

Use of Social Networking Sites by Post Graduate Students of Dibrugarh University: A Case Study

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Abstract

In today's era Social Networking Sites have become a popular communication and information sharing tools among the student community. The present study is to find out how the post graduate students of Dibrugarh University use social networking sites for their academic work purpose. A structured questionnaire was designed and personally distributed among 150 respondents. Most of them are using these sites for their academic purposes. YouTube, Facebook, Research gate and Academia.edu are the most preferred social networking sites for research purposes. Finally, a majority of respondents said using SNSs may be a waste of time. Majority of the respondents faced poor internet connection, Privacy concern and data security are the most undesirable difficulties that students face in Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh.

Keywords: Social Networking Sites, Dibrugarh University, Information sharing, Communication, Research gate, Academia, YouTube, Facebook.

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1. Introduction

Tremendous popularity of social networking sites among the people of this age has given a new way of communication. Modern day students are also using different SNS for their academic purposes. Different social networking sites such as Facebook, Research gate, Academia.edu etc. provides the modern day students to enhance the process of information procurement, sharing and dissemination among them. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, pictures, posts, events, and interest with people in their network. The present study is very much important for the academic community as it help us to know about the uses of different Social Networking Sites by the post-graduates' student of Dibrugarh University for their academic purpose.

Dibrugarh University is the backbone for higher education in Upper Assam. It was established in the year 1965 under the Dibrugarh University Act 1965. The University is located at Rajabheta; South from the Dibrugarh Town. It is affiliated by UGC and accredited by NAAC ('A' Grade 2017) and member of AIU (Association of Indian Universities). There are total Thirty-three (33) Departments and Centre's in the University and One Hundred Seventy-Seven (177) affiliated colleges and institutions under Dibrugarh University. Dibrugarh University was ranked eighty-six (86) in all over India by the National Institutional Framework (NIRF) and thirty-five in pharmacy ranking in 2019-2020.

2. Objectives

The main objective of the present study is to find out the use of social networking sites by the post-graduate students of Dibrugarh University, Assam. Other objectives of the study are given below:

- To discuss the significance of SNSs in academic/research work.
- To evaluate the frequency usage of social networking tools and the popular sites among the post graduate student community of Dibrugarh University.
- To find out the possible obstacles of using SNS tools.

3. Methodology

We adopted questionnaire methods to complete this study. Primary data has been collected with the aid of a structured questionnaire from the Post Graduate Students of Dibrugarh University. By keeping in mind the objectives of the study a structured questionnaire was

prepared and distributed randomly among the post graduate students of Dibrugarh University. Only 150 questionnaires were distributed among them and out of that 115 were returned the questionnaire. The collected data were tabulated and then analyzed with the applications of statistical tools. So the findings of this study are purely based on the responses given in the questionnaire returned by the responded.

4. Scope of the Study

This study was conducted only in a single academic intuition, so findings may not be applicable to be generalized on all academic institution. The present study is limited to the post graduate students of Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Assam.

5. Literature Review

Worldwide many studies are done on use of social networking sites among the students in Universities. In Indian context also there are so many studies are done in different Universities. Only a few studies have been undertaken in the Universities situated in the valley of Brahmaputra Assam on the use of social networking sites by the students. For any academic study the review of existing literature is a very significant component. It helps the researchers to know the past trends of their interest. An attempt has been made to review the literature published on the use of social networking sites by the students of different Universities. Few related studies have been observed before conducting this study. Among those studies, one of the studies was done by Bicen & Cavus (2011) on social networking sites usage habits of undergraduate students. The study reflects that most under-graduate students use Facebook for more than four hours a day. Another study was conducted by Bhardwaj (2014) revealed that the majority of respondents (94%) preferred Facebook followed by 115 (60%) LinkedIn whereas Xing (1%) and Myspace (4%) are the least preferred SNS. In a recent study conducted by Borgohain (2018) on use of SNS by the research scholars of Dibrugarh University finds that 83.33% respondents use social networking sites for research purpose and Research gate, Academia.edu, Linked in are the most three used specialized academic SNSs. Madhusudhan (2012) conducted a study at the University of Delhi and reported that the majority of respondents used SNS for “lurking,” or reading but not contributing to the discussion, and only a few used SNS for promoting one’s research. Another study done by Khot, N & Bansode N (2017) reveals that in the Shivaji University, Kolhapur 77.89% of respondents use online social network for finding the information and on the other hand 38.94% of respondents use social network to make friends.

The study also finds that 90.52% of respondents use social media to communicate with teacher and 98.94% of respondents use social networking technologies for research purpose. Vicari stetania (2016) stated that the study of consult online community and also highlighted the social networking online tools used as platform of research by the medical research scholars.

6. Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

A structured questionnaire was prepared and randomly distributed among 150 post graduate students from the different departments of Dibrugarh University. Among the distributed questionnaire only 115 students (76.66%) have returned the questionnaire and 35 (i.e. 23.34%) have not respond the questionnaire.

Demographic characteristics

Table 1 shows that out of 115 respondents 56 (48.70%) are men and the remaining 59 (51.30%) are women. Gender study is very much important when we conduct studies on social networking sites.

Table: 1

Gender	No of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Male	56	48.70%
Female	59	51.30%

(n=115)

On the other hand, the Table: 2 shows the age distribution of respondents and which indicates that majority of respondents (79.13%) are from the age group of 21-24 years. 13.92% are from the age group of 25-28 Years, 5.22% are from 29-32 years and lastly Only 2 respondents (1.73%) are from 33 years or above.

Table: 2

Age	No. of Respondent	Percentage
21-24 Years	91	79.13 %
25-28 Years	16	13.92 %
29-32 Years	6	5.22 %
33 or Above	2	1.73 %

(n=115)

Duration of using SNS

University students are using different social networking sites as a mode of communication. Most of the young generations are aware about different Social Networking Sites. Figure 1 also revealed that most of the respondents (82.61%) use social networking sites for more than a year whereas 1.74 % respondent's use social networking sites less than a month. On the other hand, 11.30 % respondent use SNSs for 7 months to a year and 4.35 % respondents use SNSs for 1-6 months.

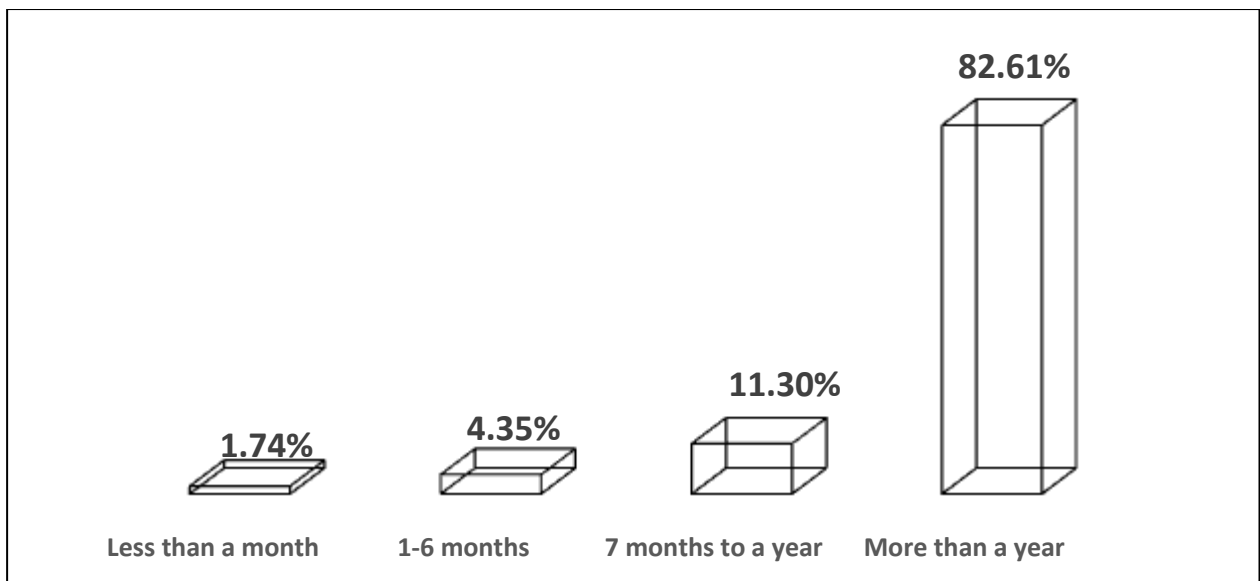


Figure 1: Duration of using Social Networking Sites (n=115)

Average time spent daily on SNSs

From the below figure 2 it is seen that 9 respondents spent less than 1 hour on SNS. On the other hand, 56 respondent spent 1-3 hours, 39 respondent spent 4-5 hour and 11 respondents spent on SNSs 5 hours or more of their daily time.

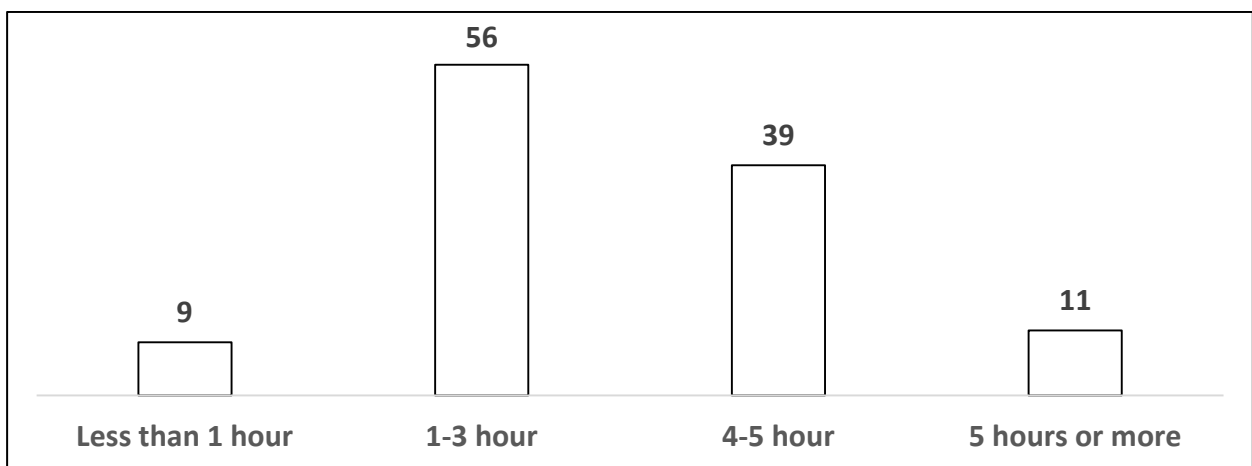


Figure: 2 Average time spent daily on SNSs (n=115)

Frequency of visit to the SNSs

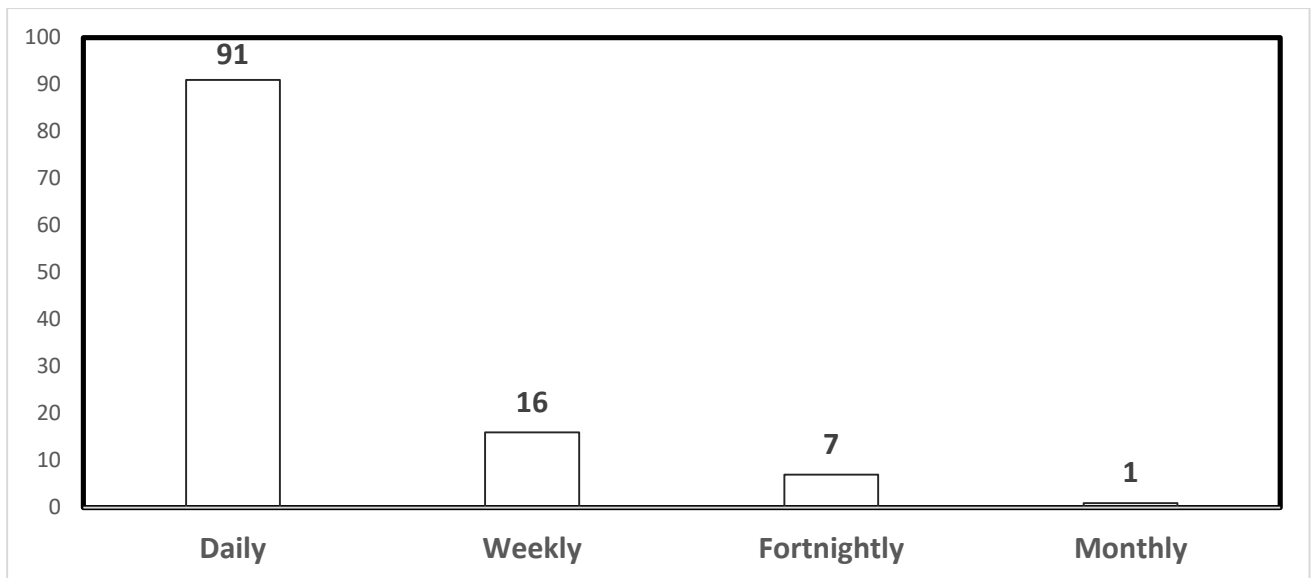


Figure 3: Frequency to visit SNS (n=115)

Figure 3 indicates that 91 respondents visit SNSs daily and on the other hand 16 respondents visit weekly. However, 7 respondents visit SNSs fortnightly and 1 respondents visit SNSs monthly. By analyzing this Figure 3 we can say that social networking sites have become an integral part of student daily routines.

Regularly used SNSs

Currently, social networking sites are being used by almost every single person in the universe specially the young generation. Students are using a wide range of social networking sites. From the below Figure 4, we can clearly say that Facebook (115), YouTube (115) along with Research gate (104) and Academia.edu (84) are the mostly used SNSs by the post graduate students of Dibrugarh University. Figure 4 also revealed that Flickr (3) is the lowest access SNSs among them. It is also observed that SNSs like Slide share (79), Instagram (76), Linked in (67), Twitter (67), Blogs (53) etc. are also being used by the community.

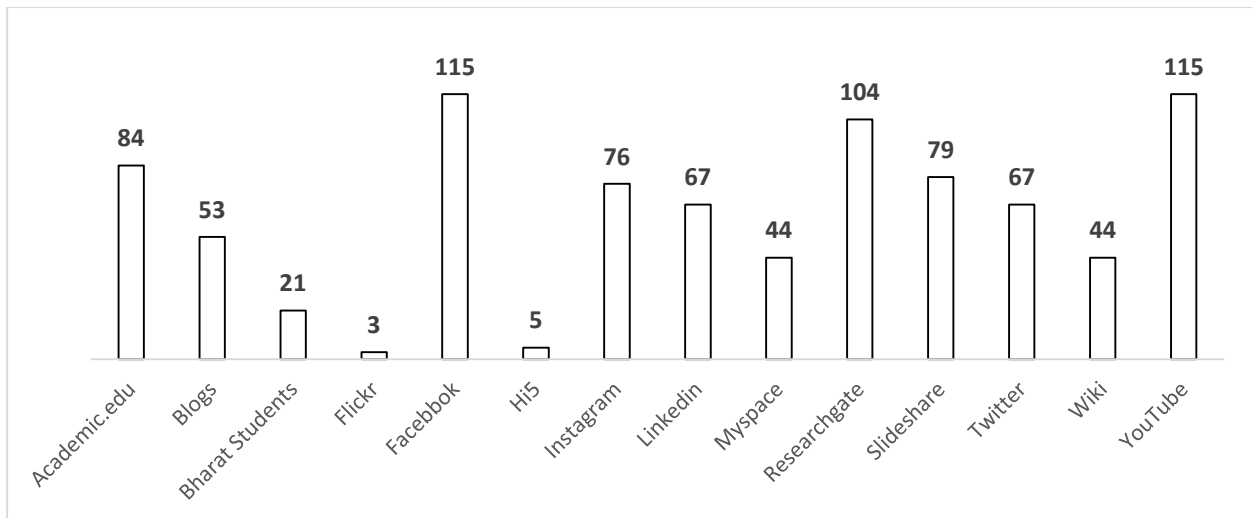


Figure 4: Regularly used SNS Note: Multiple answers are permitted (n=115)

Purpose of using SNS

It is very much essential to find out the purpose of using social networking sites by post graduate students of Dibrugarh University. In the questionnaire we provided nine options for purpose of use and all those responses received from them are presented in Table: 4

Table: 3

Sl. No.	Purpose	No of user	Percentage (%)
1	Finding Conference/Seminar	98	85.21 %
2	To promote own research	71	61.73 %
3	Academic purpose	109	94.78 %
4	Chatting with people	104	90.43 %
5	Job searching	88	76.52 %
6	Sharing photos/videos/files	94	81.73 %
7	To make friends	78	67.82 %
8	Only for time pass	25	21.73 %
9	Others	59	51.304 %

Note: Multiple choices are permitted (n=115)

From the above Table: 3 shows that 85.21 % respondents used SNS for finding conference/ seminar, whereas 61.73 % respondents use online SNSs to promote own research. On the other hand, majority of the respondents, i.e.; 94.78 % respondents are used online SNSs for academic purpose. 90.43 % respondents are used for chatting with people and 76.52 % respondents are used for job searching. Here, 81.73 % respondents are used online SNSs for

sharing photos/videos/files and 67.82 % respondents are used to make friends. However, the respondents who use online SNSs for only time pass is 21.73 % and 51.304 % respondents are used online SNSs for other purpose.

SNS used for research purpose

The below Figure 5 shows that 51% respondents use social networking sites for research purpose and remaining 49 % of respondents do not use social networking sites for research purpose.

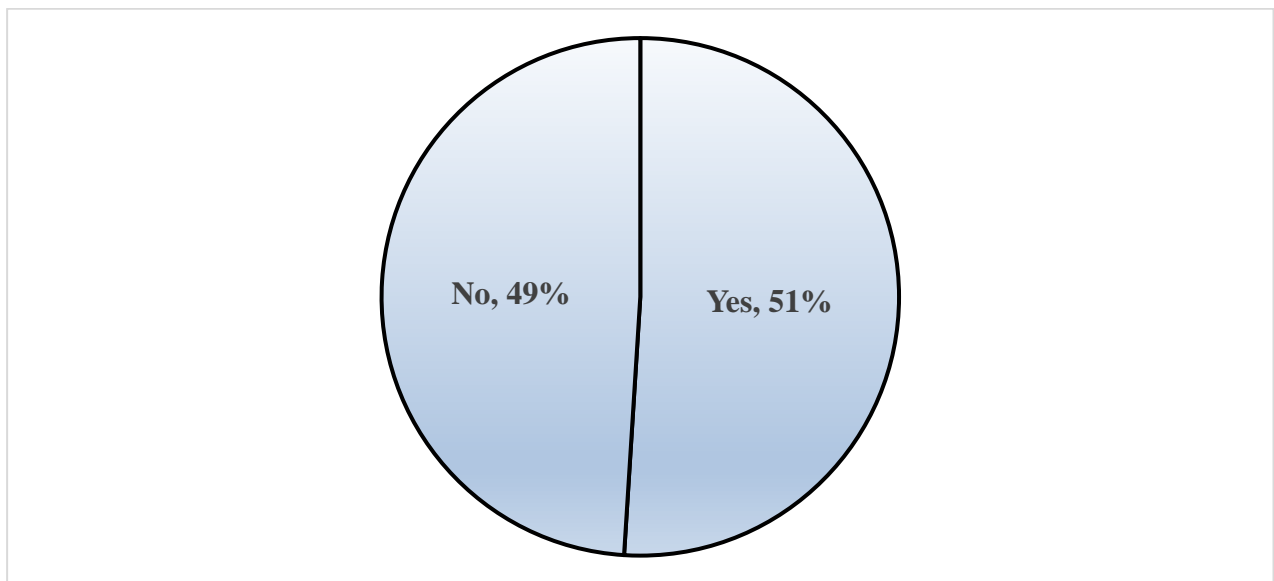


Figure 5: SNS used for only research Purpose (n=115)

Specific uses of SNS for Academic Work

Students are using social networking sites for their academic purposes. Even faculty members have also begun to familiarize themselves with this trend. They are doing everything from creating chat room forums, online live lectures, discussion, assignments, tests etc. to assisting with homework outside of the classroom setting. Figure 6 explains that majority of post graduate student (106) of Dibrugarh University use SNSs to find out relevant materials (92.17%). It also shows that 89 respondents also use SNSs to keep themselves up to date with current research trends (77.39%). Only 48.70 % respondents say that they use SNSs to contact fellow researchers.

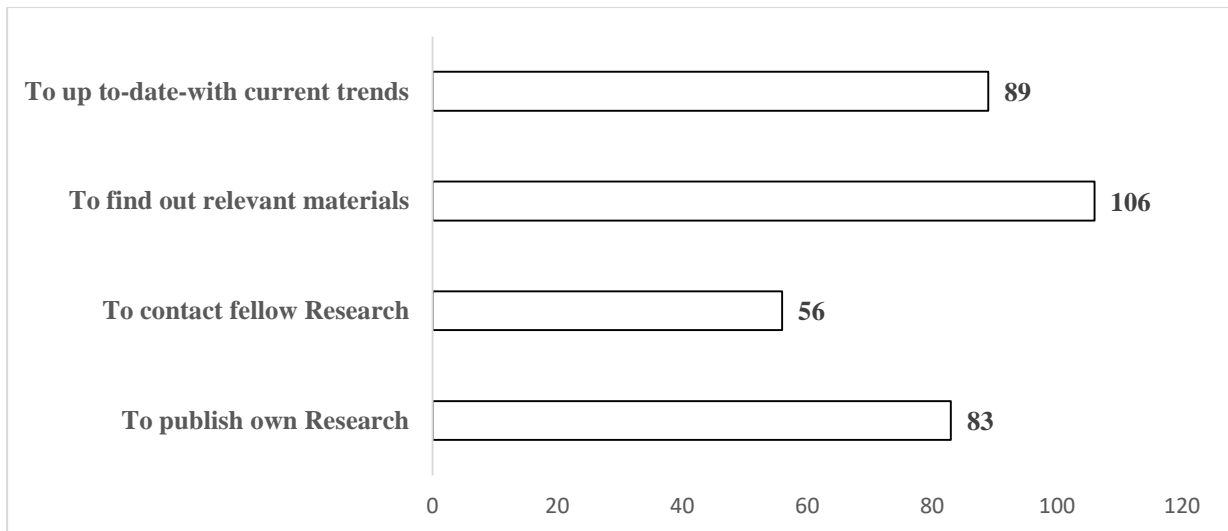


Figure 6: Specific uses of SNS for research work. Note: Multiple choices are permitted (n=115)

Used of specialized academic SNS

In today’s era, there are many social networking sites. Some of them are only for fun or making social relationship whereas there are also some specialized academic social networking sites. In our questionnaire we have provided six options to the students where respondents can choose multiple options.

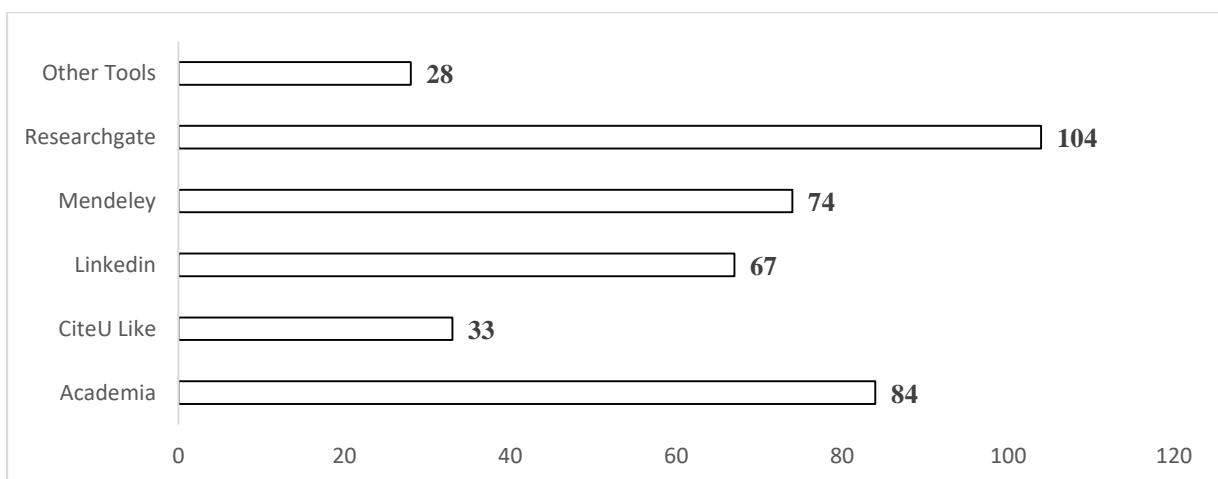


Figure 7: Used of specialized academic SNS. Note: Multiple choices are permitted (n=115)

By analyzing the responses from the students we depicted the result in Figure 7. From the Figure 7 we can say majority of respondent use Research gate (104) followed by Academia.edu (84), Mendeley (74), Linked in (67), Cite U Like (33) and other tools (28).

Effect of using SNSs:

We have discussed about the effects on student life for using SNSs. The data shows in the Figure 7 clearly indicates that SNSs have a clear impact on student’s life. 74 % of respondents mentioned that uses of SNS clearly have some affect on studies. On the other hand, only 8.7 % respondents mentioned that it does not have any impact. The result clearly says that SNS have some negative impacts also.

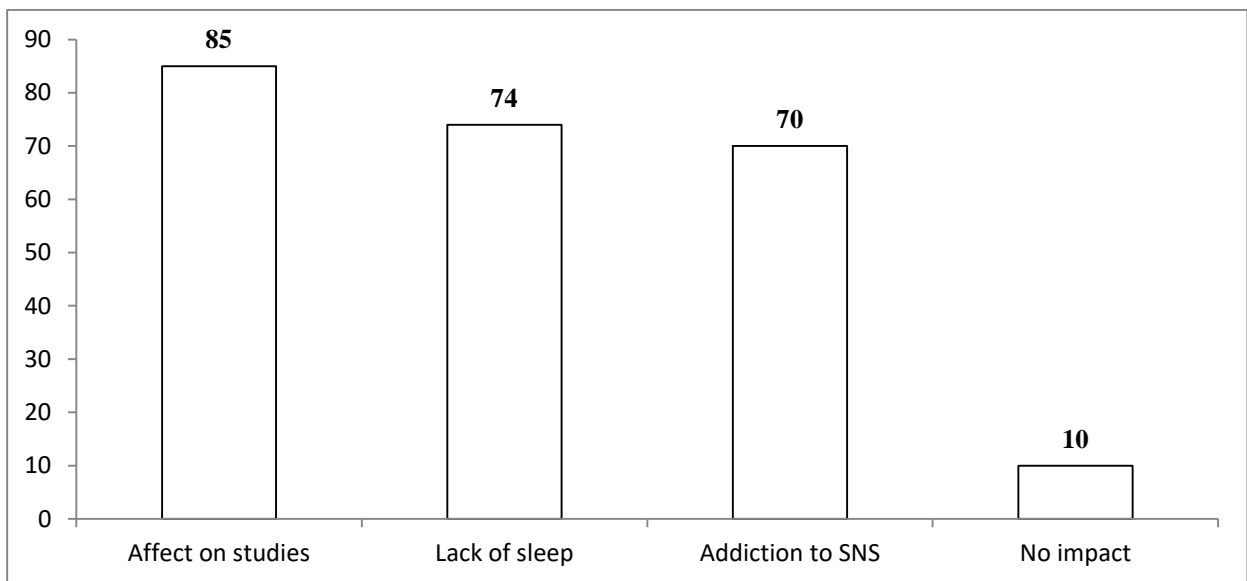


Figure 8: Effect of using SNS. Note: Multiple choices are permitted (n=115)

Satisfied level of using SNS

It is seen from the analysis given in the Table: 4 that 93 respondents (80.87%) are satisfied with the use of social networking sites and 22 respondents (19.13%) are not satisfied with the use of social networking sites

Table: 4

Type of Response	No of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	93	80.87
No	22	19.13

(n=115)

Using SNSs is a waste of time

The data in Table 5 indicates that 47 respondents (40.87%) expressed that visiting SNSs is surely a waste of time while 38 respondents (33.04%) expressed that it may be a waste of time. On the other hand, 30 respondents (26.09%) says that it is not a waste of time.

Table: 5

Type of Response	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	47	40.87
No	30	26.09
May be	38	33.04

(n=115)

Problems associated with using SNSs

Respondents were asked to indicate the problems they faced while accessing SNSs. Five options were provided in the questionnaire and among these five options majority of respondents (75.65%) indicate that poor internet connection is the most common problem followed by data security (55.65%), privacy concern (51.30%), site blocked by the university (38.26%) and lack of user friendly interface (9.56%).

Table 6

Sl No	Purpose of the Problem(s)	No. of user	Percentage (%)
1	Poor internet connect	87	75.65 %
2	Site blocked by the University	11	38.26 %
3	Lack of user Friendly interface	44	9.56 %
4	Privacy Concern	59	51.30 %
5	Data Security	64	55.65 %

Note: Multiple choices are permitted (n=115)

7. Findings

From the above study we can say that majority of post graduate student of Dibrugarh University prefer to use social networking sites for their academic purpose. Other findings and suggestion are listed below:

- All the respondents are aware about SNS and they use social networking sites. Majority of respondents have been using SNSs for more than a year.
- More than 50% of respondents use SNSs for an hour or more than an hour on a daily basis.
- Facebook (115), YouTube (115) along with Research gate (104) and Academia.edu (84) are the mostly used SNSs.
- Majority of respondents use SNSs for academic purpose.
- 51% respondents use social networking sites for research purpose.
- Research gate, Academia.edu and Mendeley are the most three used specialized academic SNSs.
- 80.87% respondents are satisfied with the use of social networking sites and 74 % of respondents stated that uses of SNS clearly have some affect on studies.
- Majority of respondents feels that poor internet connection is the most common problem followed by data security. It is noted that among all the respondent's female respondents were more concerned about privacy concern.

8. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the extensive use of different SNSs led to a new evolution in communication field. This new social media revolution helps people to communicate with each other. Students are using social networking sites regularly to maintain and develop professional relationships between them. It is also helping the students to gain information and simultaneously making them to gain updated research ideas. Students are the main users of the social networking sites as they have more time and mind to focus on their pursuit of knowledge. But contrary to this belief, the results indicate that almost half of the sample population have not use SNSs for research purposes. Use of social networking sites for academic purpose has the potential to produce great results but to achieve this the student community must consider the most effective methods.

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