SRI LANKA INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF COMPUTING

English for Academic purposes – IT1080

Assignment

Title: SLIIT Students' attitudes and preferences regarding social media.	
Batch Number: 16	Group No: MLB 16.01.07

Group Members

IT22560926	PRABASHWARA R.P
IT22601674	DILSHAN K.B
IT22603104	DIAS M.P.U
IT22602800	MUTHUKUDA ARACHCHIGE N.D
IT22560094	RANASINGHE P.M.R

Submitted on: 22/ 05 / 2023

Terms of Reference

A report submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the module IT1080, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology.

The scope of this report is to figure out SLIIT students' attitudes and preferences regarding social media. A survey was conducted prior to the beginning of the report. This report is entirely dependent on it. The timeframe of the report was one month. This report addresses the subject in a variety of ways.

Acknowledgement

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Abstract

Social media has become an integral part of our lives. Social media platforms have created an environment where individuals can interact with one another. This study aimed to examine the attitudes and preferences regarding social media among students of SLIIT (Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology).

This topic refers to the study of the beliefs, impressions, and attitudes toward social media among students of SLIIT (Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology). This research investigates preferences for various platforms, their stage, and perspectives on subjects such as content sharing and online interactions.

This report addresses various themes to discuss and analyze the outcomes of the survey. Initially, under demographic, the report has given a complete overview of gender-based, faculty-based results and age distribution.

__Introduction__

Social media has become a major part of modern society since it was founded. Billions of people basically use it to communicate with each other. But people use it for different purposes. According to the Hootsuite Software Corporations' study report 2021, there are over 4.2 billion social media users globally.

There are over 128 social media networks globally. But Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are the most popular and frequently used. [1]. Each of them has unique characteristics and a unique user base. Their popularity may be assessed by the number of monthly active users. There are more than half of the world's population active social media users globally [2].

The majority of these social media platforms are based on mobile or Desktop applications. It has made social networking more accessible and popular. The typical user spends around 2 hours and 31 minutes every day on social media sites [2]. It has been increasing every year compared with the previous year. While social media may give many benefits, such as being connected with people and learning new things, users should monitor how much time they spend on it by themselves. If not, it may develop into an addiction.

Social media has some negative effects on society. Some consumers use social media to communicate their dissatisfaction. It also spreads disinformation and misleading news, promotes illegal items, and exposes fraud. The developers have taken the necessary steps to limit such negative behaviors and increase the positive aspect.

It appears that social media is an interesting topic for discussion, also it covers a wide range of areas. Our team has decided to explore this topic with quantitative data. We conducted a comprehensive survey and collected valuable data from SLIIT students.

The report initiates with an overview of the research methodology used to collect the data based on the survey results, it examined the most popular social media platforms among SLIIT students, how often they use them, the devices that they use, and their reasons for using social media. It also discusses students' attitudes and the impact of social media on their mental health, as well as their personal opinions and recommendations.

Methodology

The method for this research was a questionnaire-based research design that aimed to examine SLIIT students' personal attitudes towards social media. Data collection was conducted using a survey questionnaire specifically designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative information on various aspects related to social media usage.

The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions that covered various dimensions, including frequency of usage, benefits, time spent, addiction, mental health implications, and participant thoughts on social media.

A total of 104 questionnaires were distributed online through WhatsApp groups, targeting undergraduate students from each of the six faculties within the University ensuring representation from different academic backgrounds. The survey questionnaire was created using a Google form, providing a user-friendly format with options such as radio button selection and check boxes for respondents to select their answers. Participants' data were collected over 40 days, the reason for this was that many questionnaires were shared among WhatsApp groups during this period.

Upon completion of data collection, a careful review and analysis of the collected data was conducted. The data were compared with relevant references to gain further knowledge and to identify any notable trends or patterns. The graphical representations, including pie charts and bar graphs, were illustrated to present the findings visually enhancing the clarity and interpretation of the results.

Data Analysis & Discussion

1. The demographic of Research Participants.

The initiation of the questionnaire was focused on gathering demographic information from the participants. The gender, age, and faculty of the respondents were asked, and the three pie charts below illustrate them.

1.1 Gender Distribution
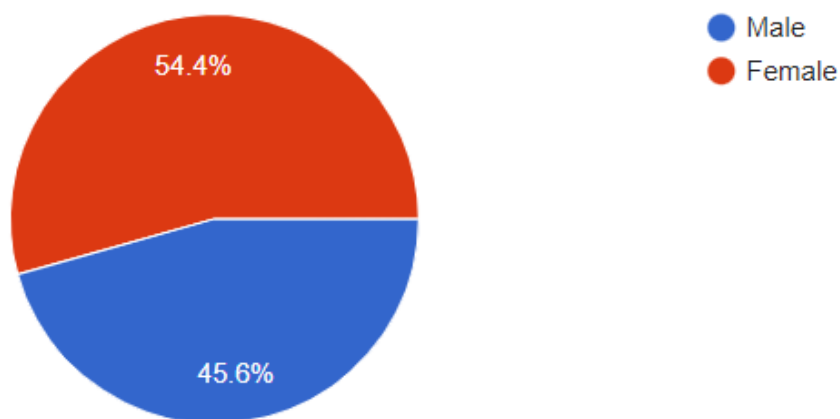
The initial question was to confirm the research participants' gender and this pie chart serves as a visual representation of their responses. There were 56 female students with 54.4% and 46 male students with the remaining 45.6%. The study confirms that both female and male students exhibit a notable interest in social media.

1.2 Age Distribution
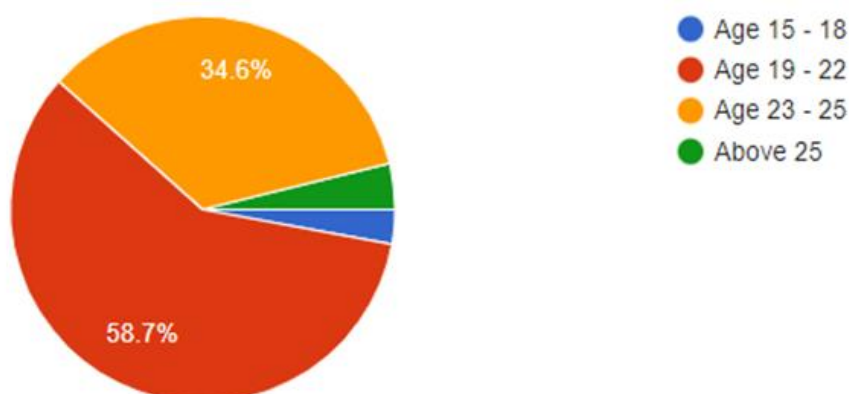
This pie chart illustrates the age of participants among 104 students. Four age categories are depicted in four colors: age 15 -18, age 19- 22 age 23-35, and above 25. The highest

age group is between 19 and 22. According to the pie chart, 61 students are aged between 19 -22 out of 104 students. This single sector has almost three-fifths of the total participants. 36 participants in the age 23-25 which was the second highest sector, and it shows just over a one-sixth. There is an equal number of responses for the other two age groups between age 15-18 and age above 25.

1.3 Faculty Distribution.
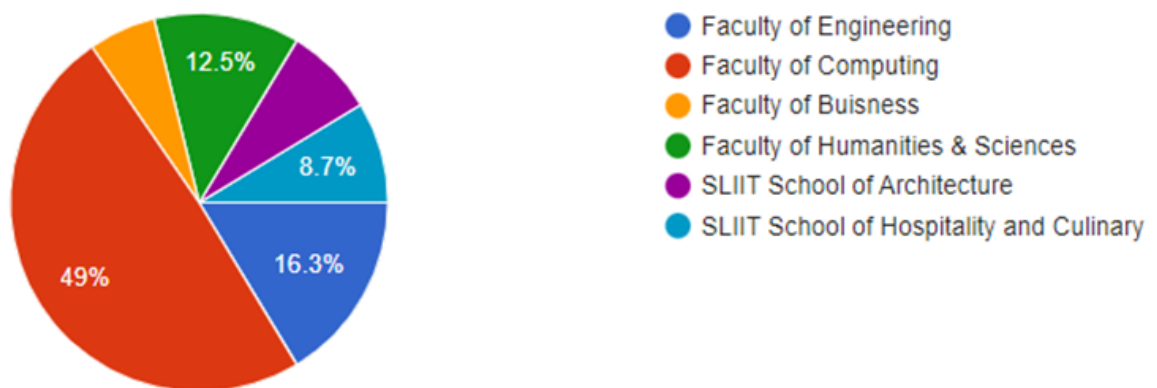
The above pie chart is to demonstrate the participant's faculty. There are six faculties involved in this research and the highest responses were received from the faculty of computing.

Nearly half of the responses were received from the faculty of computing. 51 students are included in this sector. Faculty of Engineering responses are 16.3% including 17 students. The faculty of Humanities and Science sector is the third highest with 12.5% response. Its student count is 13. The remaining three faculties received nearly a similar level of responses, ranging from 8%-9% with 7-9 students in each sector.

2. Frequently using social media platforms
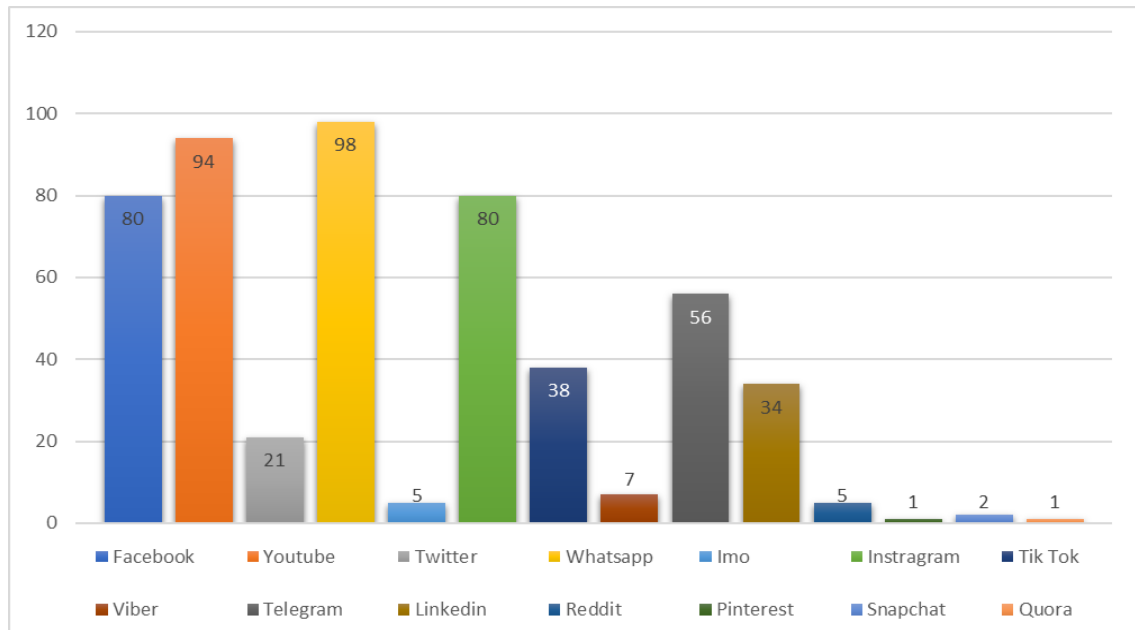
There was a question identifying the frequent use of social media platforms by SLIIT students. The bar chart above illustrates the results. A participant was allowed to mark more than one social media platform. The data was found in 104 students.

According to the results, the most usable social media platforms are WhatsApp and YouTube. More than 90% of students use them. WhatsApp is the most used one and YouTube is the second most used social media platform. The difference between them was only four. Also, it shows worldwide growth [1]. Facebook and Instagram achieve the third highest values, both are used equally and used by 80 students. Next is Telegram with 56 students.

The other platforms show lower usage. Twitter is used by 21 students. TikTok has 38 students and LinkedIn has 34 students. However, more LinkedIn users were expected since they are students. Reddit, Imo, Viber, Pinterest, Snapchat, and Quora have comparatively lower usage with 5, 5, 7, 1, 1, and 1 student respectively.

Overall, this bar chart provides a visual representation of the frequency of use of various social media platforms among SLIIT students. WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram are the most frequently used platforms.

3. Purpose of social media
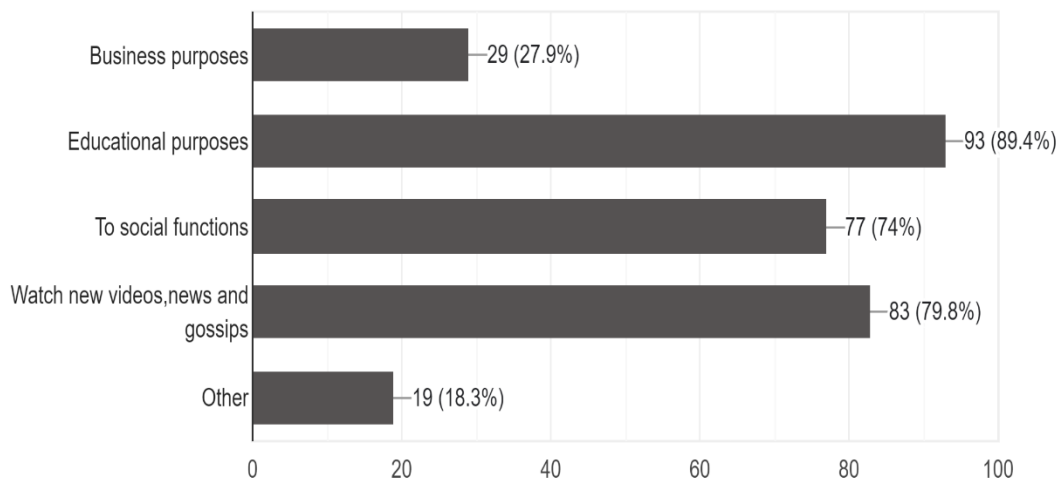
The above bar graph illustrates the purposes of social media. The data were found by the survey which was done among 104 students. The majority of respondents, comprising 89.4% (93 students), expressed a preference for educational purposes. The preference for watching new videos, news, and gossip stood at 79.8% with 83 students selecting this option. About 77 students prefer social functions for their purpose. The business purpose was preferred by about 27.9% including 29 responses. Additionally, 19 students reported having other purposes.

4. Time Spending on social media

4.1 Daily time spent on social media.
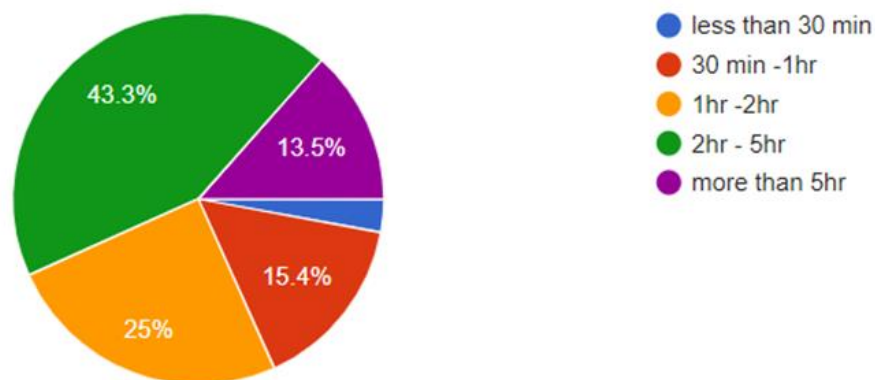
The graph shows the percentage of how much time social media is used each day by students. Social media usage was measured by how long students were logged in. 2.9% of the 104 students used social media for under 30 minutes. 15.4% of them spend 30 to 1 hour on social media.

25% of students spend one to two hours every day on social media. From 2-5 hours, 45 people use social media. Their percentage on the graph is 43.3%

## 4.2 Daily time periods spent on social media.
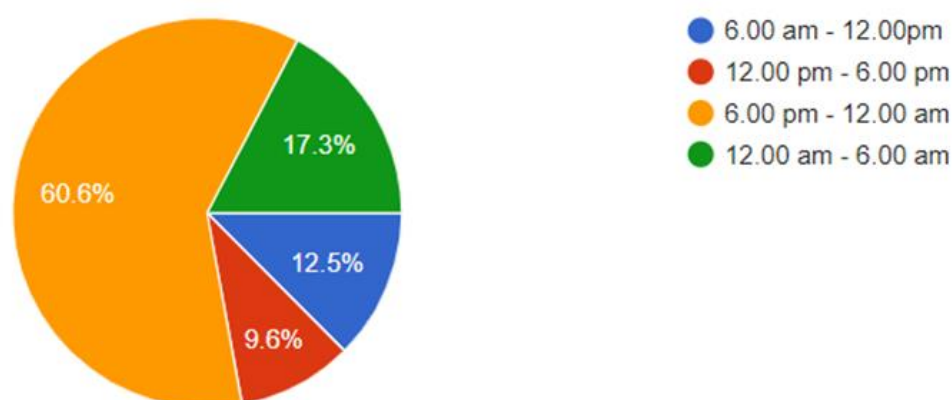
This pie chart represents what periods of time were spent on social media by the students. Between 6.00 am and 12.00 am, 12.5% of the students were using social media. Out of 104 students, 9.6 of users use social media from 12.00 pm to 6.00 pm. A large population uses social media between 6.00 pm to 12.00 am by 63 students. The percentage that they represent is 60.6%.

The longest time that social media is being used is at nighttime.

The green color slice represents 17.3% of students who used social media from midnight to six in the morning.

5. Devices used to access social media.
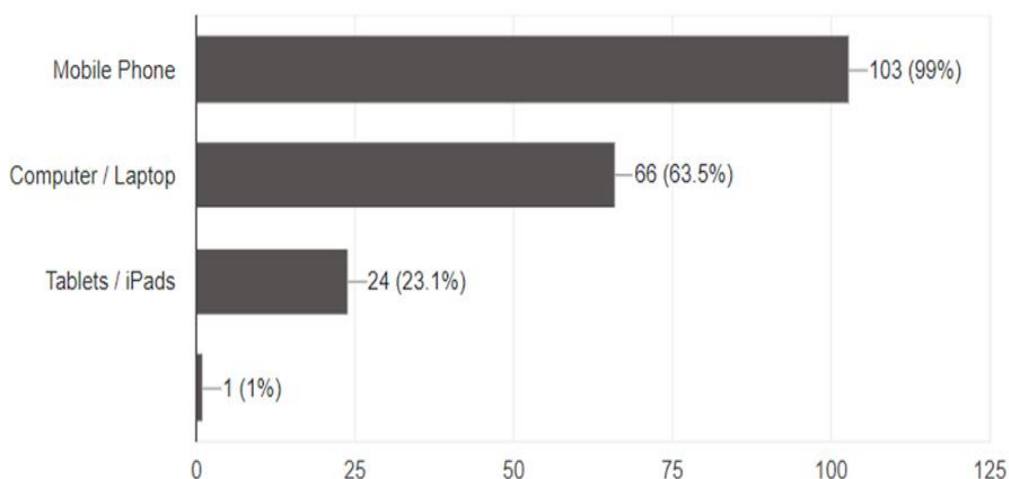
The bar graph shows the percentage of students who access social media using various electronic devices. Social media is accessed on one's mobile devices, desktop or laptop computers, or tablets or iPads all at once by them. The bar is divided into them based on what they like and ease of use.

It can be clearly seen that mobile phones have a higher percentage of the bar graph. 103 out of 104 students were accessing social media via mobile devices. Their percentage is 99%.

63.5% of them are accessing social media by computer or laptop.

The use of tablets or iPads by 23.1% of them for social media access was noted.

Only 1% of them are accessing social media with other devices, such as smartwatches and smart TV.

6. Benefits of social media
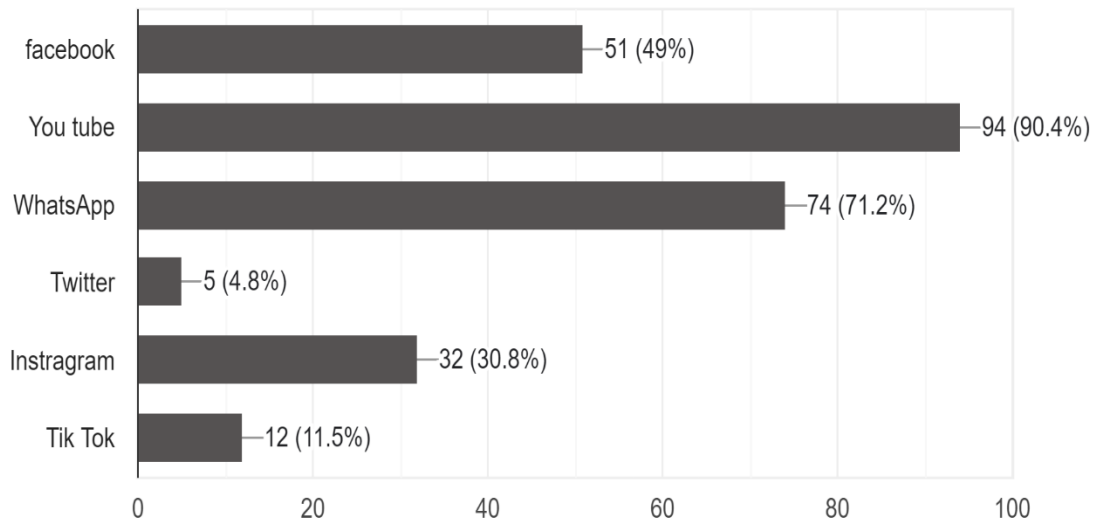
The figure illustrates the social media platform that offers benefits to SLIIT students. The sample data were obtained from a survey conducted among 104 students.

YouTube emerged as the most preferred social media platform of about 94. The second most preferred platform is WhatsApp. About 74 students preferred it. The next most preferred platform is Facebook; about 51 students prefer it. Instagram was preferred by 32 students, TikTok by 12 students. and Twitter by 5 students.

7. The Impact of Social Media Integration on Websites and Web Applications.
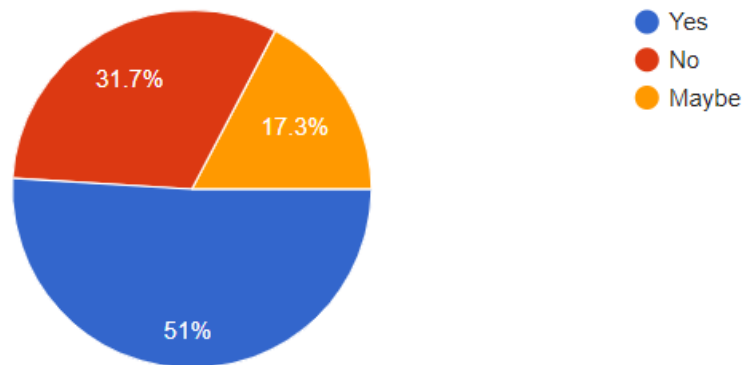
The graph demonstrates how web applications and websites are confident by students. Social media linking has been positively received by the overall student population.

51% of the students responded "YES", meaning they link their social media accounts to other websites or applications. The certainty of other websites or web applications is certain to them. Most of the respondents were represented by this group.

Those students who responded "No" made up 31.7% of the red slice. This group makes up a significant portion.

The survey found that 17.3% of students are unsure or undecided that their accounts are linked to other third-party online pages and web applications, they didn't know their privacy is compromised or not compromised.

This group represents the smallest portion of the respondents.

8. Popular features on social media
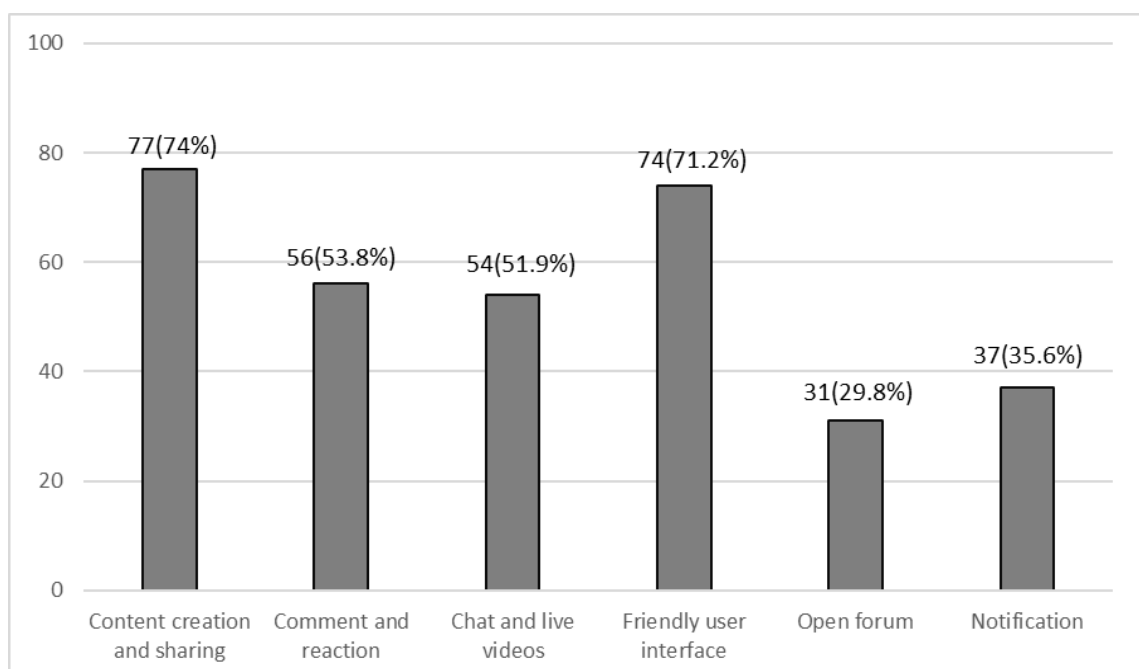
This graph illustrates the preferred features of social media. The sample data were obtained from a survey conducted among 104 students.

Content creation and sharing features were preferred by the majority of students, approximately 74% which includes 77 students. The friendly user interface feature was preferred by about 74 students. Comments and reaction features were preferred by about 53.8%, which includes 56 students. The chat and live videos feature were preferred by about 51.9%, including 54 students. The n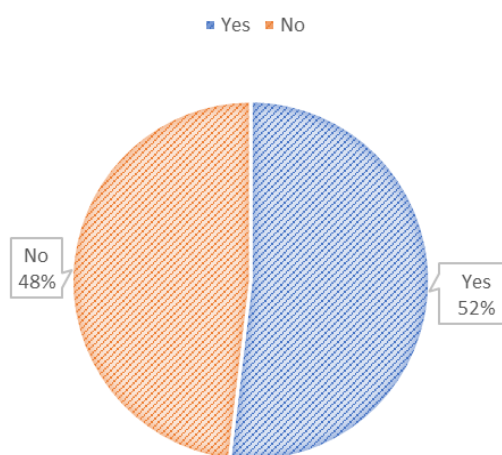otification feature was preferred by about 35.6%, including 37 students. The open forum feature garnered a preference of about 29.8% including 31 students.

9. Cyberbullying experiences

CYBERBULLYING EXPERINCE

■ Yes ■ No

No
48%

Yes
52%

This pie chart describes the result of our survey in which SLIIT students aged between 15 to 25, were asked about whether they ever had cyberbullying experiences or witnessed it happening to someone else on social media. Participants focus on the two possible outcomes: yes or no. A total number of 104 students were given their responses to this question. There were enrolled 47 male students and 56 female students.

According to the pie chart, nearly half of SLIIT students had some cyberbullying experiences. As a percentage 52% of students indicated that, they have some experience with cyberbullying. That is a considerable percentage to prove, almost half of SLIIT students who are using social media have some negative experiences.

On the other hand, 48% of SLIIT students do not have any kind of cyberbullying or have witnessed experiences while they are using social media. According to the proportion mentioned, 50 pupils can utilize social media, without experiencing any kind of harassment.

In summary, SLIIT students who are using social media almost half had some cyberbullying experiences and nearly half do not face those kinds of harassment. This graph is not enough to say whether social media is beneficial or harmful. However, this pie chart depicts that there is always a chance that using social media will not be 100 percent secure.

10. Future holds for social media

Respondents were given an opportunity to elect their preference on future holds of social media and the results are shown below as visual representation.
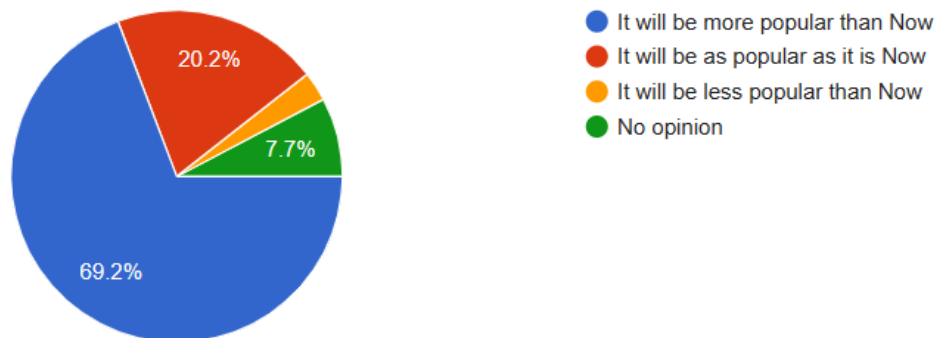
This graph indicates the preferences regarding the future holds of social media. It has come to attention that approximately seven in ten of the responses stated that social media will be more popular than its current popularity while a fifth of responses have stated that social media will exist with its current popularity. However, a minority of the responses have revealed that social media will remain less popular than its current position. Finally, 7.7% of responses are left without any of the options given during the survey.

Additionally, the progression in technology has created a major impact on the anticipation of social media. To be precise, social media will be more based on modern technologies like artificial intelligence, mobile-first delivery, and argument reality [9].

11. Social media additivity and mental health

Social media has become a necessary component of every student's life. Many SLIIT students spend most of their valuable time on social media platforms for different purposes. So, it is important to discuss how these social networks effects SLIIT students' mental health. According to that, we must get to know did they believe social media can affect their mental health negatively, whether they are addicted to social media, and which kind of mental discordance they face.

11.1 Student perception

SOCIAL MEDIA DETRIMENTAL TO
MENTAL HEALTH

Yes ▪ No ▪ Not sure

Not sure
24%

No
14%

Yes
62%
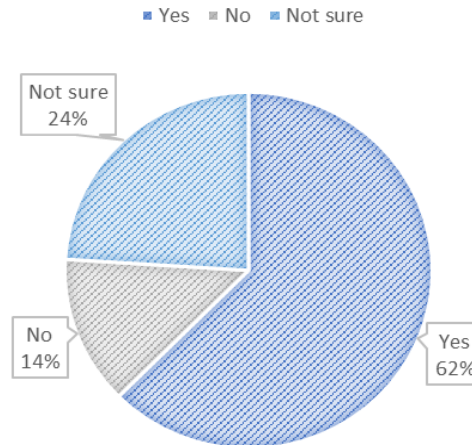
The above pie chart depicts that social media has a negative impact on mental health. SLIIT students answered using three possible outcomes: Yes, Not Sure, and No. Six separate faculties were represented by 104 students each and every one responded to the question.

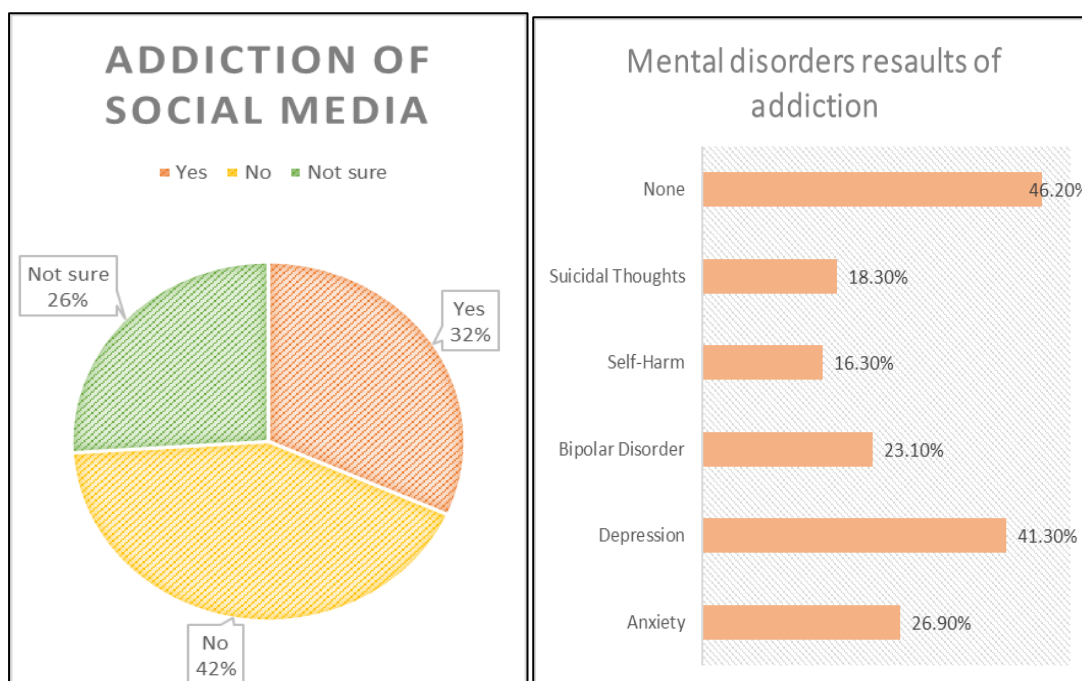The majority of SLIIT students who responded to the above query said they believe social media has a negative impact on mental health. Just over three-fifths of the students responded by using the YES option. That gives us an idea most of the students either had their own experiences or have heard about it.24% of students do not have a clear idea about the detrimental effects of social media. That percentage is nearly less than a quarter. A lesser number of students believe social media does not have an impact on them negatively. They are shown as a percentage of 14% and in the color gray on the above pie chart.

Finally, most of the SLIIT students are aware of the drawbacks of social media, and a smaller proportion of students do not agree with that. Those that responded NO to the above question have shared their opinions. These theories also contend that social media can be harmful. Their argument [3] is social media is just a tool for students, and if they don't know how to use it responsibly then only that tool affects them negatively. Briefly, most SLIIT students are aware that social media can be detrimental to mental health.

11.2 Addiction and mental discordance

SLIIT students were questioned about whether they are addicted to using social media or not. Students who answered YES were questioned further about the mental illness they face. Sixty both male and female students were provided their answers. We must have a clear understanding of those issues if we are going to provide some solutions to them. That is the reason for providing this kind of questionary. The following pie chart

illustrates SLIIT students' addiction to social media. Also, the accompanying bar graph displays what are the mental issues brought on by addiction.

The data from the pie chart indicates that the majority of SLIIT students believed that they were not addicted to social media. That amounts to 42% as a percentage or as a proportion almost half. Students believe they were addicted to social media, which is the second major percentage among SLIIT students. That outcome was described by 32% of students. A small minority of students, represented by 26%, are providing whether they are unsure about their social media addiction.

 Those who are addicted and do not have a clear idea about addiction are totally 56%. Those sets of students' answers were represented in the above bar graph as mental discordance. Also, those who believe that they are not addicted commonly provide answers as "None".

According to the bar graph,41.30% of students have depression. That is the most common mental disorder among the students. The second most common mental health problem is anxiety. Among SLLIT students 26.90% of students who are using social media have that problem. Also, 23.10% of students have bipolar disorder, 18.30% of students have suicidal thoughts and 16.30% of students have self-Harm thoughts. Only 48 students were represented whether they do not have any of these mental dissonances. As a percentage that was 46.20%. The total number of students who participated in this questionary was 104, among them only 33 students identified they are addicted to social media. But 56 students provide their answers in the above mental disorder questionnaire. This data shows us students who say completely they are not addicted or there are not sure about their additivity also have some kind of mental illness.

In summary, those kinds of mental disorders may occur as a result of the number of hours they spend on social media, which time period they use it and what are the purposes for using this social media.

In the above sections [4], we represent the number of hours that they are spending on social media daily. It shows most of them use social media for two to five hours. Also, 13.5% of students spend more than 5 hours daily on social media platforms. That was a considerable number to prove why they have such kind of mental discordance. That concept [5] was proven by using 6595 participants in 2019. That result shows students who are using social media platforms more than 3 hours per day, there are uncover higher risk for mental health problems.

The time period of using social media platforms does affects mental disorders. [6]

The purpose of using social media platforms does affect mental health. [7]

Positive effects on those who have none of these mental problems [8]

12. Overall feedback on the social media

12.1 Participants' overall feedback

To examine the aspects of overall satisfaction with social media among SLIIT Students, the respondents were questioned to give their feedback. The resulting graph is shown below.
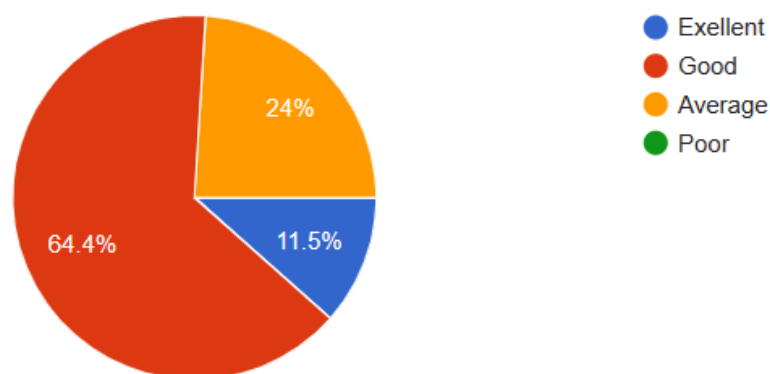
This graph illustrates the overall satisfaction with social media and out of the total responses, it has been observed that social media has a positive impact associated with its usage with a proportion of 64.4%.

According to the above diagram, about a quarter of responses have revealed that social media is associated with excellent usage while a small minority percentage has related with its average usage. In contrast, there have been no responses received indicating poor usage of social media.

12.2 Utilization of social media
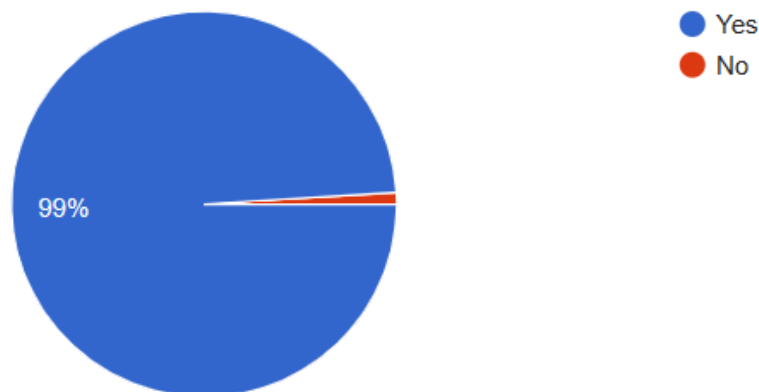
The above graph demonstrates the impact of the utilization of social media based on the respondent's preferences. It is indicated that out of the responses, many respondents have inclined to use social media for beneficial purposes with a proportion of 99% while a minority of respondents have stated that social media is not associated with beneficial purposes with a percentage of 1%.

Nowadays, social media platforms are becoming increasingly popular for beneficial purposes. These platforms offer various benefits to enhance their academic career.

13. Personal perspectives on social media

As a part of the survey, respondents were given an opportunity to share their personal impressions on social media. It has been observed that the responses reveal various opinions and experiences.

Some of the responses have stated the usefulness of social media focusing on limitations when accessing social media while some of the responses have acknowledged both positive and negative aspects of social media. One response emphasizes the correct usage of social media due to its potential high risks and has identified both good and bad elements on these platforms.

Several responses have highlighted the duality of social media mentioning both benefits and negative impacts on mental health and relationships. One respondent suggests that social media creates an environment based on their preferences.

Overall, the responses reveal that social media is a vital component of sharing knowledge, communicating, and staying connected. Although, identifying potential risks and limitations will ensure a positive experience with social media.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the information gained from the survey given to SLIIT students offers perceptions of their usage, preferences, and experiences with social media. The results show that both male and female students view social media to be an essential subject, with female students somewhat outnumbering male students. Participants ages 19 to 22 make up the majority, followed by those aged 23 to 25.

The most commonly used social media networks are WhatsApp and YouTube, and afterward Facebook and Instagram. The student population uses fewer platforms like TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn, and others. The report also finds that students use social media overwhelmingly for educational purposes, with entertainment, social activities, and business goals coming in second and third respectively

When it comes to the time used for social media, a significant number of students using it daily for between 2 to 5 hours. The evening and late-night hours are when the most consumption is seen. The most used device for accessing social media is a mobile phone, followed by PCs or laptops, tablets, and iPads

Students are responsive to social media features that allow them to create and share content and have simple user interfaces, participate in live video chats, comments, and other forms of social media. The majority of students choose to link their social media accounts to other websites or applications, but a smaller proportion choose to forego doing so or are unclear about their account connections.

Students at SLIIT are concerned about cyberbullying, with roughly fifty percent of the respondents admitting they have either been the victim of it or observed it happen to others. It also illustrates how important it is to prevent online harassment and encourage a secure social media environment

Overall, according to the survey findings, social media is a big part of students' lives at SLIIT, with the majority of respondents expressing fulfillment and acknowledging its potential advantages. The potential harm to mental health must be taken into inspection, and problems like addiction and mental ill-health brought on by social media use must be addressed. The majority of students anticipate that social media will maintain its popularity going forward, with developments in technology like artificial intelligence, mobile-first delivery, and augmented reality predicted to determine how it develops in the future.

__Recommendations__

1. Encourage digital literacy - Given how common social media is in students' lives. We need to know they have the information and skills necessary to use the internet safely. Programs that highlight online etiquette and privacy settings, and identifying and responding to cyberbullying should be included in educational institutions and government programs [10]

2. Create Safer Online Environments -Many students have experienced cyberbullying or have witnessed it happen to others. Creating a safe online environment is important. To reduce and prevent cyberbullying incidents, social media organizations and educational institutions should work together to establish efficient reporting systems, moderation tools, and awareness programs.[11]

3. Support the Awareness of Mental Health - Since social media may impact mental health, it's critical to spread knowledge about the possible dangers and offers tools for assistance. To help youngsters understand and handle the potential negative effects of increased social media use, schools may collaborate with mental health specialists to provide workshops, counseling services, and teaching resources [12]

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