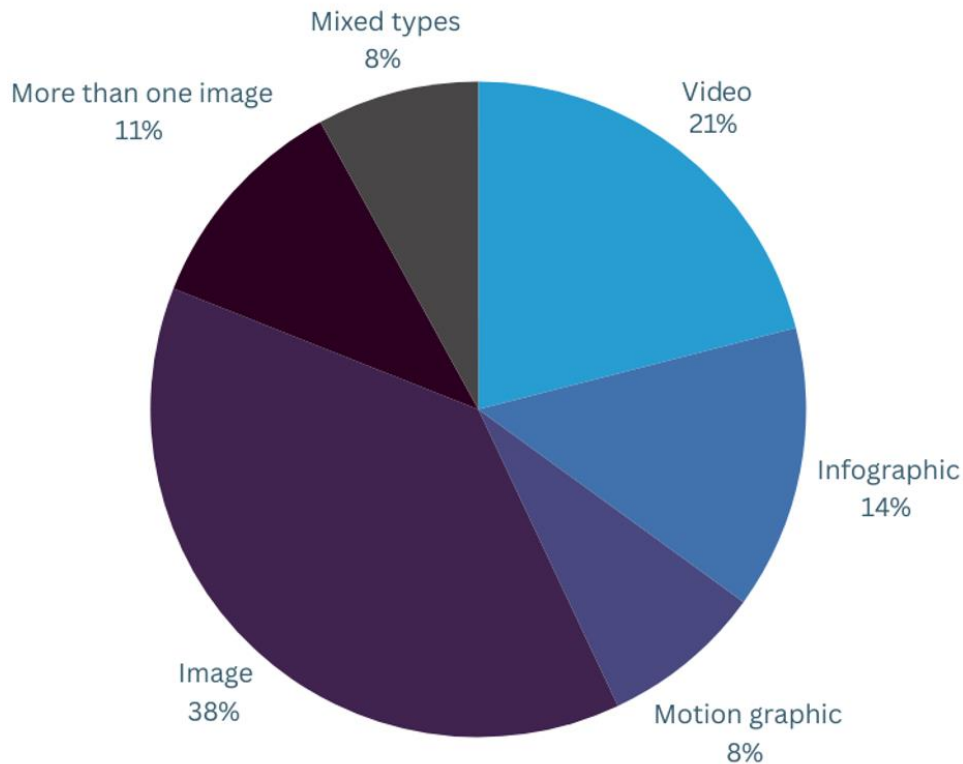
This part will showcase the substantive features of all Instagram accounts under study. The results of this analysis will be divided into four partitions according to the four international promotion dimensions as follows:

### 7.2.1. Content Analysis of Instagram Accounts in the Tourism Field

As mentioned in Table 1, the Instagram accounts under study dedicated to tourism promotion for Bahrain are the Ministry of Tourism, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority, and Bahrain Calendar. The content analysis of these accounts is as follows:

#### 7.2.1.1. Content Format

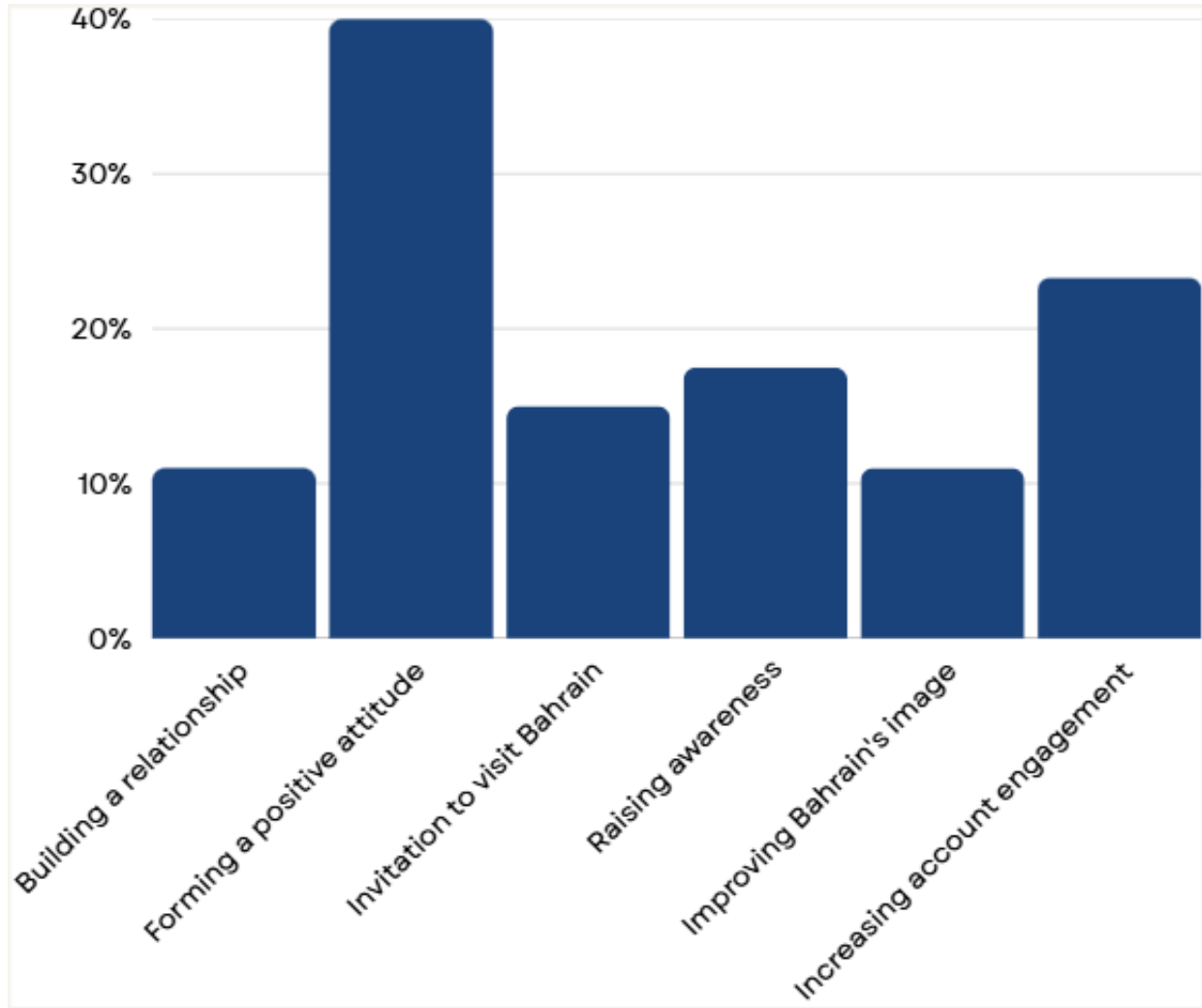
Figure 2 shows the content format of the three Instagram accounts promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain in the tourism field.



**Figure 2.**  
The content format on Instagram accounts specialized in tourism promotion

According to Figure 2, "image" is the most used content format across the three Instagram accounts that are concerned with tourism promotion for Bahrain (38%), followed by "video" (21%), "infographic" (14%), "more than one image" (11%), and "motion graphic" (8%). The same table indicates the diversity of content formats that can aim to attract and influence followers. This result is consistent with Ahn and Wu [39], which highlighted the importance of diversifying the formats used on Instagram accounts specializing in tourism promotion to attract the target audience.

### 7.2.1.2. The Aims of the Instagram Posts

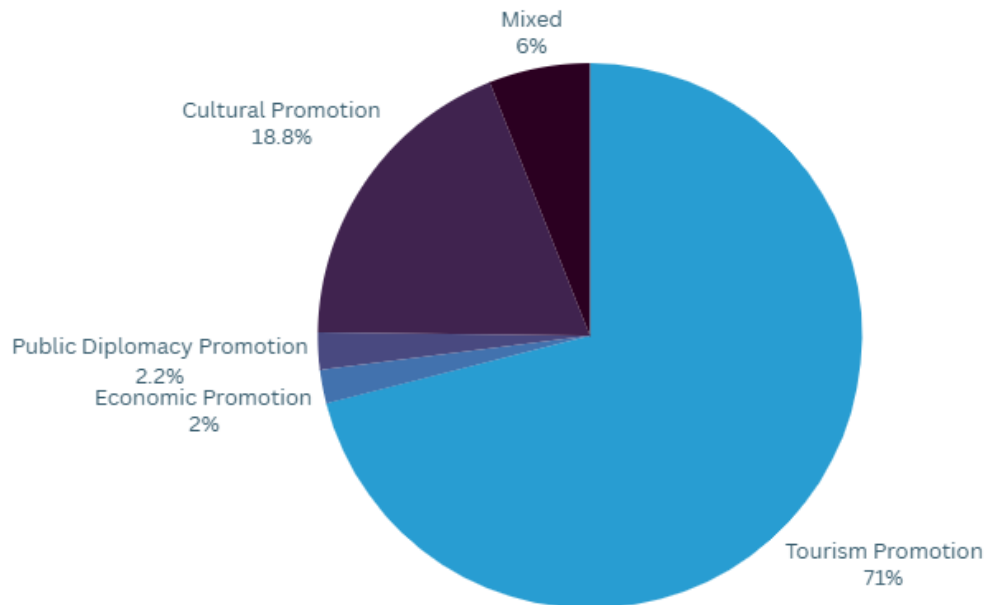


**Figure 3.**  
Aims of Instagram posts targeting tourism promotion for the Kingdom of Bahrain

Figure 3 shows the objectives of posts on Instagram accounts that promote tourism in the Kingdom of Bahrain. "Forming a positive attitude towards the Kingdom of Bahrain as a tourist destination" ranks first (40%), followed by "inviting people to visit the Kingdom of Bahrain" (17.5%), then "increasing awareness of the distinctive tourist destinations in the Kingdom of Bahrain" (15%). Both "improving the image of Bahrain" and "building and forming a relationship with the international community" share the same rank (11%), and finally, "increasing engagement on the account" accounts for 5.5%.



### 7.2.1.3. The International Promotion Types

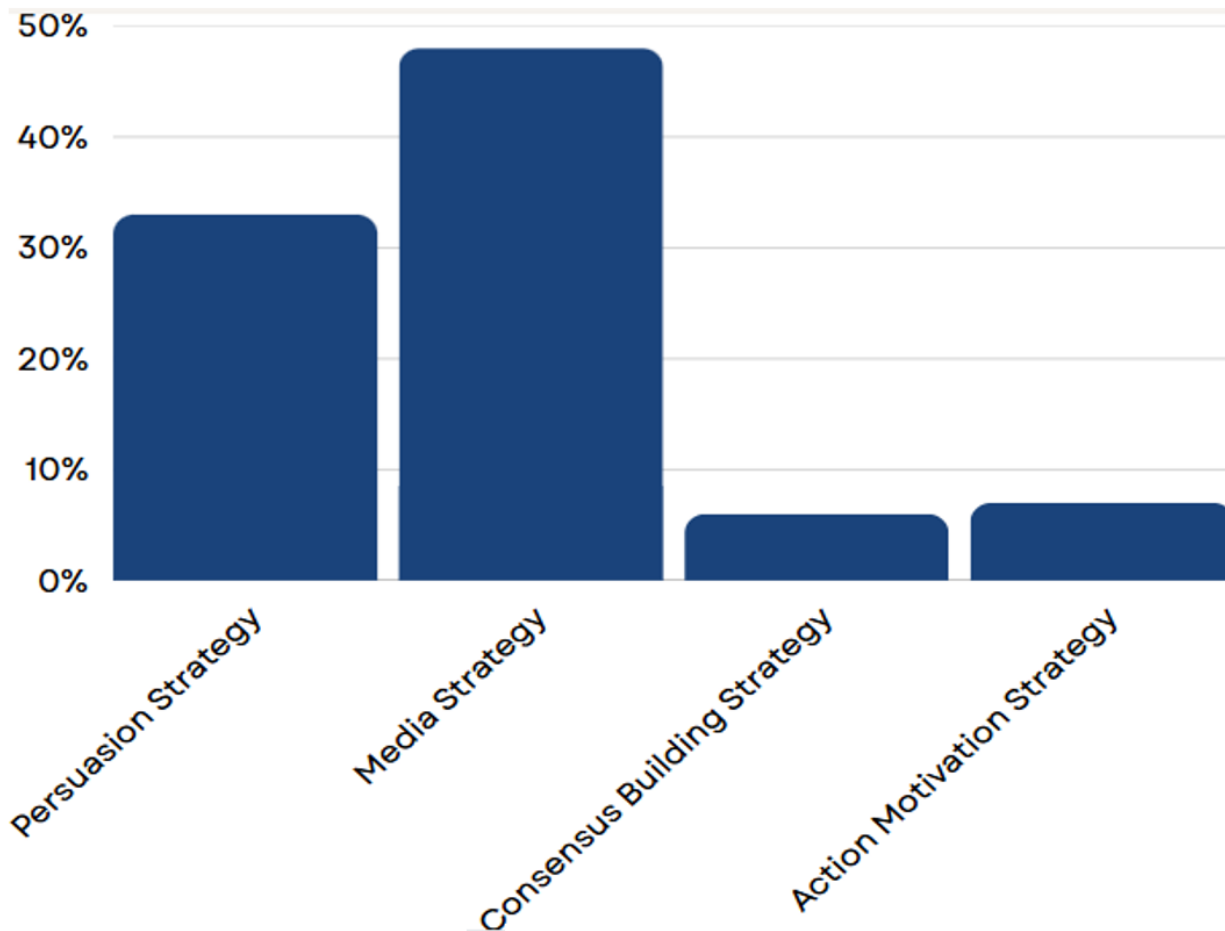


**Figure 4.**  
The international promotion types for the Kingdom of Bahrain on Instagram accounts concerned with tourism promotion.

Figure 4 shows several international promotion types on Instagram accounts concerned with tourism promotion for the Kingdom of Bahrain. "Tourism" promotion topped the list of these types (71%), followed by "cultural" promotion (18.8%), then "mixed types" promotion (6%).

### 7.2.1.4. Government Communication Strategies

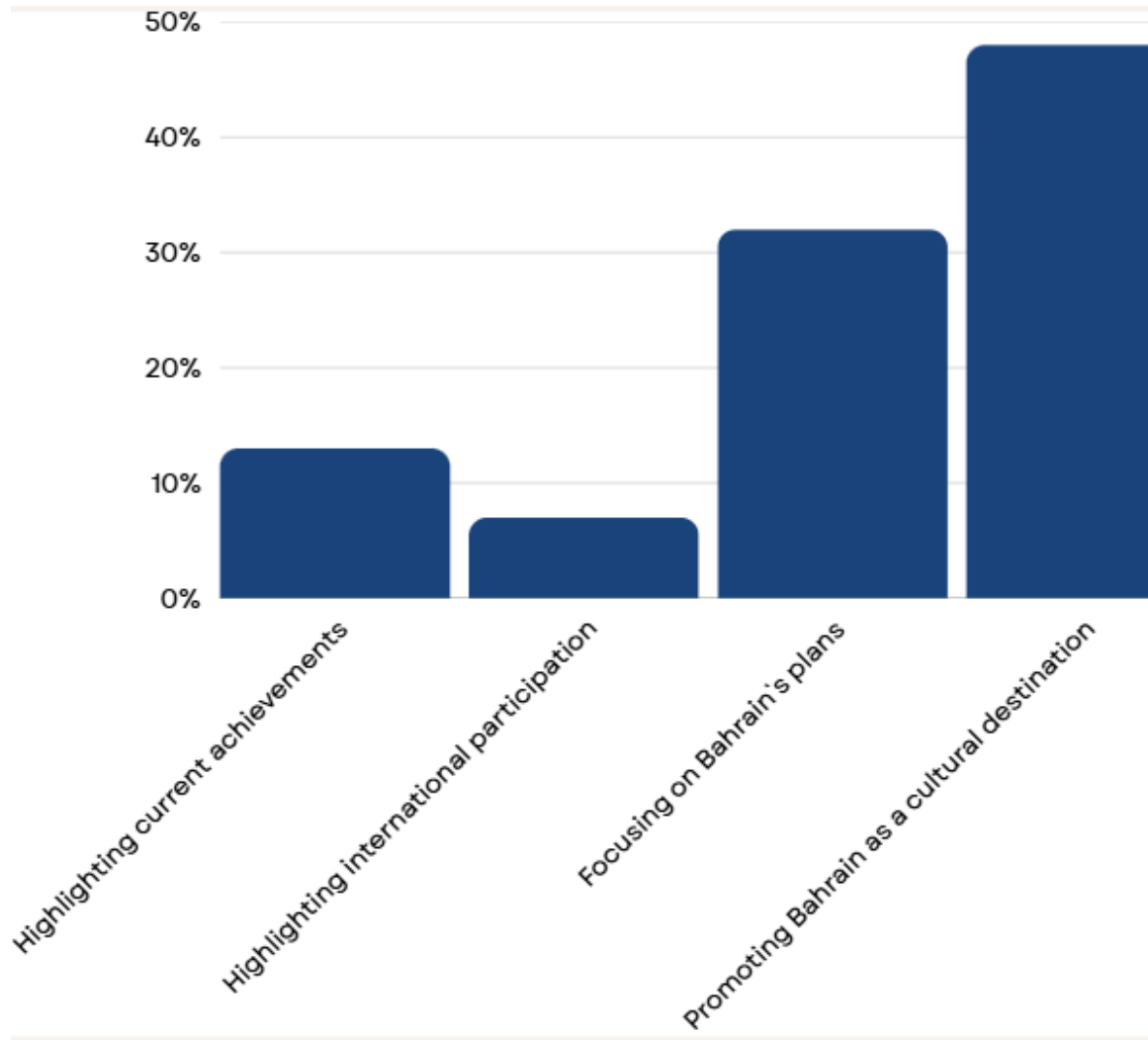
Figure 5 shows a set of government communication strategies used to promote the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally on the Instagram accounts of the Ministry of Tourism, the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority, and the Bahrain Calendar.



**Figure 5.**  
Government communication strategies on the Instagram accounts of institutions concerned with tourism promotion for the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Figure 5 shows that the “media” strategy ranked first among these accounts representing the tourism sector (48%), followed by the “persuasion” strategy (33%), then the “action-motivating” strategy (7%), and finally the “consensus-building” strategy (6%). In the same context, Steenkamp [34] also confirmed the importance of the “media” strategy in providing essential meanings about the international promotion of different countries.

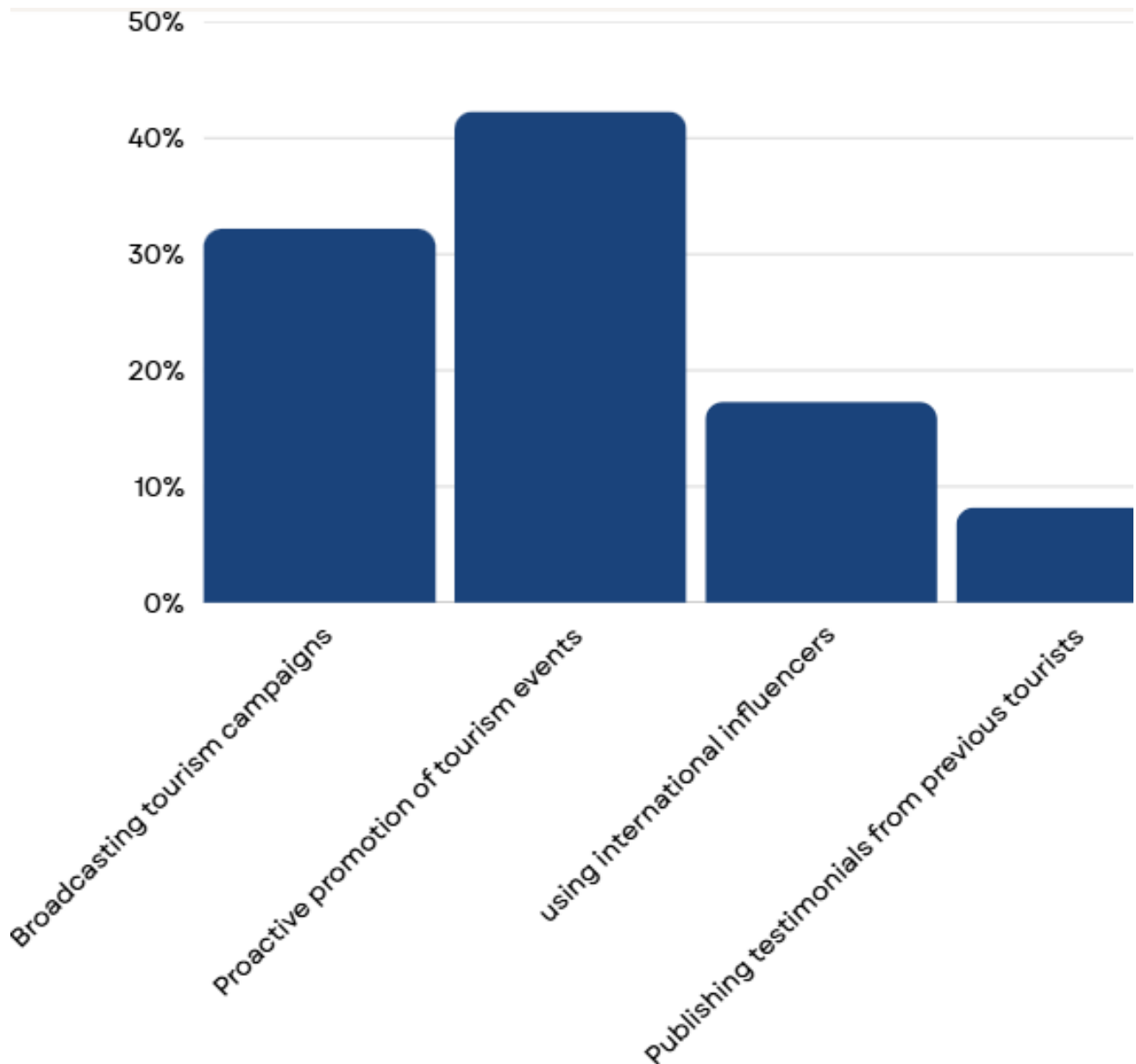
#### 7.2.1.5. International Promotional Activities



**Figure 6.**  
International promotional activities on the Instagram accounts of tourism institutions under study.

Figure 6 illustrates the international promotional activities of the Kingdom of Bahrain reflected in Instagram posts on tourism-related accounts. Overall, it appears that highlighting the Kingdom as a civilized destination (48%) and focusing on Bahrain's plans (32%) are the most prominent promotional activities reflected in the tourism promotion used by the three institutions under analysis in the tourism sector. This result is consistent with another study that confirmed that the Kingdom of Bahrain possesses creative capabilities through the ministries that promote it in a way that can persuade the public to form positive attitudes towards it as a distinguished destination [30].

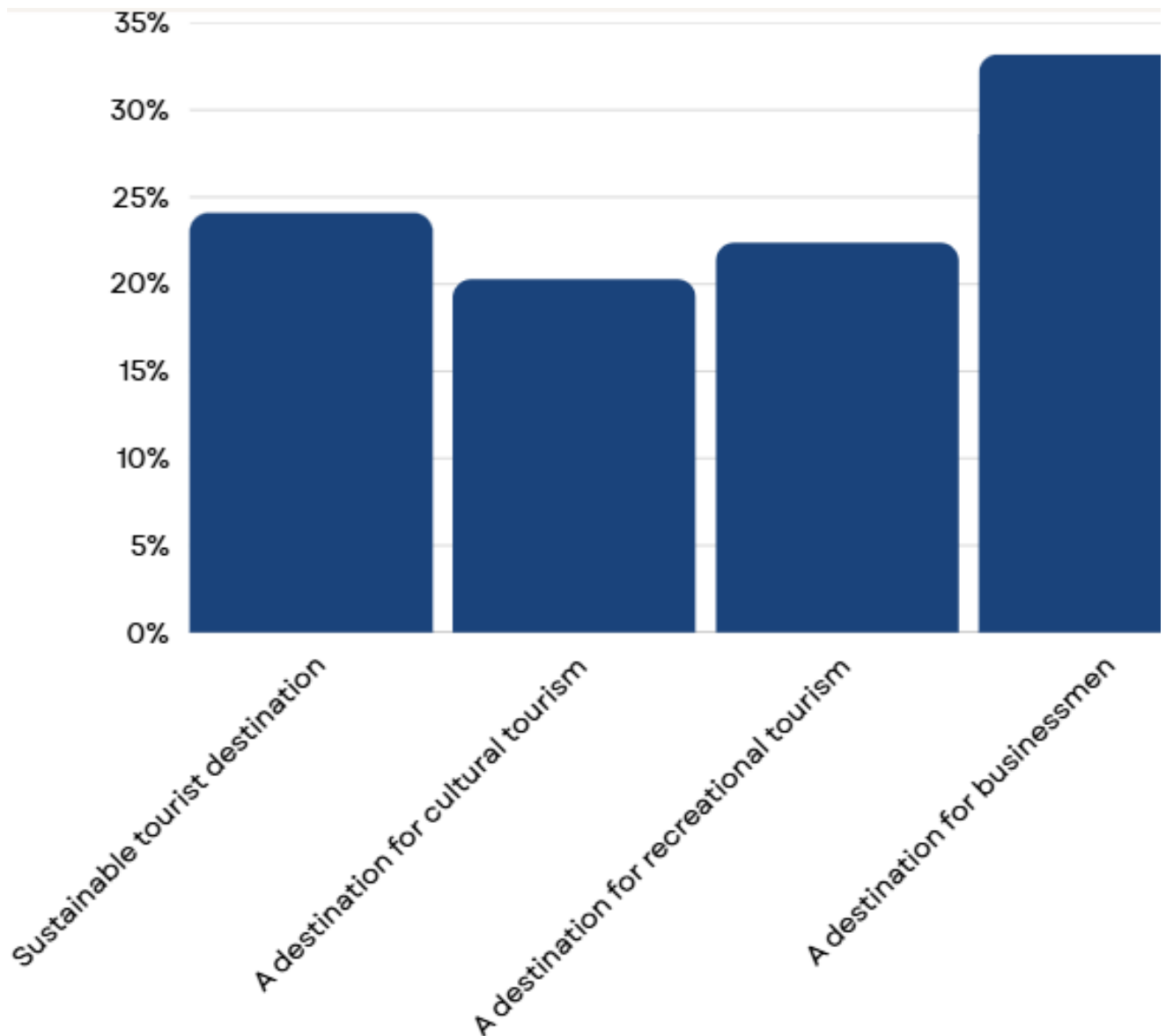
#### 7.2.1.6. Promotion Mechanisms



**Figure 7.**  
Mechanisms for promoting tourism in the Kingdom of Bahrain on Instagram accounts concerned with tourism promotion.

Figure 7 indicates that proactive promotion of important tourism events in the Kingdom of Bahrain topped the list of essential tourism promotion mechanisms for the Kingdom of Bahrain on the Instagram accounts concerned with tourism promotion under analysis (42.3%), followed by broadcasting promotional campaigns for tourism in Bahrain (32.2%), promotion through international influencers (17.3%), and publishing testimonials from previous tourists (8.2%). This result is consistent with the study by Florido-Benítez [40] which confirmed that the most prominent tourism promotion mechanisms in Indonesia were the proactive promotion of important tourism events and broadcasting promotional tourism campaigns.

### 7.2.1.7. Features of the Kingdom of Bahrain's Metal Image



**Figure 8.**

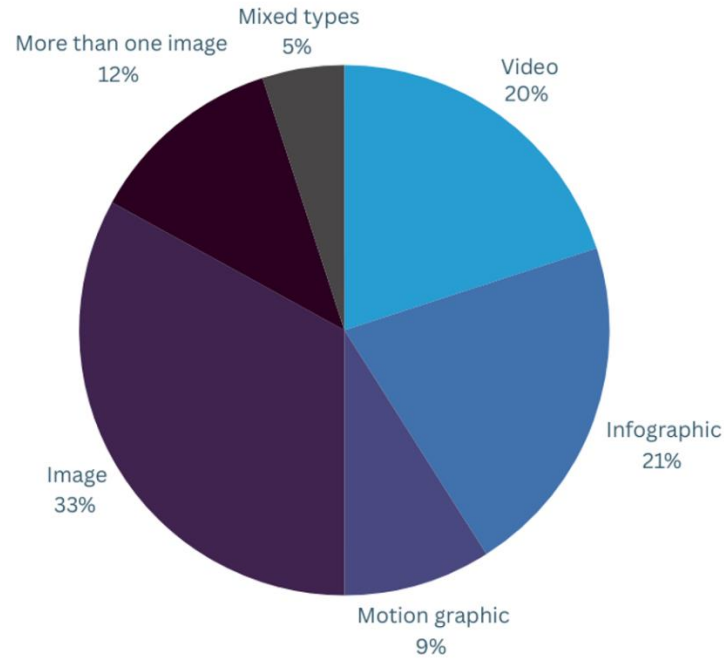
Features of the kingdom of Bahrain's metal image highlighted by posts from Instagram accounts concerned with tourism promotion.

Figure 8 shows the features of the Kingdom of Bahrain's mental image highlighted by the under-study Instagram accounts concerned with promoting tourism for the Kingdom. "A destination for conference tourism, businessmen, and investors" topped the list as the most essential feature of the mental image intended to be conveyed about the Kingdom of Bahrain on these accounts (33.2%), followed by "a sustainable tourism destination" (24.1%), then "a destination for recreational tourism" (22.4%), and finally "a destination for cultural and heritage tourism" (20.3%). This result is consistent with Kusraeva [35] study, which confirmed that Instagram posts promoting the country's tourism played an important role in highlighting the country as a destination for conference tourism and investors, which presents the country in a successful image on both the tourism and economic levels.

### 7.2.2. Content Analysis of Instagram Accounts in the Economic Field:

As mentioned in Table 1, the Instagram accounts under study dedicated to economic promotion for Bahrain are the Economic Development Board, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Ministry of Finance and National Economy. The content analysis of these accounts is as follows:

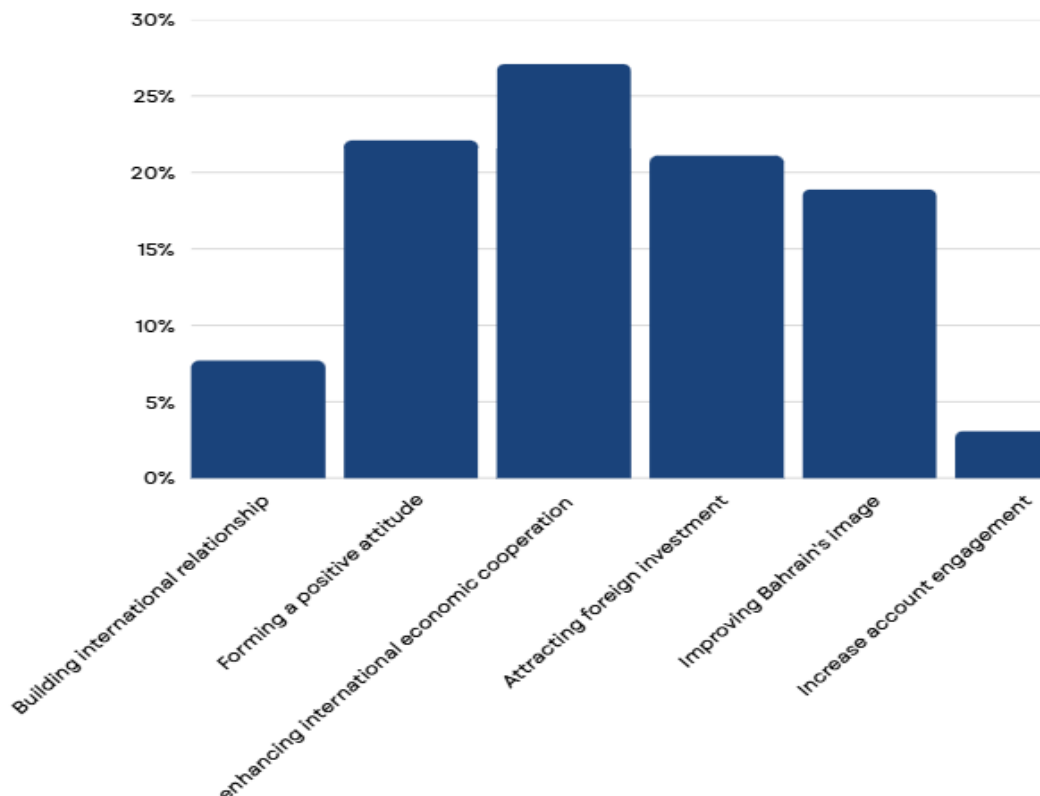
#### 7.2.2.1. Content Format



**Figure 9.**  
The content format of the three Instagram accounts promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain in the Economic field.

Figure 9 shows that "image" takes the first place among the content forms on Instagram accounts representing the business and economic sector, with a percentage of 33%, followed by "infographic" at 21%, "video" at 20%, "more than one image" at 12%, "motion graphics" at 9%, and "mixed types" at 5%. This result indicates the diversity of content used to attract the target audience effectively.

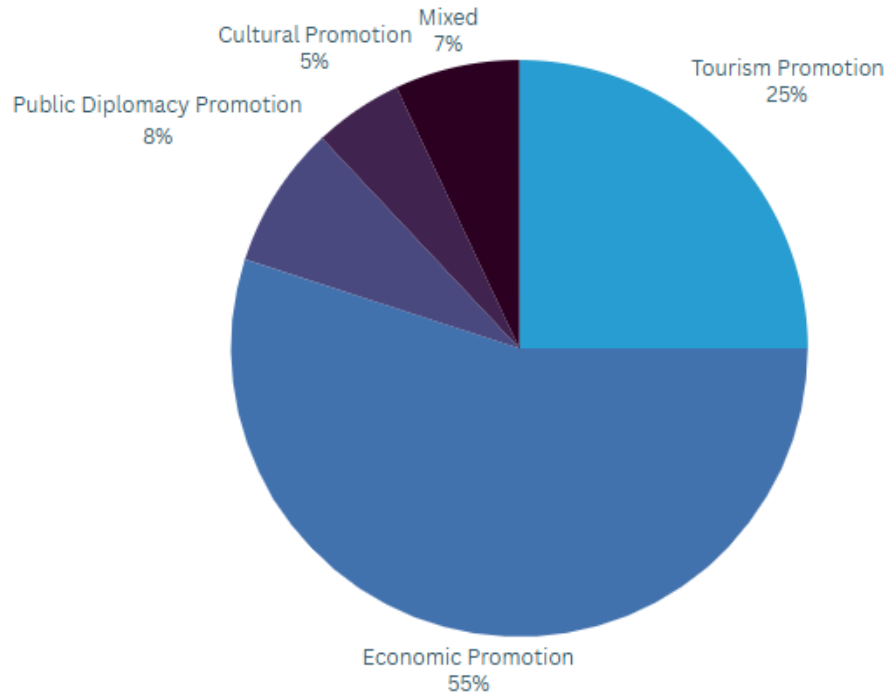
#### 7.2.2.2. The aims of the Instagram Posts



**Figure 10.**  
Aims of Instagram posts targeting economic promotion for the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Figure 10 shows the objectives of posts on Instagram accounts concerned with the economic promotion of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The most prominent objective is “enhancing international trade and economic cooperation with Bahrain” (27.1%), followed by “forming a positive attitude towards the Kingdom of Bahrain as an economic destination” (22.1%), “attracting foreign direct investment” (21.1%), “improving the mental image of Bahrain” (18.9%), “building and forming a relationship with the international community” (7.7%), and “increasing interaction on the account” (3.1%). The result is consistent with the findings of Hamaz and Boukerzaza [12], which confirmed that “enhancing international trade and economic cooperation” and “improving Bahrain’s public image” are the most important goals of the country’s economic promotion operations through social media accounts.

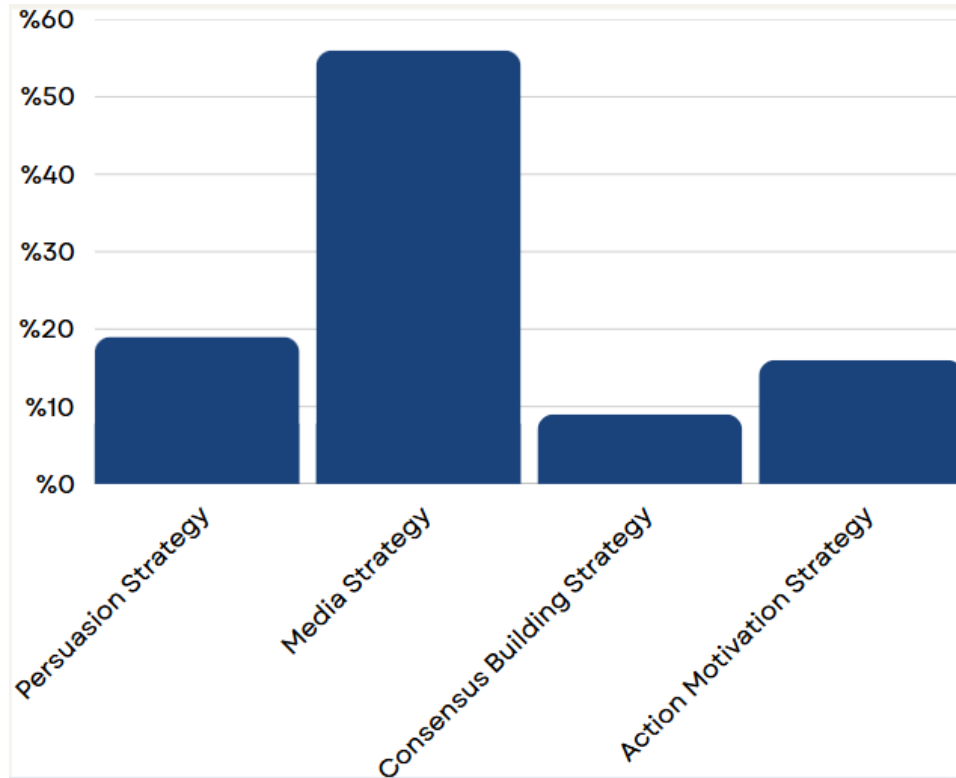
#### 7.2.2.3. The International Promotion Type



**Figure 11.**  
The international promotion type for the Kingdom of Bahrain on Instagram accounts concerned with economic promotion.

Figure 11 shows several types of international promotion on Instagram by institutions involved in economic promotion for the Kingdom of Bahrain. "Economic promotion" topped the list of these promotion types (55%), followed by "tourism promotion" (25%), which is consistent with a result by Evitha et al. [10].

#### 7.2.2.4. Government Communication Strategies

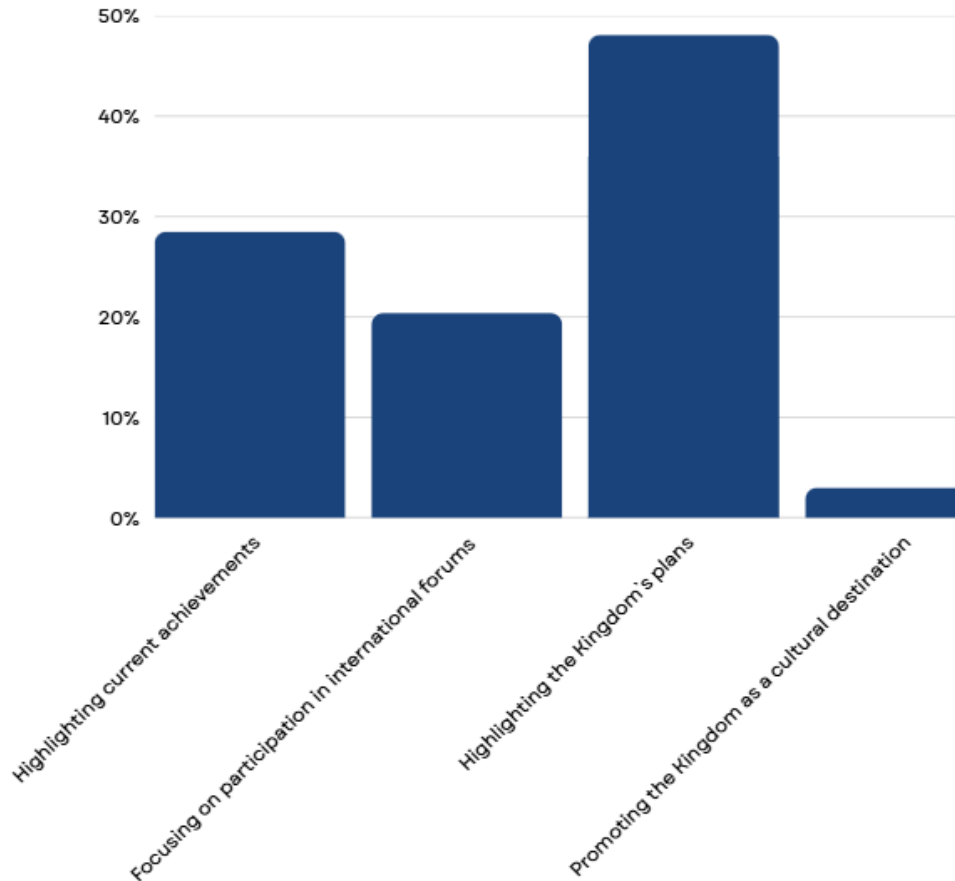


**Figure 12.**  
Government communication strategies on the Instagram accounts of institutions concerned with Economic promotion for the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Figure 12 shows that the "media strategy" ranked first (56%) on all accounts related to the economic promotion of the Kingdom of Bahrain, followed by the "persuasion strategy" (19%), the "action-driven strategy" (16%), and the "consensus-building strategy" (9%). In this regard, Ben Salem Safi and Dhikra [22] and Singha [41] emphasized the importance of "media," "persuasion," and the "action-driven" strategies within the framework of the role of government digital communication in achieving effective communication with the target audience.



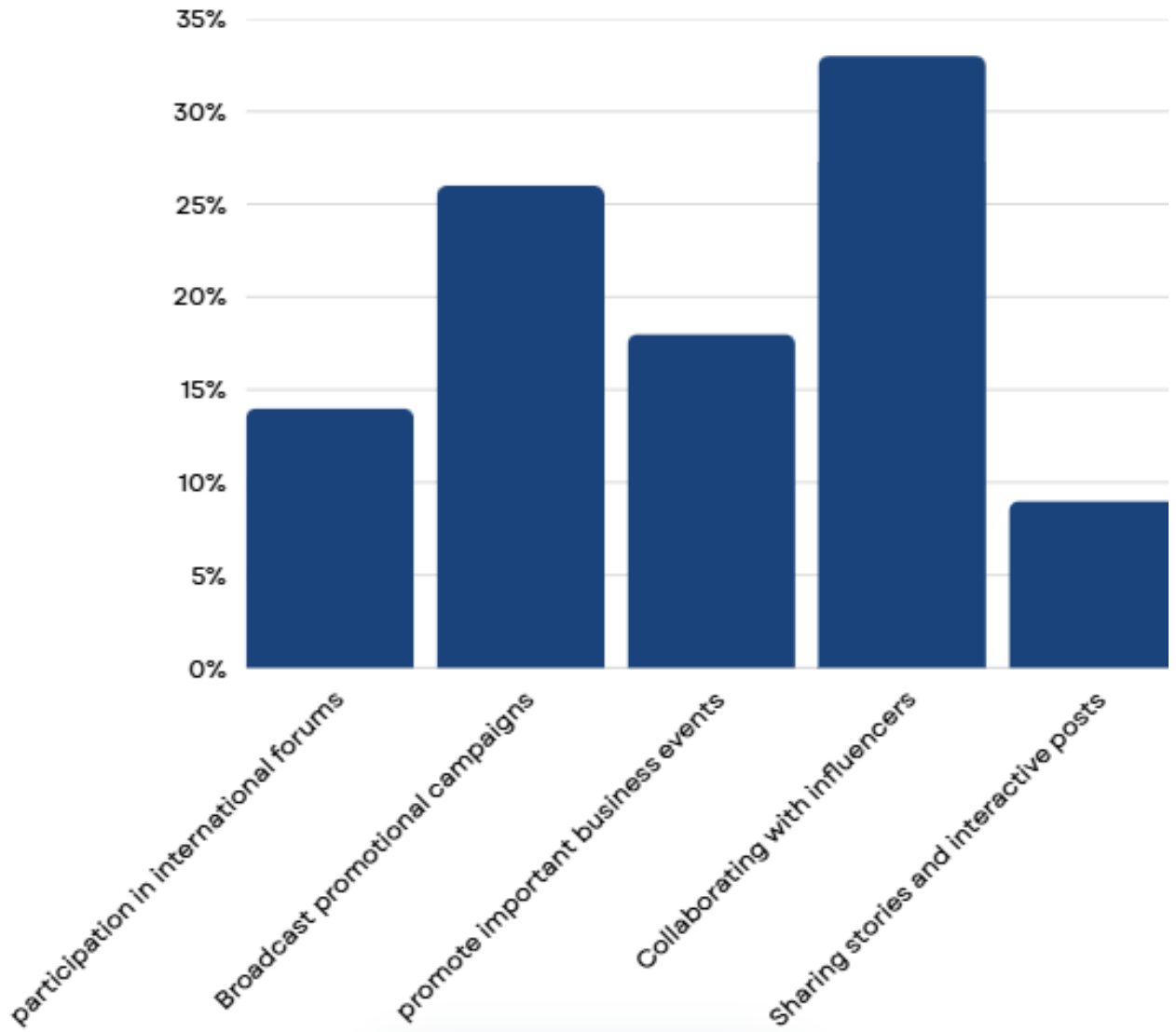
#### 7.2.2.5. International Promotional Activities



**Figure 13.**  
International promotional activities for the Kingdom of Bahrain in Instagram posts on Economic-related accounts.

Figure 13 displays the international promotional activities of the Kingdom of Bahrain reflected in the Instagram accounts of institutions concerned with the economic promotion of the Kingdom. The most prominent of these activities on these accounts are "highlighting the plans of the Kingdom of Bahrain" (48.1%), "highlighting the current achievements of the Kingdom of Bahrain in the trade field" (28.5%), "focusing on the international participation of the Kingdom of Bahrain in international forums" (20.4%), and finally, "promoting the Kingdom as a civilized destination" (3%). In this regard, Juusola and Lahrech [42] highlighted the roles played by government institutions' Instagram accounts in promoting the country's economy by showcasing its achievements and plans to develop its economy.

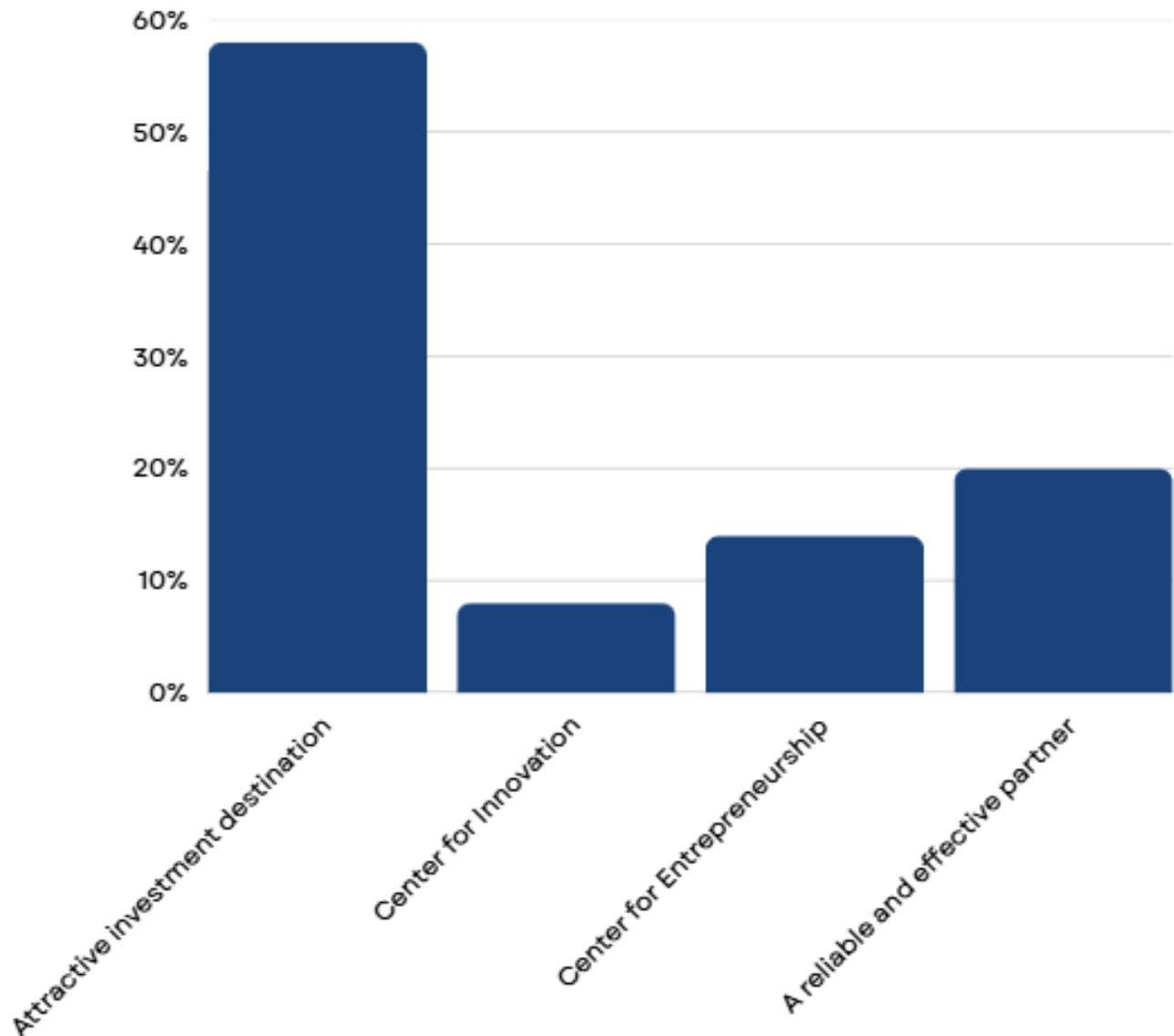
#### 7.2.2.6. Promotion Mechanisms



**Figure 14.**  
Economic Promotion Mechanisms for the Kingdom of Bahrain on Instagram Accounts of the Economic Institutions Under Study.

Figure 14 discusses the economic promotion mechanisms for the Kingdom of Bahrain on the Instagram accounts of various economic institutions. It highlights that "cooperating with influencers and digital ambassadors to promote Bahrain internationally" is the most significant mechanism at 33%, followed by "broadcasting promotional campaigns for trade in Bahrain" at 26%, "highlighting the Kingdom's participation in international forums" at 14%, and "sharing stories and interactive posts about the Kingdom" at 9%. This result aligns with the findings of the study by Nguyen and Özçaglar-Toulouse [43].

#### 7.2.2.7. Features of the Kingdom of Bahrain's Metal Image



**Figure 15.**

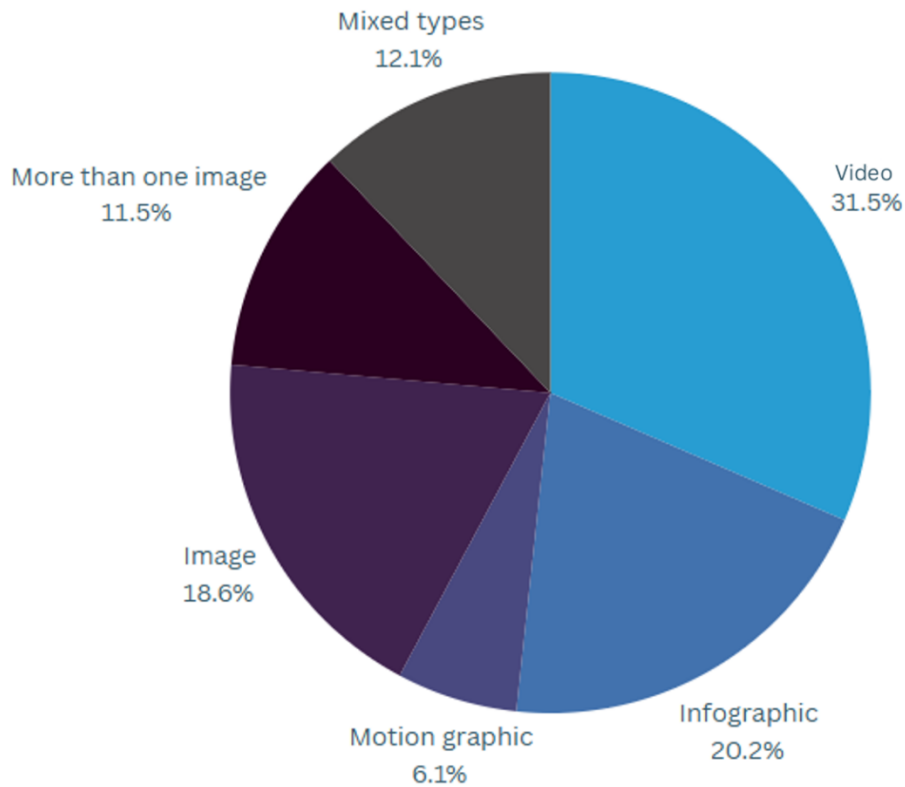
Features of the kingdom of Bahrain's metal image are highlighted by posts from Instagram accounts concerned with economic promotion.

Figure 15 shows the features of the mental image of the Kingdom of Bahrain, highlighted by the Instagram accounts of the institutions concerned with the economic promotion of the kingdom. "Attractive investment destination" (58%) takes first place, followed by Bahrain as a "trusted and effective partner in international trade" (20%), a "center for entrepreneurship and start-up projects" (14%), and a "center for innovation and technology" (8%). This result is consistent with the study results of Qarni et al. [44], which confirmed that presenting the country as an "attractive investment destination" plays a prominent role in its international economic promotion and encourages foreign direct investment.

#### 7.2.3. Content Analysis of Instagram Accounts in the Public Diplomacy Field

As mentioned in Table 1, the Instagram accounts under study dedicated to public diplomacy promotion for Bahrain are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Contact Center. The content analysis of these accounts is as follows:

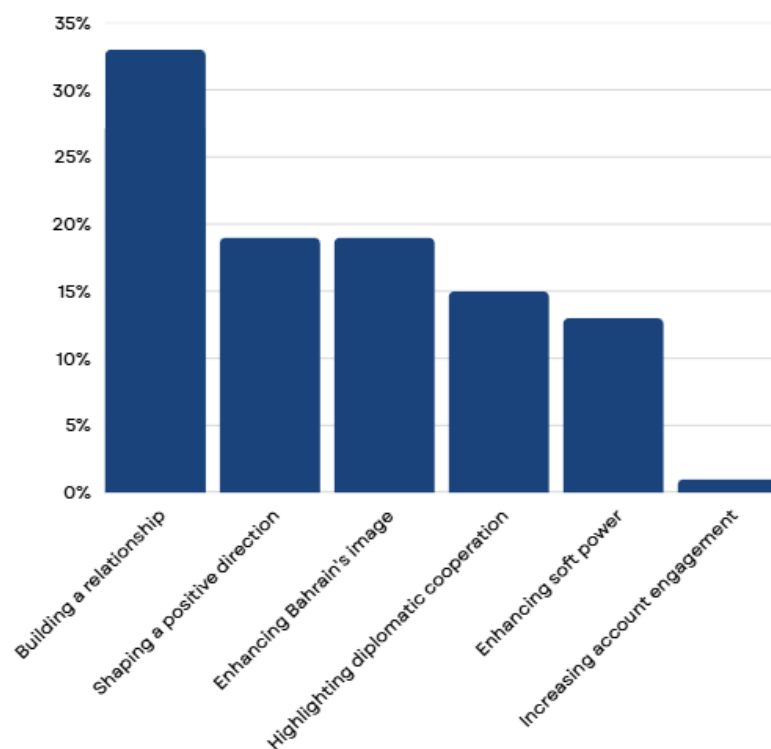
### 7.2.3.1. Content Format



**Figure 16.**  
The content format of the three Instagram accounts promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain in the Public Diplomacy field.

Figure 16 indicates that the “video” category tops the list of the most important forms of content used on the Instagram accounts promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain in the Public Diplomacy field (31.5%), followed by “infographics” (20.8%), “images” (18.6%), and “mixed types” (12.1%).

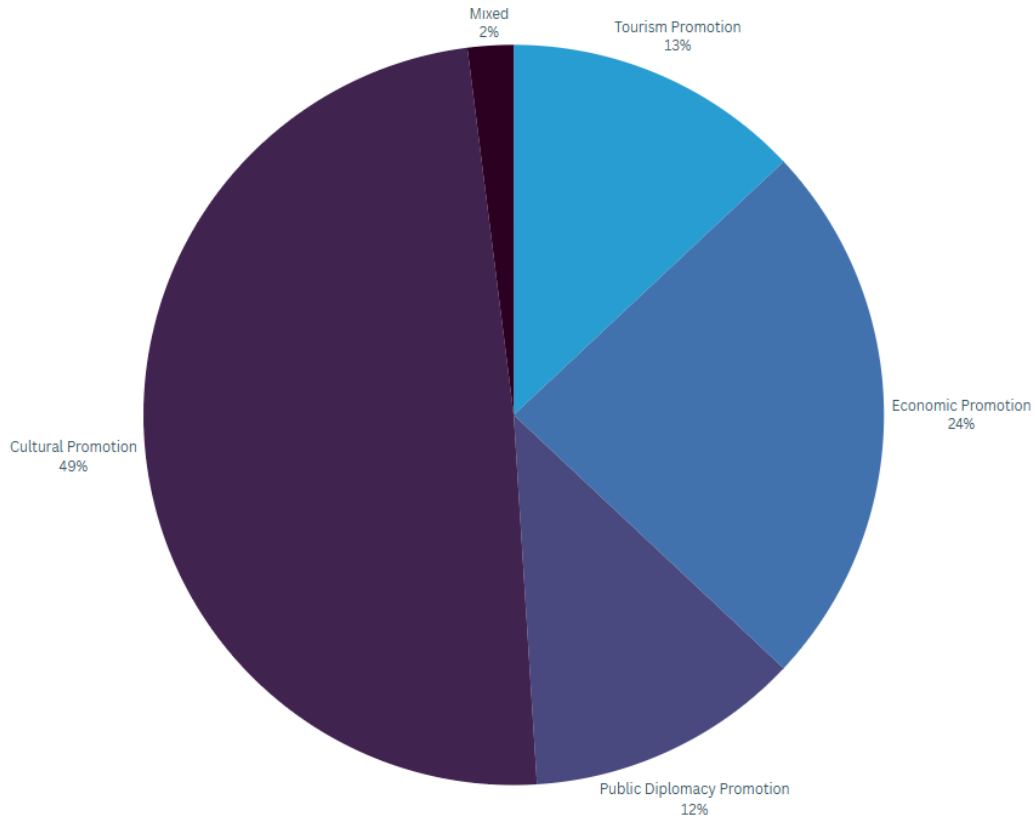
### 7.2.3.2. The Aims of the Instagram Posts



**Figure 17.**  
Aims of Instagram posts targeting public diplomacy promotion for the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Figure 17 shows the objectives of posts on Instagram accounts specialized in promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain's public diplomacy during the study period. The most prominent objective is "building and shaping a relationship with the international community" (33%), followed by "forming a positive attitude towards Bahrain's diplomatic power" and "enhancing the mental image of the Kingdom of Bahrain as a reliable and influential partner" (19%) each, then "enhancing soft power and international influence" (13%). This result is consistent with Al-Harhi [45], which confirms that political institutions that promote the state's diplomacy can shape a positive attitude toward its diplomatic power.

#### 7.2.3.3. The International Promotion Type

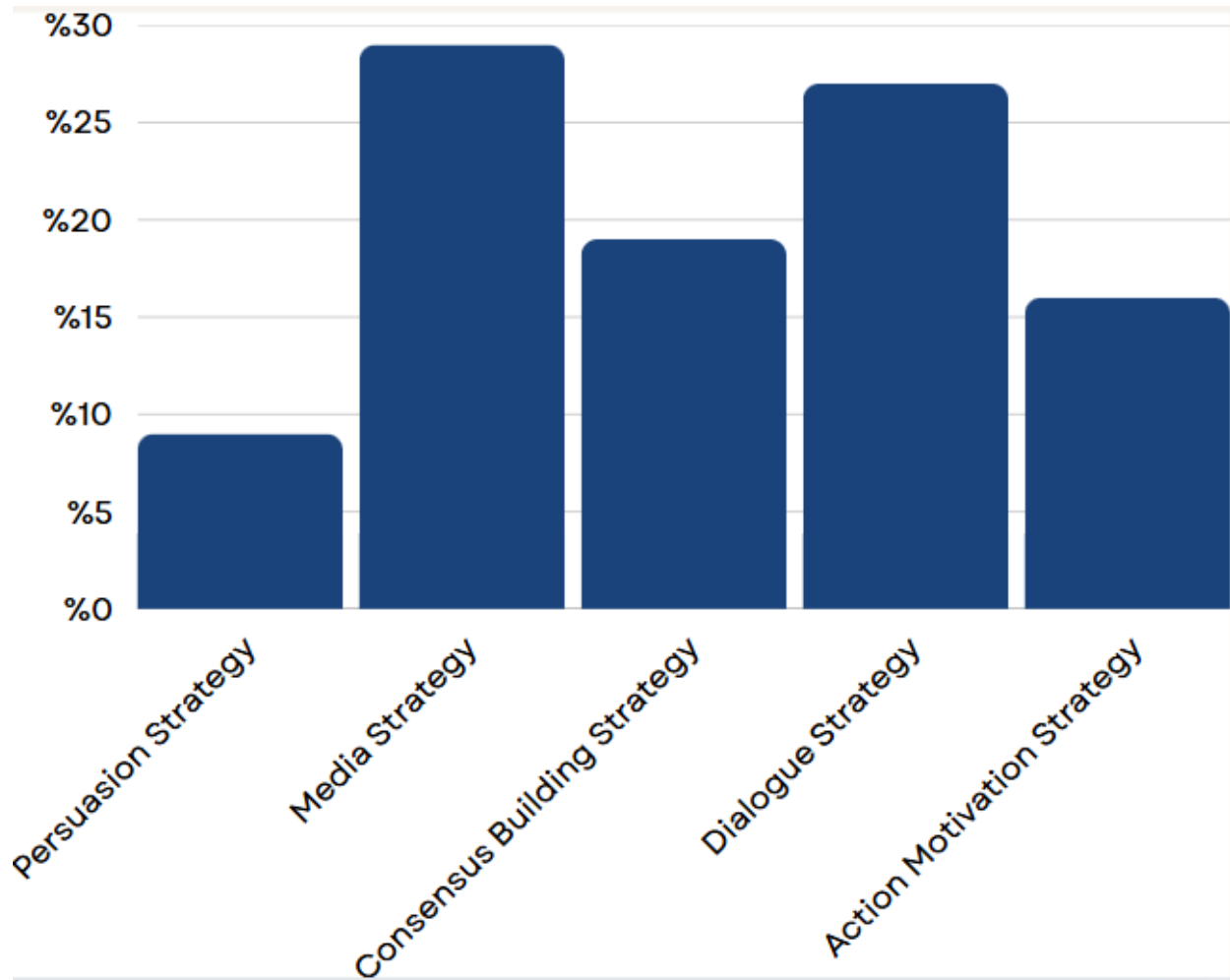


**Figure 18.**

The international promotion type for the Kingdom of Bahrain on Instagram accounts concerned with public policy promotion.

Figure 18 shows that "public diplomacy" was promoted in 49% of the list of types of promotion conducted on Instagram accounts promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain's public diplomacy, followed by "economic promotion" (24%) and "tourism promotion" (13%).

#### 7.2.3.4. Government Communication Strategies

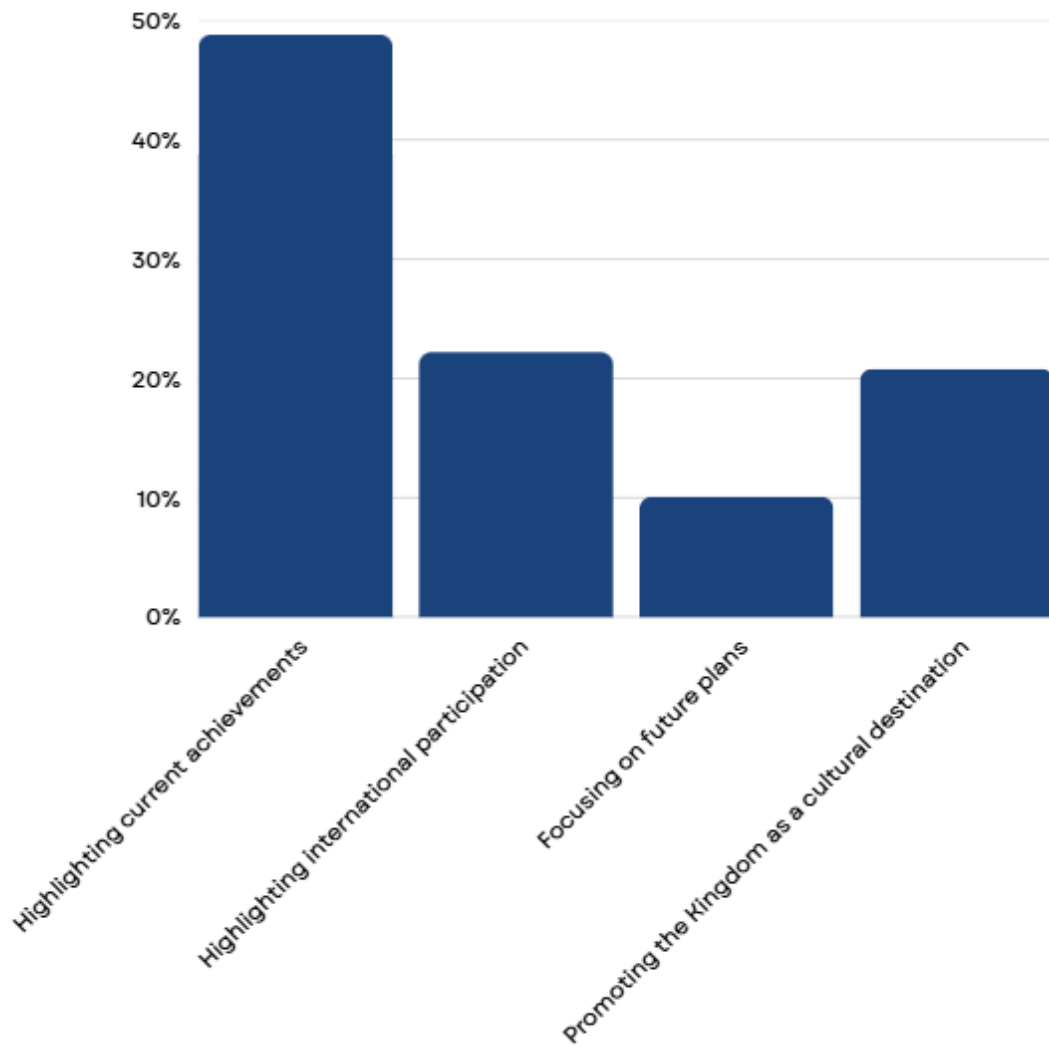


**Figure 19.**

Government communication strategies on the Instagram accounts of institutions concerned with public diplomacy promotion for the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Figure 19 shows the set of government communication strategies used to promote the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally on the Instagram accounts of the institutions involved in the diplomatic promotion of the Kingdom. The “media” strategy ranked first (29%), followed by the “dialogue strategy” (27%), the “consensus-building strategy” (19%), and the “action-motivation strategy” (16%). In the same context, Melliani and Salem [46] emphasized the importance of government digital communication strategies in achieving effective communication with the target audience. The most important of these strategies were "information," "persuasion," and "incentivizing action."

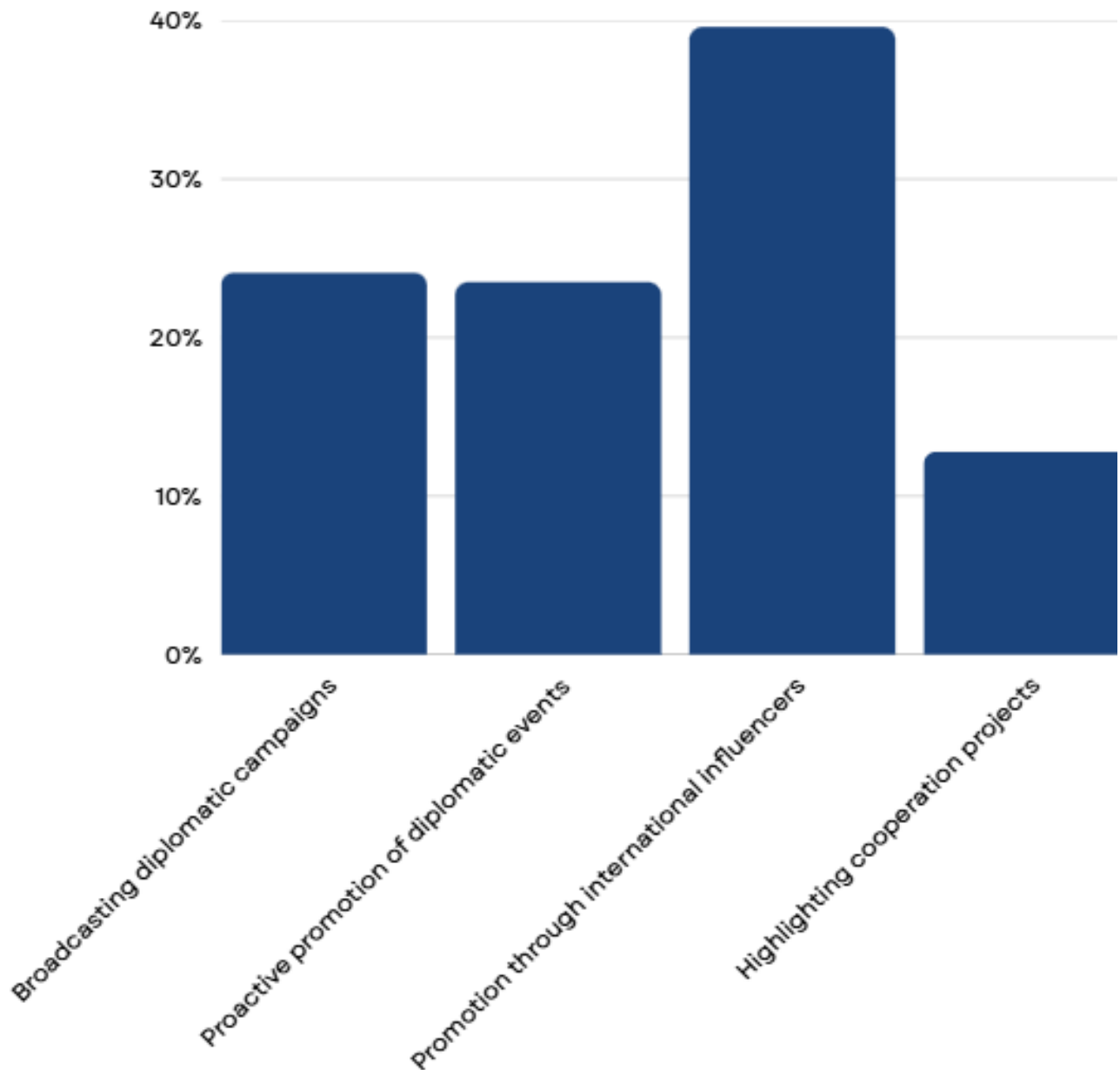
#### 7.2.3.5. International Promotional Activities



**Figure 20.**  
International promotional activities for the Kingdom of Bahrain on public diplomacy-related Instagram accounts.

Figure 20 shows the international promotional activities reflected in the Instagram posts of the institutions concerned with promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally in the field of public diplomacy. The most prominent of these activities is "highlighting the current achievements of the Kingdom of Bahrain in the diplomatic field" (48.8%), followed by "highlighting the international participation of the Kingdom of Bahrain in international forums" (22.2%), and "promoting the Kingdom as a civilized destination" (20.8%). This result is consistent with the findings of Jamal El-Din [17], which confirmed that government institutions' use of promotional activities that highlight the country's diplomatic achievements helps to present the country as a civilized destination and an effective partner in various international issues.

#### 7.2.3.6. Promotion Mechanisms



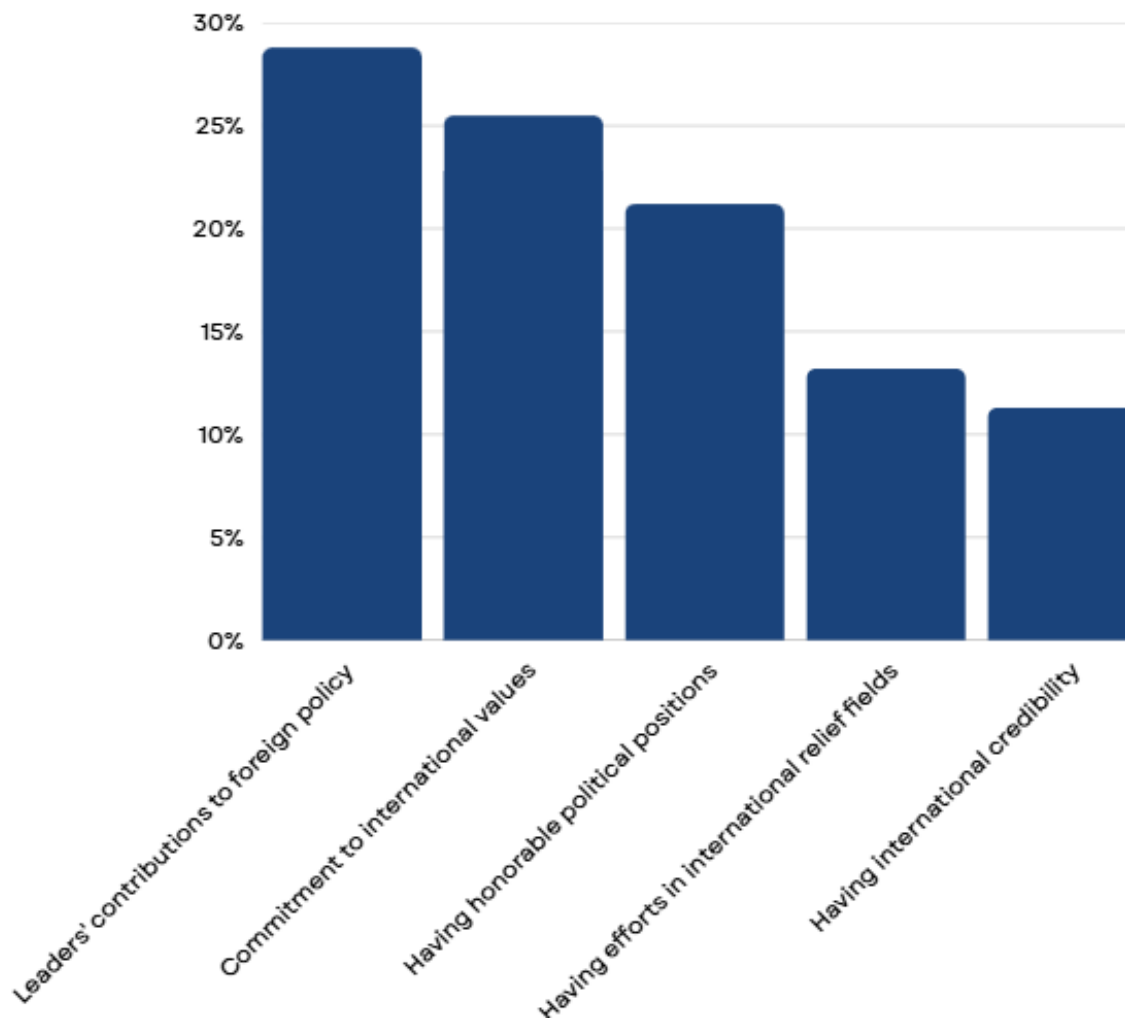
**Figure 21.**

Economic Promotion Mechanisms for the Kingdom of Bahrain on Instagram accounts concerned with public diplomacy promotion.

Figure 21 shows mechanisms for promoting diplomacy for the Kingdom of Bahrain on Instagram accounts specialized in promoting public diplomacy. “Promotion through international influencers” topped these mechanisms (39.6%), followed by “broadcasting promotional campaigns for diplomacy in Bahrain by highlighting participation in international conferences and events” (24.1%), “proactive promotion of important diplomatic events in the Kingdom of Bahrain” (23.5%), and “highlighting cooperation projects and joint initiatives with other countries” (12.8%).



#### 7.2.3.7. Features of the Kingdom of Bahrain's Metal Image



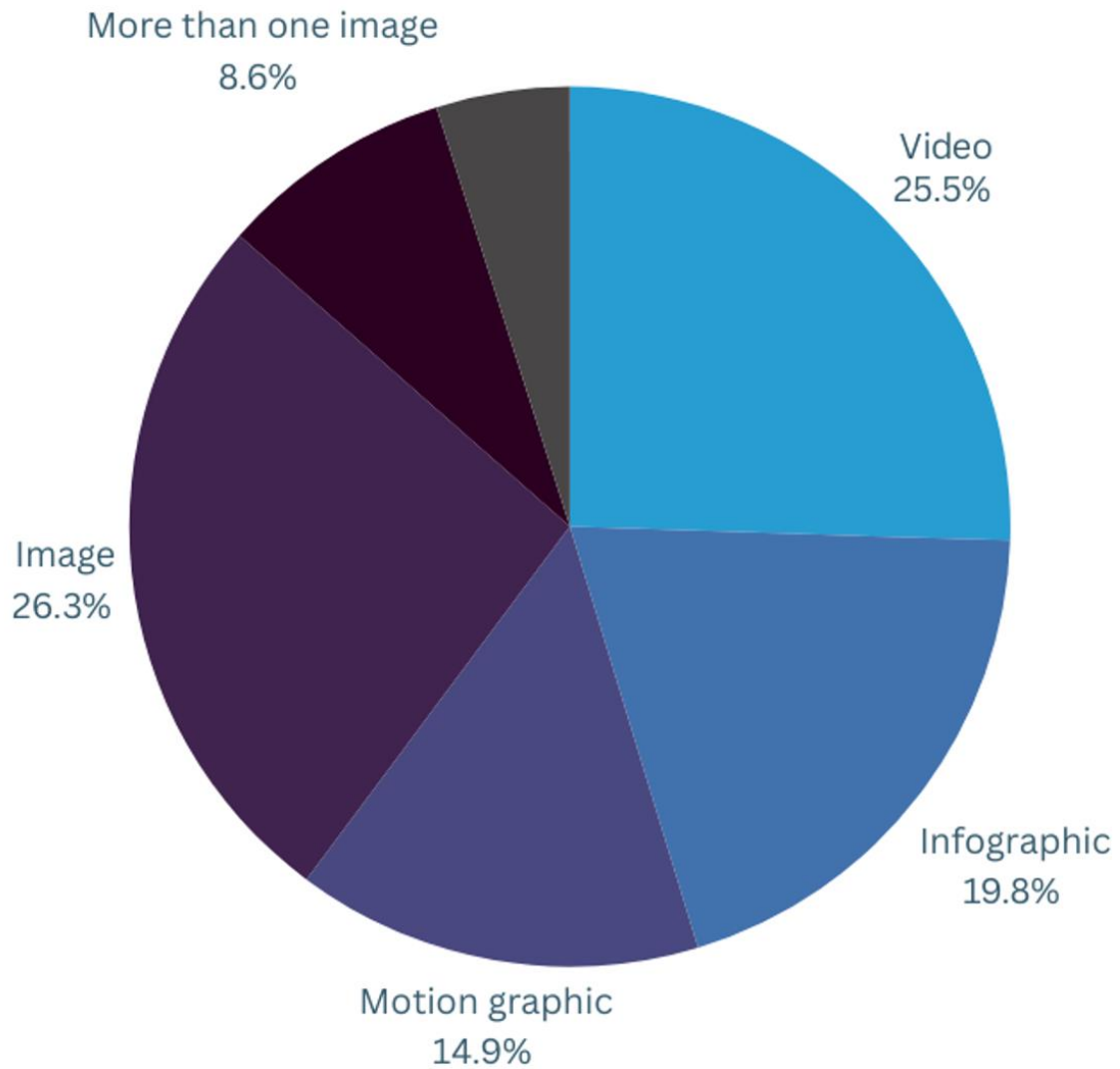
**Figure 22.**  
Features of the kingdom of Bahrain's metal image highlighted by posts from Instagram accounts concerned with diplomatic promotion.

Figure 22 shows the features of the Kingdom of Bahrain's mental image highlighted by the Instagram accounts of institutions involved in promoting the Kingdom's public diplomacy. The category "a mental image highlighting the Bahraini leaders' contributions to foreign policy and diplomacy" tops the list (28.8%), followed by "a mental image highlighting the Kingdom of Bahrain's commitment to international values and standards, and respect for human rights and international law" (25.5%), "a mental image highlighting Bahrain as a country with honorable political positions on international issues" (21.2%), "a mental image highlighting the Kingdom's efforts in international relief fields" (13.2%), and "a mental image highlighting Bahrain's international credibility as an influential partner committed to international law" (11.3%). Generally, this result is consistent with a study by Abd Khaf [18], which showed that the image features that emerged through Instagram posts on the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs reflected the Kingdom's honorable political positions on regional and international issues.

#### 7.2.4. Content Analysis of Instagram Accounts in the Culture Field

As mentioned in Table 1, the Instagram accounts under study dedicated to cultural promotion for Bahrain are "Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities" and "Spring of Culture". The content analysis of these accounts is as follows:

#### 7.2.4.1. Content Format

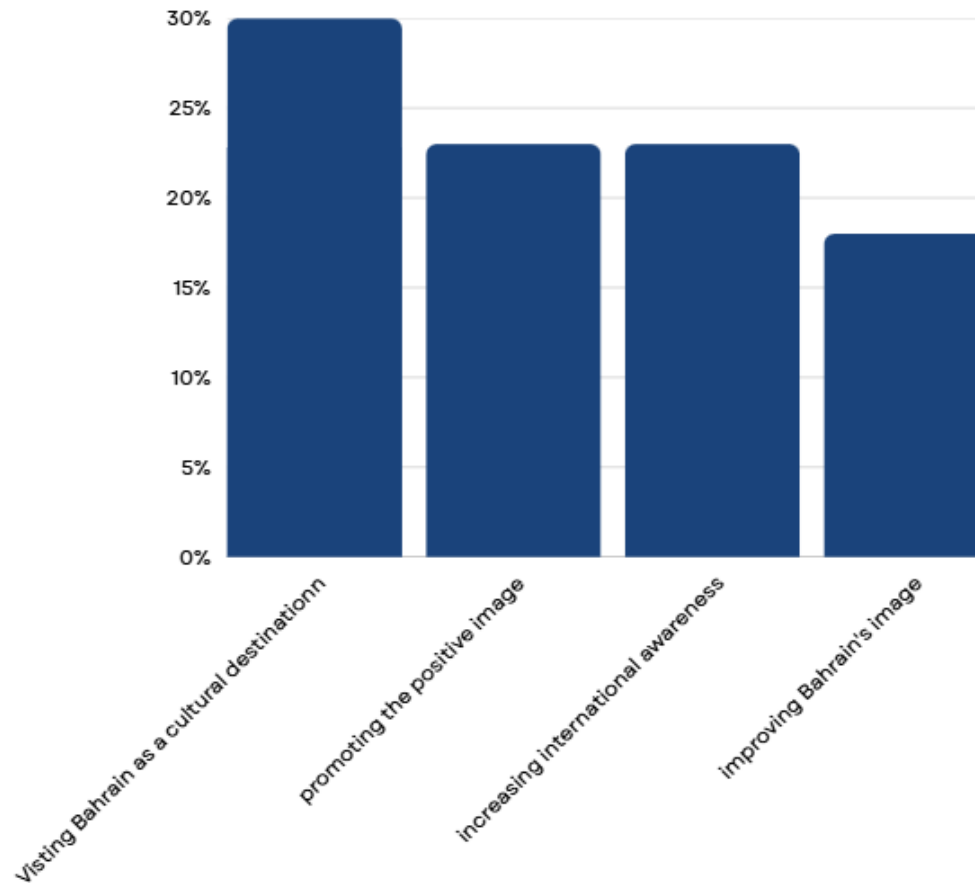


**Figure 23.**

The content format of the three Instagram accounts promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain in the Culture field.

Figure 23 shows the content type of Instagram accounts concerned with promoting the culture of the Kingdom of Bahrain. "Image" is considered the most prominent content on these accounts (26.3%), followed by "videos" (25.5%), "infographics" (19.8%), "motion graphics" (14.9%), "combining more than one image" (8.6%), and "mixed types" (4.9%).

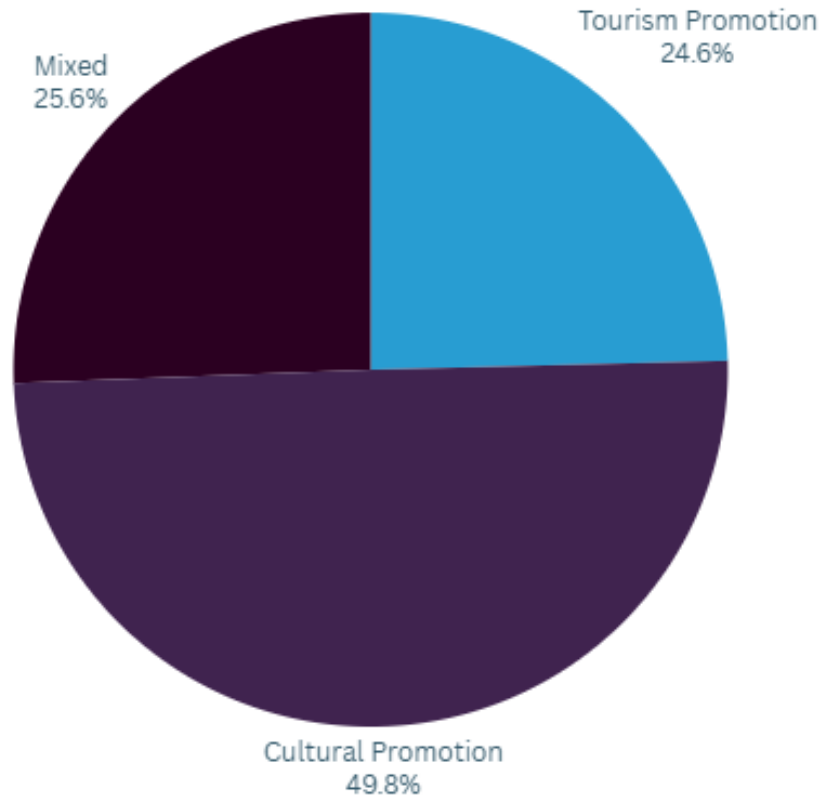
#### 7.2.4.2. The Aims of the Instagram Posts



**Figure 24.**  
Aims of Instagram posts targeting culture promotion for the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Figure 24 shows the objectives of posts on Instagram accounts involved in the cultural promotion of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The most prominent aim of these posts is "inviting people to visit the Kingdom of Bahrain as a cultural heritage destination" (30%), followed by "promoting the positive image and attractiveness of heritage and cultural tourism in the Kingdom of Bahrain," "increasing international awareness and interest in Bahraini culture and heritage" with the same percentage (23%), and "improving Bahrain's image" (18%). In the same context, Hakala et al. [47] confirmed that the cultural promotion of a country primarily revolves around inviting people to visit it as a cultural heritage destination and working to enhance its positive image among its audience, who admire its culture.

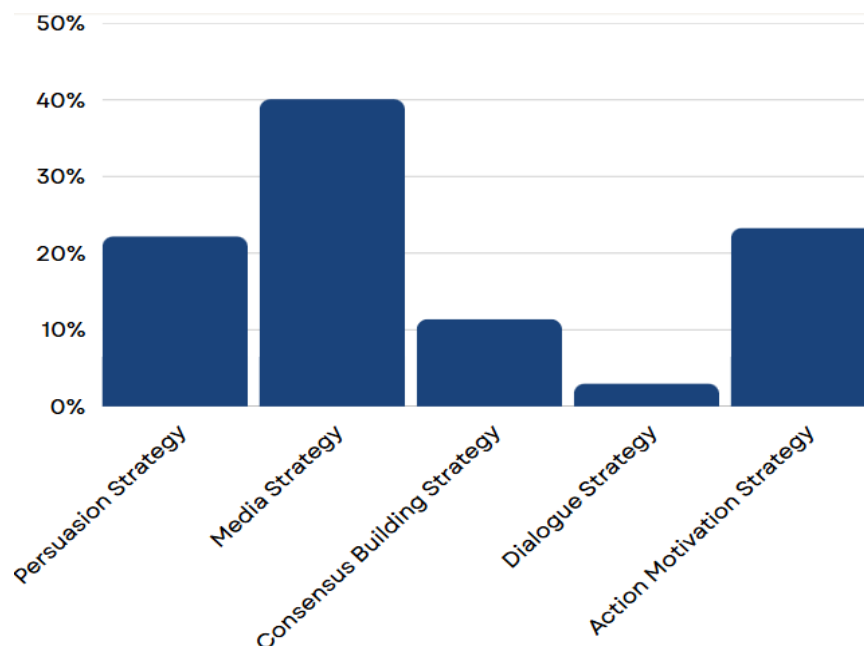
#### 7.2.4.3. The International Promotion Type



**Figure 25.**  
The international promotion type on Instagram accounts involved in cultural promotion for the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Figure 25 shows that “cultural promotion” topped the list of types of international promotion for the Kingdom of Bahrain, as highlighted by the Instagram accounts concerned with the Kingdom's cultural promotion (49.8%), followed by “combining more than one type of promotion” (25.6%) and “tourism promotion” (24.6%). In this regard, Gosling [19] clarified that cultural government institutions should promote countries by focusing on both culture and tourism fields in an integrated manner.

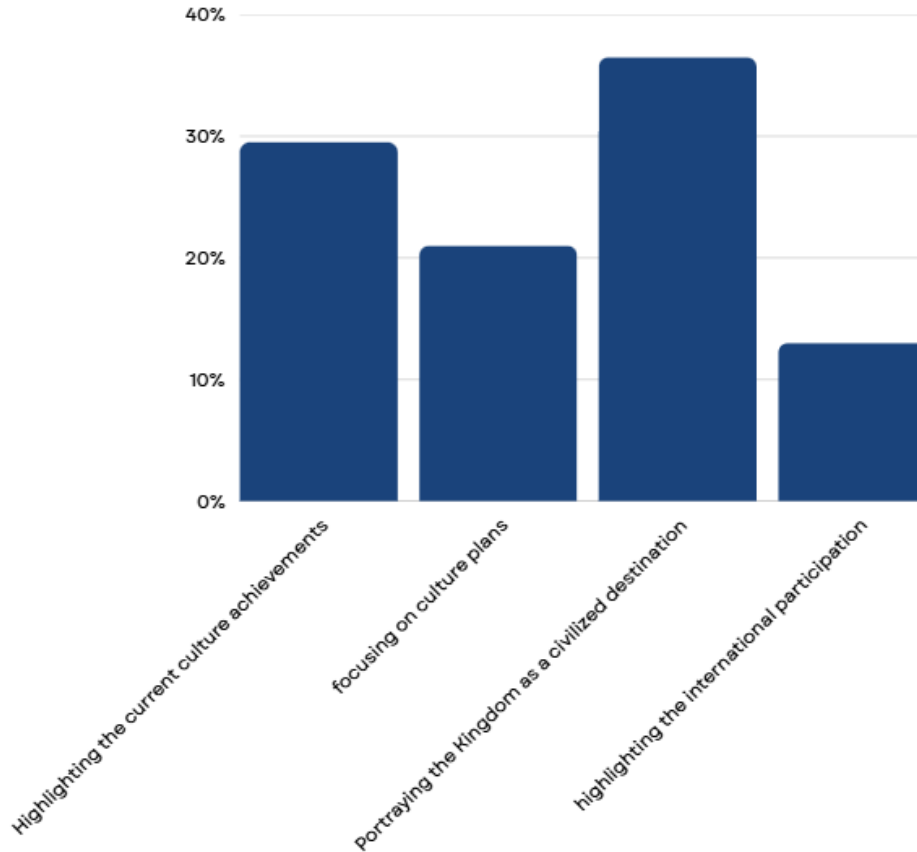
#### 7.2.4.4. Government Communication Strategies



**Figure 26.**  
Government communication strategies on the Instagram accounts of institutions concerned with cultural promotion for the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Figure 26 shows the government communication strategies used to promote the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally on Instagram accounts concerned with promoting the Kingdom's culture, where the "media strategy" came first (40.1%), followed by the "strategy of urging a specific action" (23.3%), "persuasion" (22.2%), and the "dialogue" strategy (3%).

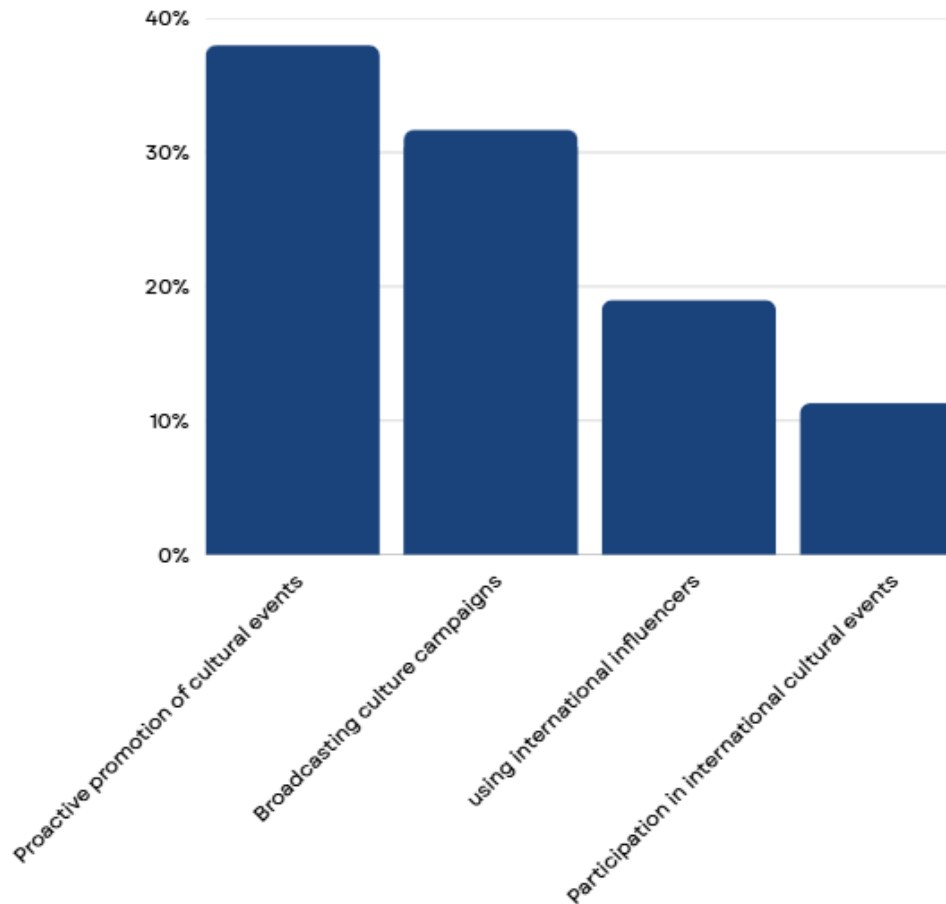
#### 7.2.4.5. International Promotional Activities



**Figure 27.**  
International promotional activities for the Kingdom of Bahrain in Instagram posts on culture-related Instagram accounts.

Figure 27 shows international promotional activities for the Kingdom of Bahrain in Instagram posts on cultural-related accounts. The most prominent of these activities are "portraying the Kingdom as a civilized and cultural destination by shedding light on its cultural heritage" (36.5%), then "highlighting the current cultural achievements of the Kingdom of Bahrain" (29.5%), "focusing on cultural plans of the Kingdom of Bahrain" (21%), and "highlighting the international participation of the Kingdom of Bahrain in many international cultural forums" (13%).

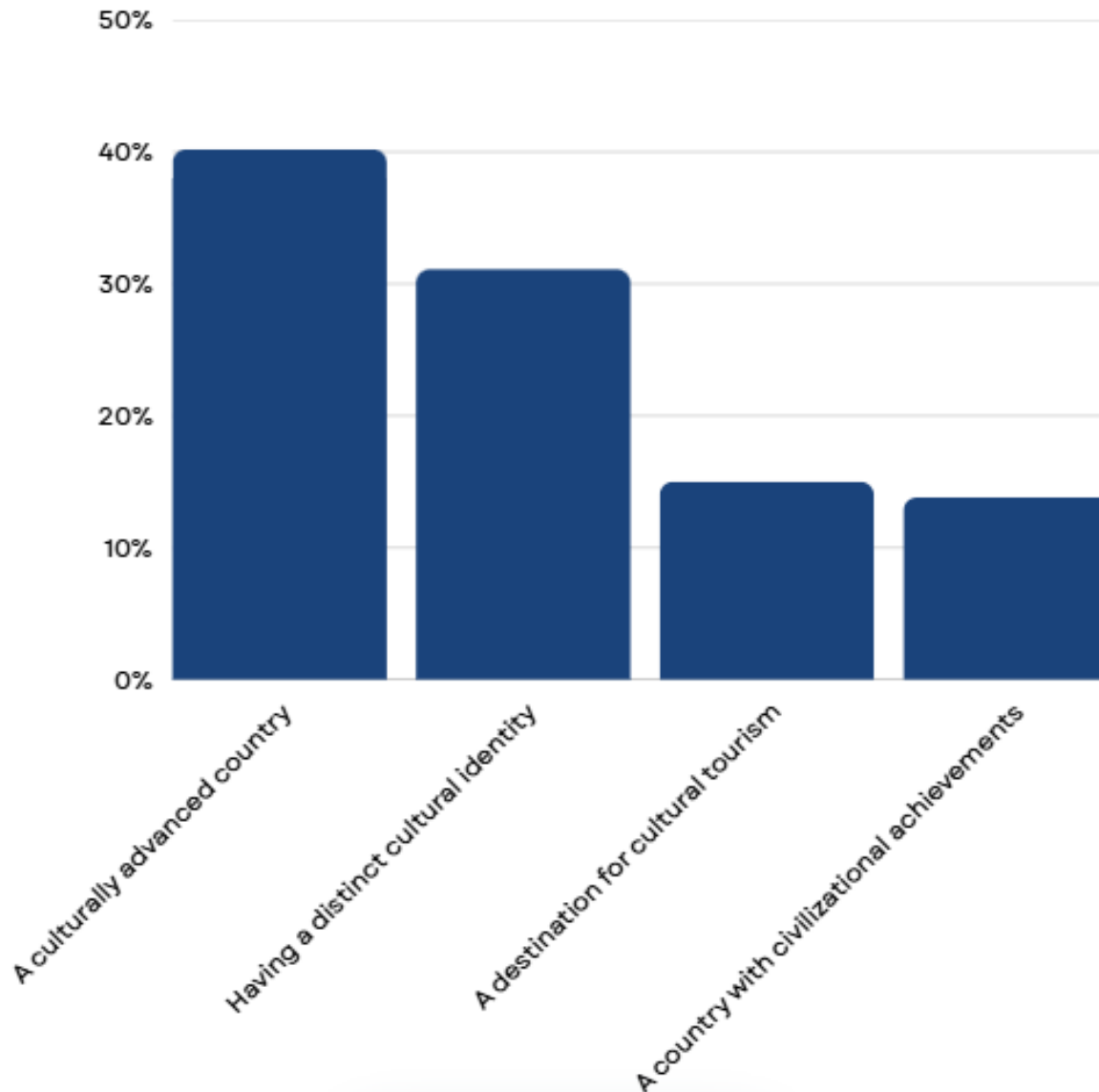
## 7.2.4.6. Promotion Mechanisms

**Figure 28.**

Economic Promotion Mechanisms for the Kingdom of Bahrain on Instagram accounts concerned with cultural promotion for the kingdom.

Figure 28 shows a mental model of the mechanisms for cultural promotion for the Kingdom of Bahrain on Instagram accounts specialized in promoting Bahraini culture. "Proactive promotion of important cultural events in the Kingdom of Bahrain" topped the list of cultural promotion mechanisms used on these accounts (38%), followed by "Broadcasting promotional campaigns to promote the culture and heritage of the Kingdom of Bahrain" (31.7%), "using international influencers and cultural ambassadors" (19%), and "Highlighting the participation of the Kingdom of Bahrain in international cultural events" (11.3%). This result is consistent with a result by Melliani and Salem [46], which shows that the most essential international promotion mechanism is the proactive promotion of cultural events.

#### 7.2.4.7. Features of the Kingdom of Bahrain's Metal Image



**Figure 29.**

Features of the kingdom of Bahrain's metal image are highlighted by posts on Instagram accounts concerned with the cultural promotion of the Kingdom.

Figure 29 shows the features of the Kingdom of Bahrain's metal image highlighted by posts on Instagram accounts concerned with the cultural promotion of the Kingdom. "A mental image that highlights the current cultural development" (40.2%) is at the forefront, followed by "a mental image that highlights the distinct cultural identity of the Kingdom of Bahrain" (31.1%), "a mental image that highlights Bahrain as a destination for cultural and heritage tourism" (15%), then "a mental image that highlights civilizational achievements and innovations" (13.8%).

## 8. Discussion

According to the results of the current study, all Instagram accounts of the institutions promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain under study largely agreed on the use of "information" and "persuasion" strategies, which can contribute to enhancing the public's awareness of the Kingdom of Bahrain's tourism, economic, diplomatic, and cultural potential and justifying its status as an ideal destination capable of meeting their expectations. It is worth noting the essential role of the National Communication Center as the body entrusted with coordinating the strategic visions of all government institutions in creating harmony among them and achieving the Kingdom of Bahrain's Vision 2050.

The study results also showed that the promotional activities of the accounts under study focused primarily on highlighting the Kingdom of Bahrain's current achievements in the tourism, culture, and public diplomacy fields, shedding light on the Kingdom's periodic participation in international forums, and highlighting the Kingdom's futuristic plans. In addition, these accounts followed many promotional mechanisms, including proactively promoting important tourism and cultural events in the Kingdom of Bahrain in the tourism and cultural sectors. Meanwhile, collaborating with influencers and digital ambassadors to promote Bahrain internationally topped the list for the economic and public diplomacy fields.

The image features of the Kingdom of Bahrain varied according to the study's results from one Instagram account to another. Overall, the image features of the Kingdom of Bahrain on all analyzed Instagram accounts strengthen the Kingdom's image as an investment destination and a tourism hub, highlighting a distinguished civilization and culture, and portraying the country as having strong political stances on international issues and being a reliable diplomatic partner.

The study results also indicated that the government institutions under study have adopted a comprehensive set of multi-dimensional digital strategies for the international promotion of the Kingdom of Bahrain. It became clear that these institutions are focusing on achieving a degree of compatibility with Bahrain Vision 2050, which has given great attention to ensuring that the Kingdom of Bahrain remains competitive within the framework of the global economy and investment. This will only be achieved through the use of appropriate digital government strategies to promote the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally and improve its international image.

Generally, the digital communication strategies adopted by the institutions concerned with promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain under study reflect a clear vision for enhancing Bahrain's economic, cultural, tourism, and diplomatic standing internationally. They also reflect a strong trend toward using social media as key tools for promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally. However, great efforts are still needed to enhance the interactivity rate on all government Instagram accounts concerned with promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally.

## 9. Recommendations

Based on the study results, it is recommended to:

- 1- Continuing to unify the efforts of government institutions responsible for promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally to achieve a unified and distinctive image of the Kingdom based on the four main promotion pillars: tourism, economy, public diplomacy, and culture. In the same context, it is essential to diversify the digital communication strategies used to serve the objectives of promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally.
2. Formulating a strategic vision for Bahraini digital diplomacy, placing it at the top of Bahraini diplomatic priorities as one of its soft power tools.
3. Working on leveraging new technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning to analyze audience behavior and gain a deeper understanding of their interests, which can contribute to producing effective and creative digital promotional content for the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- 4- Managing the various digital platforms used to promote the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally in an integrated manner, ensuring content coordination across these platforms. Additionally, expanding the use of multiple digital platforms can increase access to a wide range of international audiences.
- 5- Collaborating with international social influencers to promote the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally. Furthermore, working with these influencers to create digital content that combines Bahrain's local values with the interests of international audiences for more effective and engaging digital content.

## 10. Future Research

Based on the study results, it is recommended to conduct the following future research:

- 1- The effectiveness of cooperation between the government and private institutions in promoting the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally.
- 2- Using artificial intelligence technology to promote the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally: A forward-looking vision.
- 3- The impact of new technology on international promotion strategies: A second-level analytical study.
- 4-Using metaverse technology to promote the Kingdom of Bahrain internationally, based on the vision of a sample of media practitioners.

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