

Awareness of Cyber Security Issues among Social Media Users-A Study of Postgraduate Students

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Abstract:- The rapid advancement of social media platforms has completely transformed everyday activities, especially among the younger generation. These platforms serve multiple purposes, providing both entertainment and serving as essential tools for communication and information dissemination. These platforms offer a wide range of features like augmented reality and interactive elements to cater to engage their audience. In Spite of their widespread use, concerns about privacy breaches and data violations continue to be a cause for concern. Despite the use of privacy protection tools, the number of breaches continues to rising. This study seeks to examine the awareness of cyber security issues and behaviors of postgraduate students on social media platforms. Using a descriptive research design, the primary data is gathered from a sample of 250 post graduate students selected at randomly from Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapura and Karnatak University, Dharwad. The primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. This study aims to address the privacy concerns in social media usage among postgraduate students.

Keywords:- Social Media, Cyber Security, Data Privacy, PG Students, New Media.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, social media has become a crucial platform for people throughout the world for discovering both entertainment and information. Studies in this field have continuously underlined the rapid increase in the number of users on different social networking websites worldwide. “The global population of social media users has reached an all-time high of 4.9 billion users. Furthermore, it is projected that this figure would increase to almost 5.85 billion users by the year 2027” (Wong, 2024). According to the report published in mixbloom.com, India's social media market has witnessed significant growth, with a staggering 467 million active users. Among Indian users, Facebook is the dominant social media network, with a massive 369.9 million active monthly users. In India, Instagram is quite popular, with a market share of 36%. Indian social media users exhibit significant levels of engagement, dedicating an average of more than 2.6 hours each day on social media sites (Daniella, 2024). The extensive usage of social media platforms in contemporary society has significantly altered individuals' modes of communication, information

dissemination, and perception of the world. Its diverse function as both a source of entertainment and an instrument of distributing information has made it an essential part of the everyday lives of people. Social media platforms have become essential instruments for communication and connection, allowing users to share private experiences and remain updated on current events.

Moreover, research indicates a substantial rise in the use of social media among many age groups, highlighting its pervasive impact on individuals' everyday schedules. The rising use of smartphones and user-friendly social media applications, which provide more and more engaging features, is also contributing to the increase in time spent on these platforms. Social media networks constantly introduce new features to maintain and enhance user interaction. The rise of new social media platforms and features designed for younger audiences has increased competition in the social media industry, as platforms compete to improve their user engagement rates. The captivating and interactive features of contemporary social media platforms have enticed users, leading them to dedicate more time to consuming material and interacting with their peers. Throughout various social media platforms, a succession of updates has been rolled out at regular intervals. These updates encompass a wide range of features, including the ability to post stories, create and upload short videos, in-app photo and video editing tools, and augmented reality camera features during video calls. Moreover, platforms have introduced functions such as live video productions, collaborative content creation with other users, customizable pre-loaded templates, and artificial intelligence-driven filters and stickers. These updates have also facilitated group video calls, creation of communities by similar interest groups, and introduction tagging options for posts and reels. These features have significantly enhanced user engagement across social media platforms.

The increase in user involvement on social media platforms has resulted in the rise of new challenges, particularly related to privacy and addiction to these platforms. In recent years, there has been a noticeable rise in online privacy breaches, indicating a rising concern about protecting personal information in digital environments. Simultaneously, the problem of social media addiction has emerged as a separate and significant obstacle, especially impacting younger age groups. Over the past decade, there has been a notable surge in the excessive utilization of social media among the youth in India, prompting concern

regarding its addictive tendencies. The global phenomenon of problems arising from excessive use of social media has been well documented, especially in India, where there has been a noticeable growth in social media usage (Narula S. & Jindal N. 2015). The sharing of personal information on social media sites, including changes in residence contact information, job status, and family data, poses a significant risk to individuals' privacy. Users, especially younger generations, have a tendency to routinely provide new visual content to platforms like Facebook, making themselves vulnerable to exploitative techniques. It is crucial to be vigilant and aware of the possible consequences of not properly managing private information and visual assets, since this might expose persons to many types of social damage. (Ahuja R, & Bharadwaj. A 2016). Scammers can exploit the vast amount of social media data of users to obtain sufficient information, enabling them to engage in espionage, identity theft, and fraudulent activities. The usage of social media exposes user information to potential risks owing to vulnerabilities in data security and limitations in privacy management.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

N. S. K., Saravanakumar, K., & Deepa, K. (2016) examined the attitudes of users towards privacy on social media platforms and discovered that individuals frequently fail to give due consideration to safeguarding their privacy and are uninformed about the various measures available to secure themselves online. Additionally, the study examined the technical deficiencies that exist within social media platforms and how they undermine the privacy and security of users. The study proposed several recommendations, which encompassed the promotion of strong passwords and consistent password modifications. Additionally, it underscored the criticality of exercising prudence when managing personal information that is disclosed on social media platforms.

A comprehensive study titled "Privacy issues in social networks and analysis" which was carried out by Pham V. V. H., Yu, S., Sood, K., & Cui, L.(2018), aimed to investigate a range of activities occurring on social networks. Notably, the researchers concentrated on commenting and posting, as these actions inherently carry the risk of information leakage. The research elucidated the difficulties linked to safeguarding privacy during these prevalent digital exchanges. Further, the study examined a significant issue pertaining to the dissemination of multimedia content on social media platforms: the prolonged period required to remove uploaded images, which has the potential to worsen breaches of privacy.

In their study, Gruzd and Hernández-García (2018) explored how people manage the disclosure of personal information on social media platforms, particularly regarding private and public accounts. The research revealed that individuals tailor their disclosure levels based on their privacy concerns, regardless of whether their account is public or private.

Dhiman (2023), in his scholarly article titled "Addressing Ethical Issues and Challenges in Social Media," elucidates the moral issues that have surfaced in concert with the rapid growth of social media platforms. Privacy concerns, the proliferation of misinformation, the effects of social media addiction, online harassment, discrimination, and the difficulties of content moderation are among the critical issues identified in the study. Dhiman stresses the importance of a collaborative effort among social media corporations, governments, and individuals in order to adequately confront these ethical dilemmas.

A. Statement of the Problem:

Research article "Awareness of Cyber security Issues Among Social Media Users-A Study of Postgraduate Students" seeks to investigate and compare the awareness of cyber security issues among postgraduate students on social media platforms. The research aims to understand the extent of privacy concerns among this demographic, explore the factors influencing their privacy behaviors, and identify any differences or similarities in adopting cyber security measures among male and female students.

B. Objectives of the Study:

- To evaluate the students knowledge about cyber security on social media
- To assess the concerns of students about privacy on social media platforms
- To understand the measures taken by the students to protect their privacy
- To compare the cyber issues awareness level of male and female students.

III. METHODOLOGY

Convenience sampling was employed to select 125 male postgraduate students from Karnatak University, Dharwad, and 125 female postgraduate students from Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapura, ensuring equal representation from both genders across various academic streams. A structured questionnaire was designed to evaluate participants' privacy concerns in different spheres such as social interactions, online activities, and personal information disclosure. Researchers obtained prior permissions and briefed participants about the study's purpose, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. Quantitative data obtained were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods to compare privacy concerns between male and female postgraduate students.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Post Graduation Stream

Stream	Frequency	Percentage
Arts	42	16.80
Social Science	52	20.80
Commerce	86	34.40
Science	43	17.20
Education	27	10.80
Total	250	100

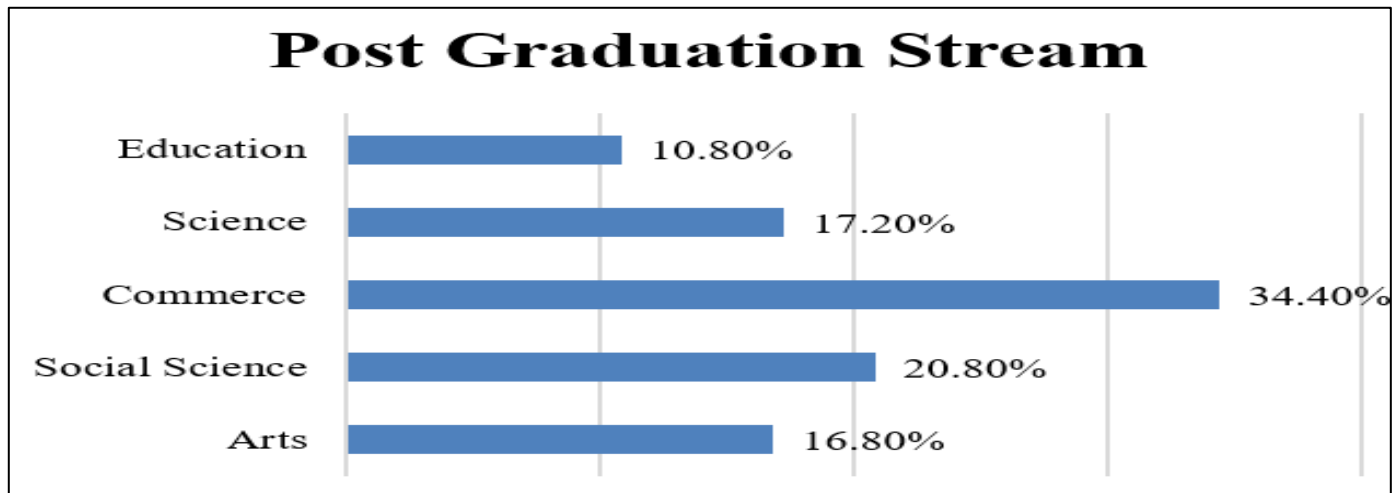


Fig 1: Post-Graduation Streams

Table 1 indicates respondents' post-graduation streams. The largest percentage of respondents, 34.40% (N=86), pursuing post-graduation in Commerce. Social Science accounted for 20.80% (N=52) of respondents, followed by

Arts and Science at 16.80% (N=42) and 17.20% (N=43). Education is the least represented stream, with 10.80% (N=27) of respondents.

Table 2: Average Time Spending on Social Media in a Day

Time	Frequency	Percentage
Less than one hour	17	6.80
1 to 2 hours	82	32.80
2 to 3 hours	64	25.60
3 to 4 hours	61	24.40
More than 5 hours	26	10.40
Total	250	100

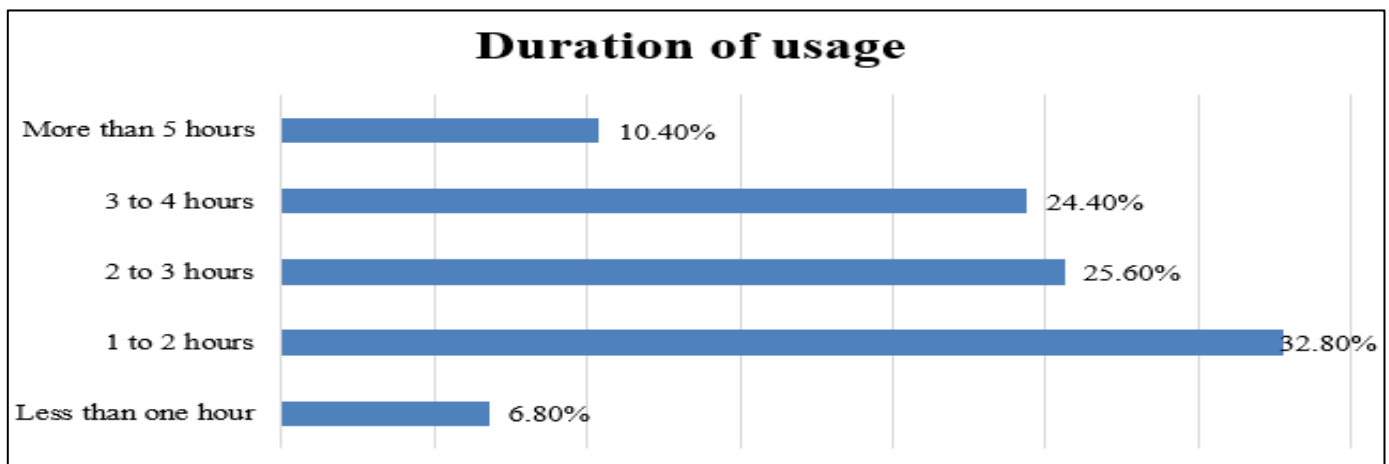


Fig 2: Duration of Usage

The table above shows the average daily time spent by participants on social media platforms. Among total respondents, 32.80% (N=82) reported spending 1 to 2 hours on social media daily. In the study, 25.60% (N=64) of participants spent 2 to 3 hours, and 24.40% (N=61) spent 3 to

4 hours. Some participants spent less than one hour (6.80%, N=17), while others spent more than 5 hours (10.40%, N=26). This is understood from the study that a large number spend a considerable amount of time on these platforms.

Table 3: Popular Device for Accessing Social Media

Device	Frequency	Percentage
Computer	11	4.40
Laptop	18	7.20
Tablet	13	5.20
Smartphone	208	83.20
Total	250	100

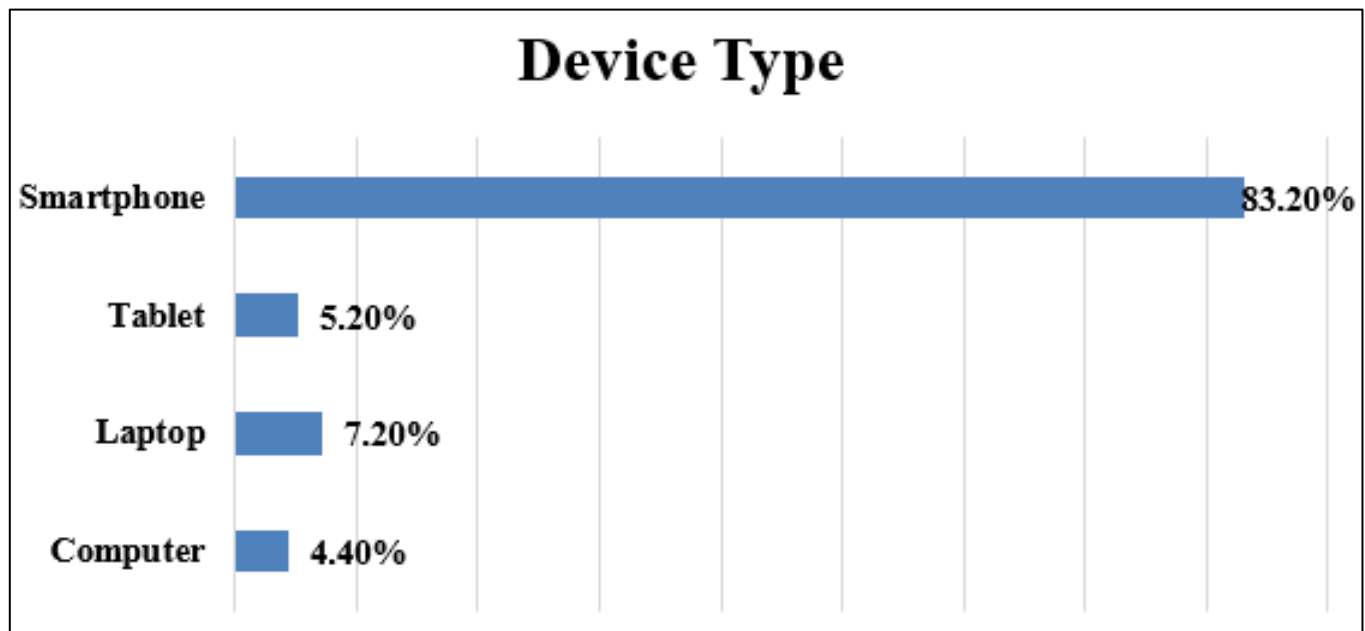


Fig 3: Device Type

Table 3 displays the most popular devices used to access social media among participants. Most of the respondents, 83.20% (N=208) out of 250, stated that they use smartphones as their main device for accessing social media. Following this, laptops were used by 7.20% (N=18), while tablets were

utilized by 5.20% (N=13) of participants. Only 4.40% (N=11) uses computers to access social media. The data clearly shows that smartphones are the most popular device for accessing social media among the people surveyed.

Table 4: Frequency of using Social Media

Social Media Platform	Regularly		Occasionally		Never	
	%	F	%	F	%	F
Facebook	63.2	158	28.4	71	8.4	21
Instagram	68.8	172	24.4	61	6.8	17
X	12.8	32	45.2	113	42	105
LinkdIn	4.8	12	23.6	59	71.6	179
YouTube	56.4	141	32.8	82	10.8	27
WhatsApp	76.8	192	16.8	42	6.4	16
Telegram	27.2	68	28.8	72	44	110
Snapchat	39.2	98	33.6	84	27.2	68

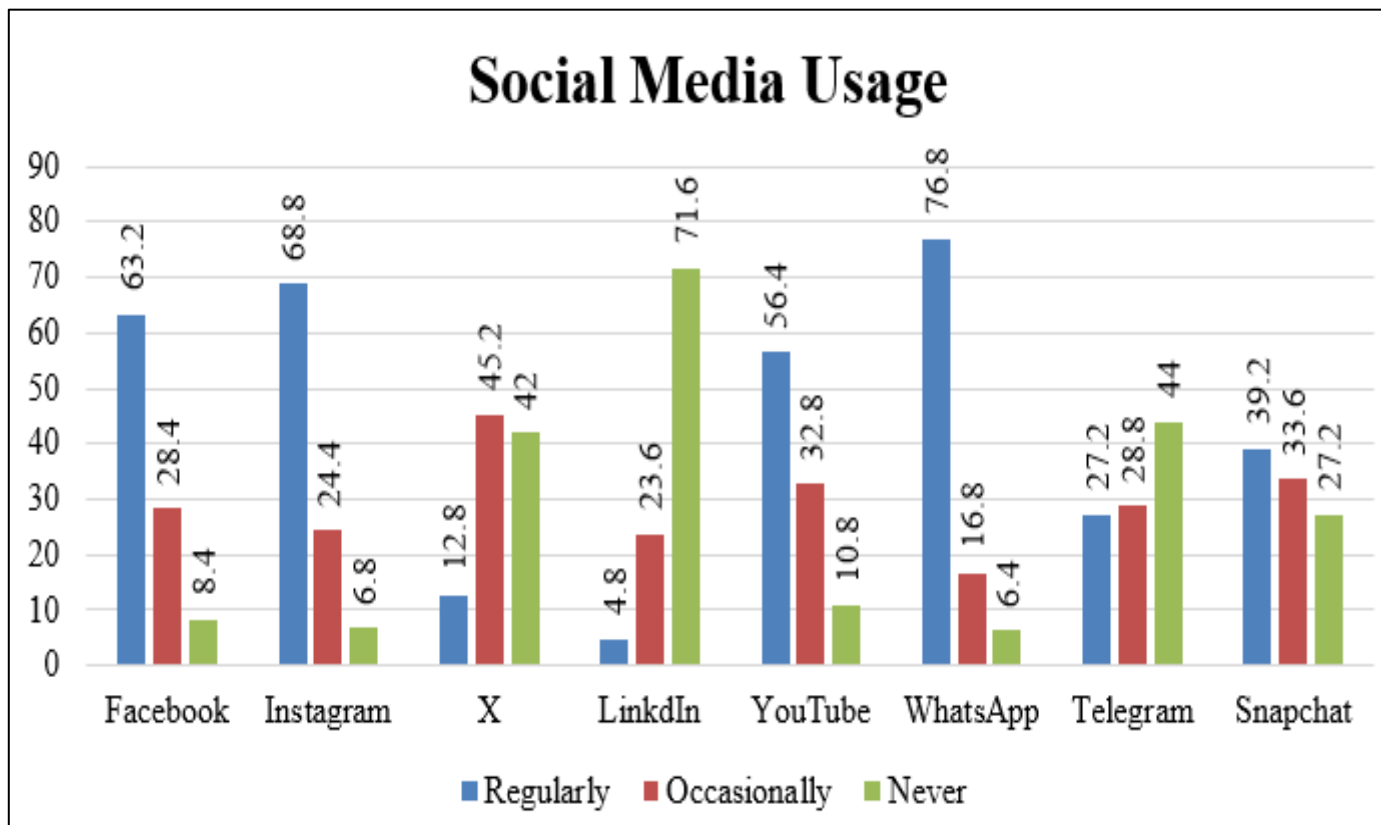


Fig 4: Social Media Usage

Table 4 explains that a significant majority of postgraduate students (76.8%) reported using WhatsApp as their primary social media platform. The frequent use of WhatsApp indicates that it is a popular communication tool among students. Instagram is a highly popular platform for sharing photos and videos, as indicated by the high percentage (68.8%) of participants who reported regular usage. Facebook is also widely used, with 63.2% of respondents reporting regular usage. When it comes to

platforms that are used occasionally, YouTube is a standout with 32.8% of participants reporting occasional usage. Interestingly, LinkedIn, a professional networking platform, has a relatively low regular usage rate of 4.8% among postgraduate students. This indicates that it may not be as popular as other social media platforms in this demographic. The data presents a wide range of social media usage among postgraduate students, with WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook being the most commonly used platforms.

Table 5: Primary Purpose of Using Social Media

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Education	45	18.00
Entertainment	78	31.20
Information	53	21.20
Communication	39	15.60
Time pass	35	14.00
Other	45	18.00
Total	250	100

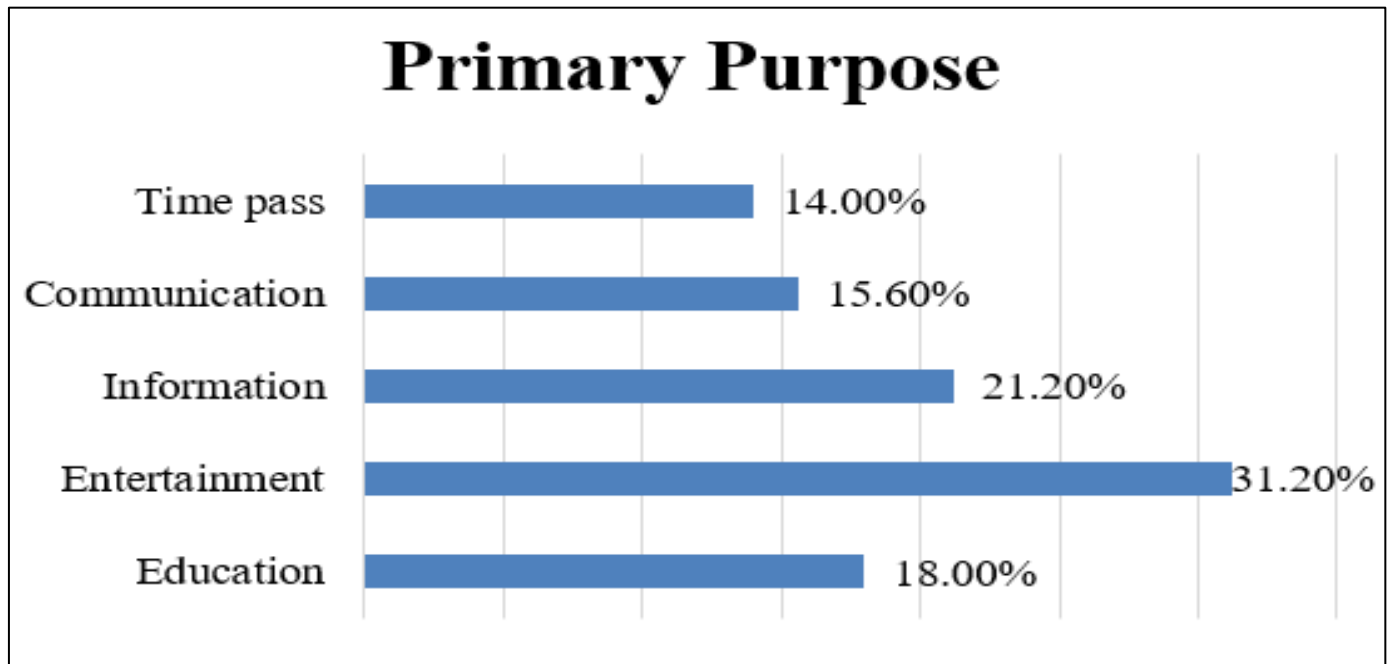


Fig 5: Primary Purpose

The table presents the main reasons of respondents for using social media. Entertainment is the most commonly cited purpose, with 31.20% (N=78) of the participants highlighting its significance. 21.20% (N=53) of respondents reported seeking information, with 18.00% (N=45) citing education as the main purpose. Communication is considered

important by 15.60% (N=39) of participants. 14.00% (N=35) of participants reported using social media to pass time. Among the surveyed population, the 'Other' category represents 18.00% (N=45) of reported purposes, indicating a wide variety of reasons for social media usage.

Table 6: Social Media Activities (N=250)

Activities	Frequency	Percentage
Creating post/stories/Reels	162	64.80
Private Chat	113	45.20
Group Chat	82	32.80
Group Calling	43	17.20
Other	32	12.80

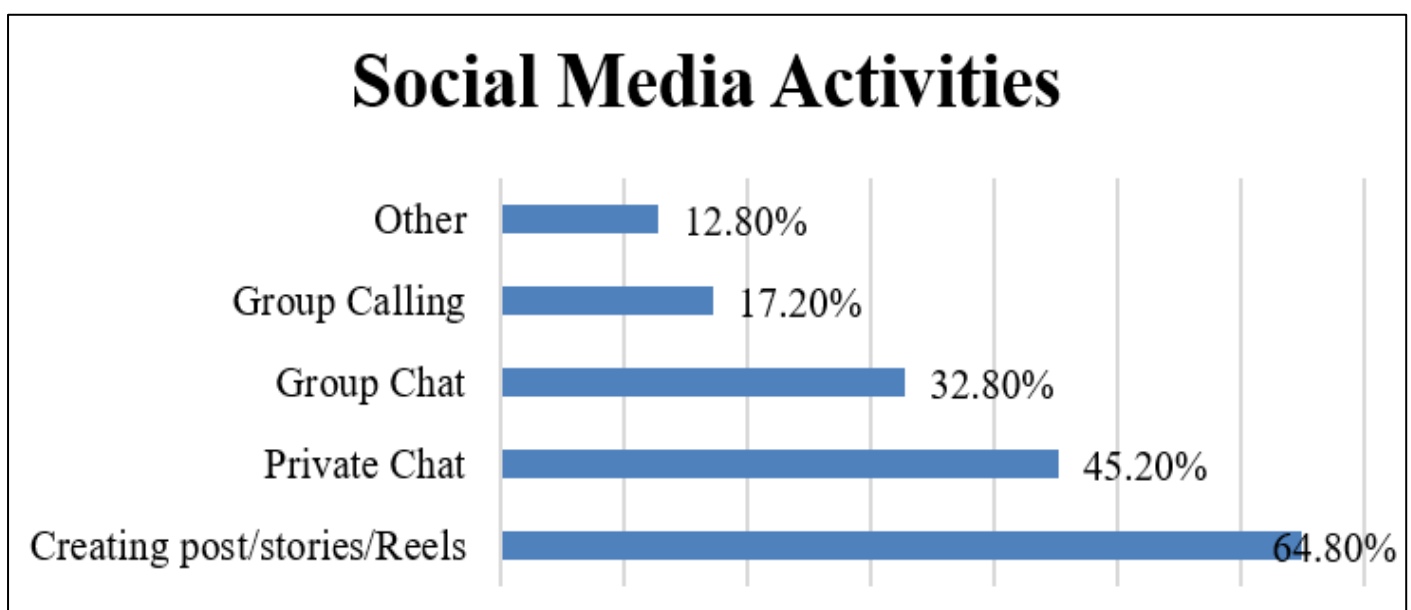


Fig 6: Social Media Activities

Table 6 explores the social media activities of the participants. Creating posts, stories, or reels is the most common activity among the participants, with 64.80% (N=162) engaged in it. 45.20% of respondents reported using private chat, while 32.80% engaged in group chat. Group

calling is a common activity, with 17.20% (N=43) of participants taking part. In addition, 12.80% of participants (N=32) mentioned participating in social media activities that were not explicitly mentioned.

Table 7: Personal Photo/Video Uploading Trends

Uploading Personal Photo/ Videos	Male Students		Female Students	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Regularly	43	34.40	35	28.00
Occasionally	63	50.40	28	22.40
Never	19	15.20	62	49.60
Total	125	100	125	100

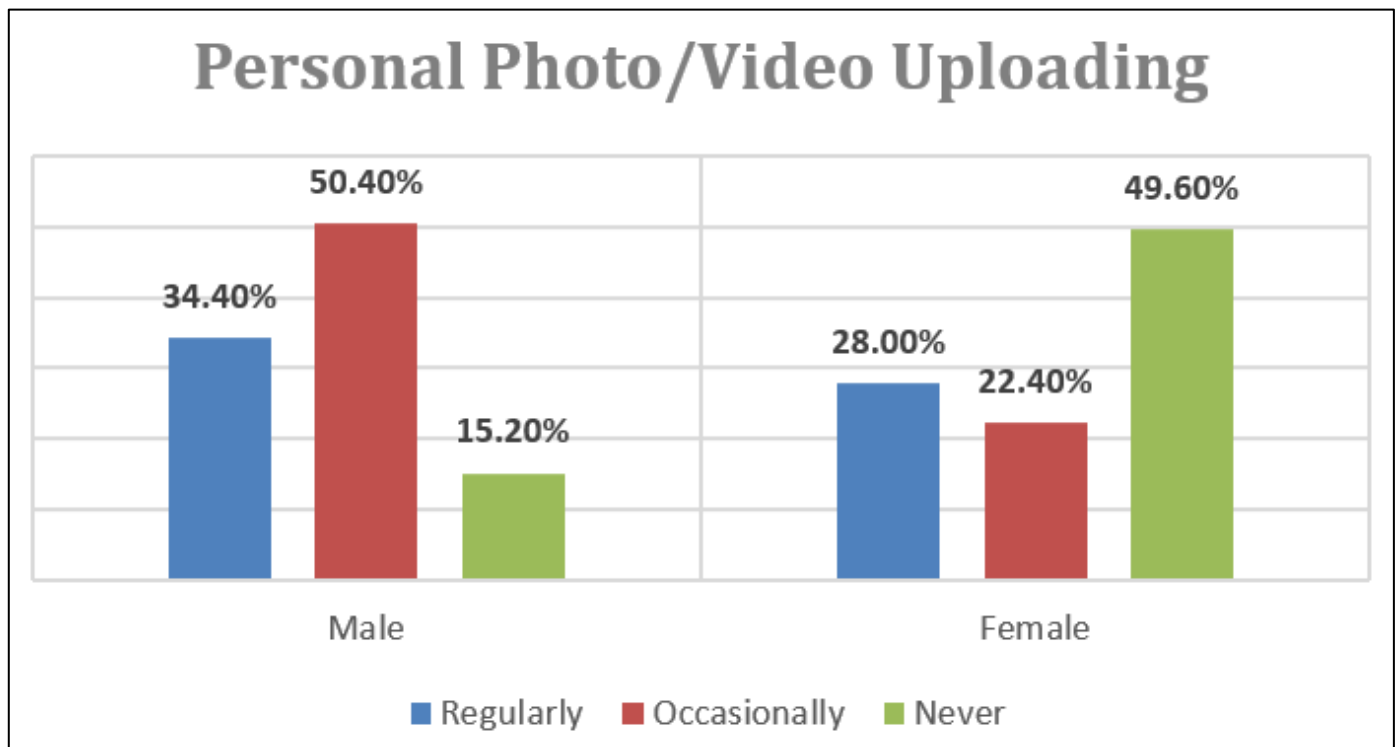


Fig 7: Personal Photo/Video Uploading

The trends of uploading personal photos or videos between male and female students are compared in Table 7. 34.40% of male students (N=43) reported regularly uploading personal photos or videos, while 50.40% do it occasionally, and 15.20% never upload. Female students exhibit different

patterns of uploading behavior: 28.00% upload regularly, 22.40% do it occasionally, and 49.60% never upload. The research gives a clear picture that Male students tend to upload personal photos or videos more frequently than female students.

Table 8: Frequency of Uploading Personal Information

Frequency	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Multiple Times a day	10	8.00	6	4.80
Daily	21	16.80	7	5.60
Weekly	23	18.40	12	9.60
Monthly	24	19.20	22	17.60
Rarely	33	26.40	51	40.80
Never	14	11.20	27	21.60
Total	125	100	125	100

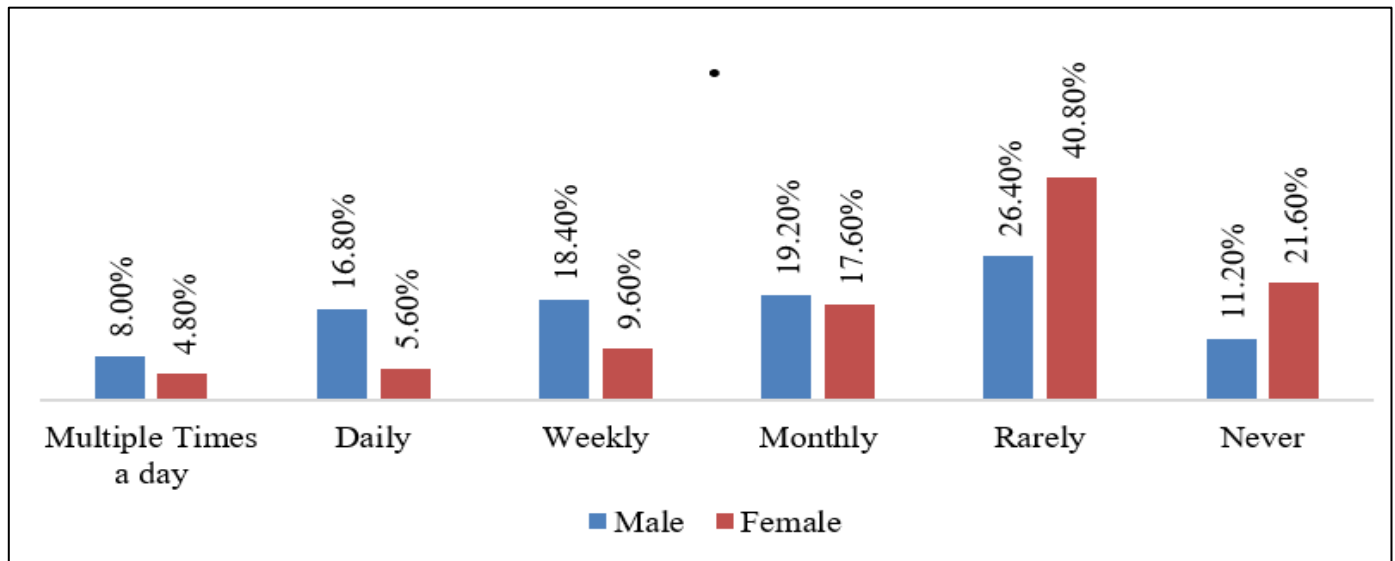


Fig 8: Frequency of Uploading Personal Information

The table compares how often male and female students upload personal information. Most male students rarely upload personal information, with 26.40% (N=33) doing so, followed by 19.20% (N=24) who upload monthly. On the other hand, most female students rarely post personal information online, with only 40.80% (N=51) performing

that. Furthermore, 17.60% (N=22) of female students report monthly uploads. Female students generally upload personal information less frequently than male students, which indicate a more balanced distribution across different frequency categories.

Table 9: Response to the Messages from Unknown Sources

Response	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Responding	37	29.60	19	15.20
Not Responding	88	70.40	106	84.80
Total	125	100	125	100

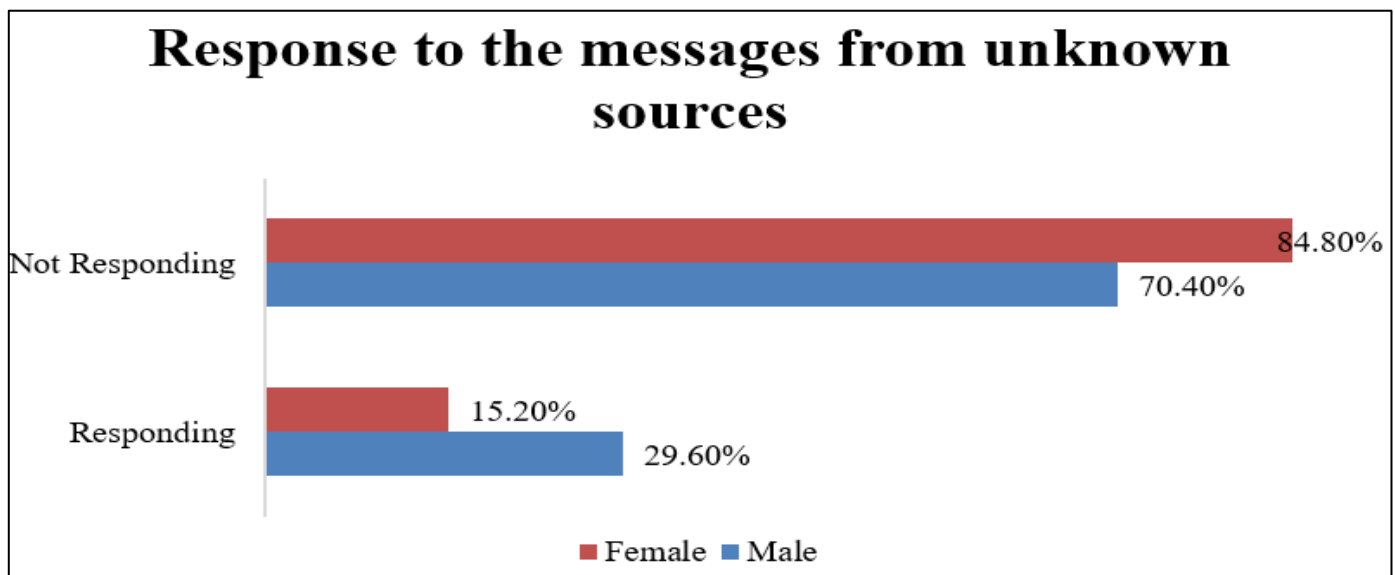


Fig 9: Response to the Messages from Unknown Sources

Table 9 provides a comparison of male and female students' responses to messages from unknown sources. In the study, 29.60% (N=37) male students responded to the messages, while the majority, 70.40% (N=88), did not respond. Female students had a response rate of 15.20%

(N=19) to messages from unknown sources, with 84.80% (N=106) choosing not to respond. Male students are more likely to respond to messages from unknown sources than female students.

Table 10: Knowledge of Privacy Settings

Privacy Setting Awareness	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Have knowledge	83	66.40	66	52.80
Do not have knowledge	42	33.60	59	47.20
Total	125	100	125	100

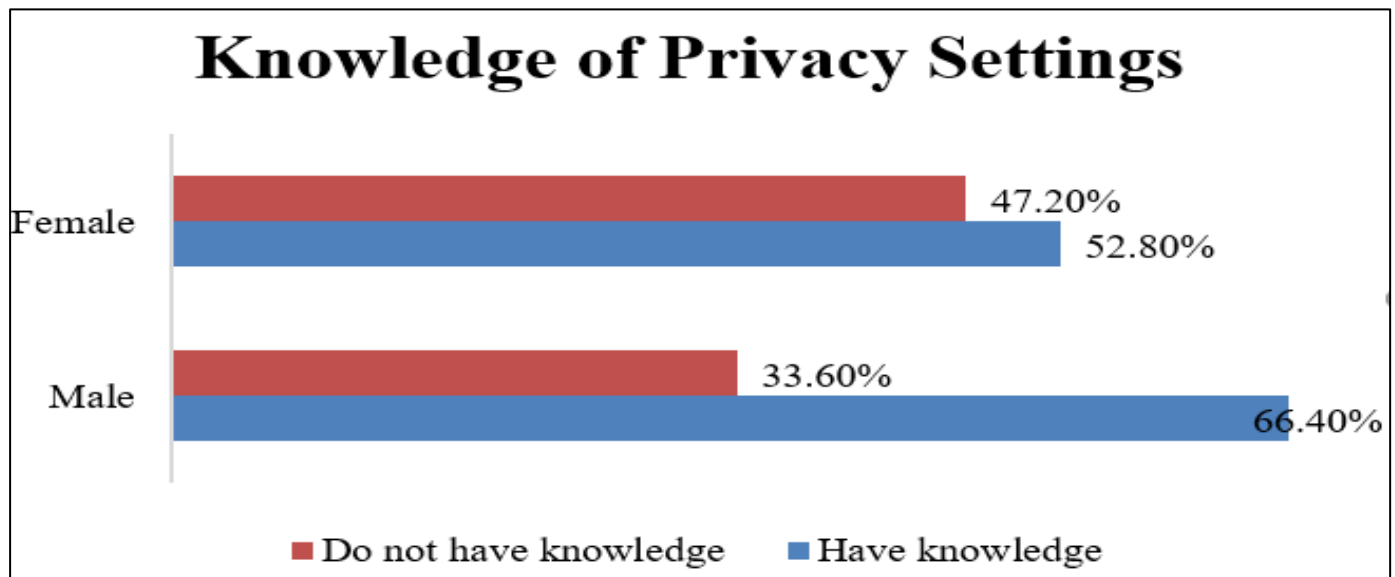


Fig 10: Knowledge of Privacy Settings

In Table 10, the privacy settings knowledge of male and female students is examined. Among male students, 66.40% (N=83) indicated awareness of privacy settings, with 33.60% (N=42) reporting a lack of knowledge in this area. Female students showed a lower percentage of knowledge of privacy

settings, with 52.80% reporting awareness and 47.20% indicating lack of knowledge. The result of the study indicates that Male students show a greater understanding of privacy settings compared to female students.

Table 11: Concern about Privacy Breach

Concern	Male Students		Female Students	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Concerned	87	69.60	101	80.80
Not concerned	38	30.40	24	19.20
Total	125	100	125	100

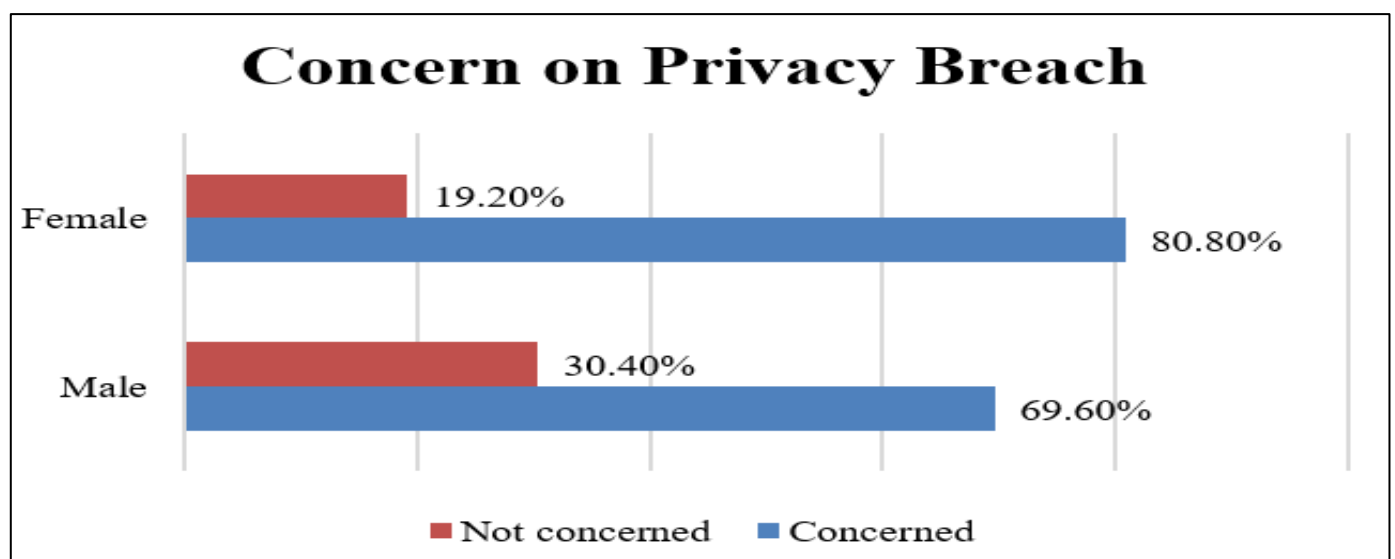


Fig 11: Concern about Privacy Breach

Table 11 demonstrates the privacy breach concern among male and female students. Most male students, 69.60% (N=87), were worried about privacy breaches, while 30.40% (N=38) were not concerned. On the other hand,

80.80% (N=101) of female students showed worry about privacy breaches, compared to 19.20% (N=24) who did not express concern. Female students show more concern about privacy breaches than male students.

Table 12: Experience of Privacy Breach (N=220)

Privacy Breach	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Experienced	17	13.60	32	25.60
Not Experienced	108	86.40	93	74.40
Total	125	100	125	100

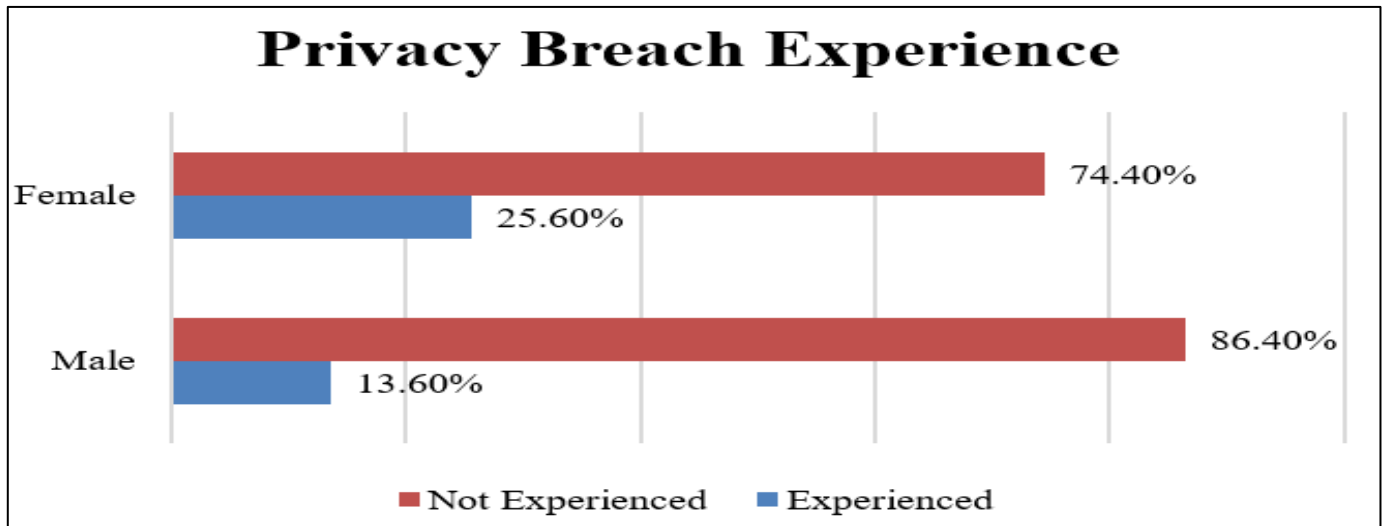


Fig 12: Privacy Breach Experience

The data in Table 12 highlights privacy breach experiences among male and female students. Out of the male students surveyed, 13.60% (N=17) reported a privacy breach, while 86.40% (N=108) did not report any breaches. Female

students reported varying experiences with privacy breaches: 25.60% experienced it, while 74.40% did not. Female students have a higher rate of privacy breaches than male students.

Table 13: Utilizing Privacy Settings in social media applications

Privacy setting adjustment	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Utilizing	76	60.80	88	70.40
Not Utilizing	49	39.20	37	29.60
Total	125	100	125	100

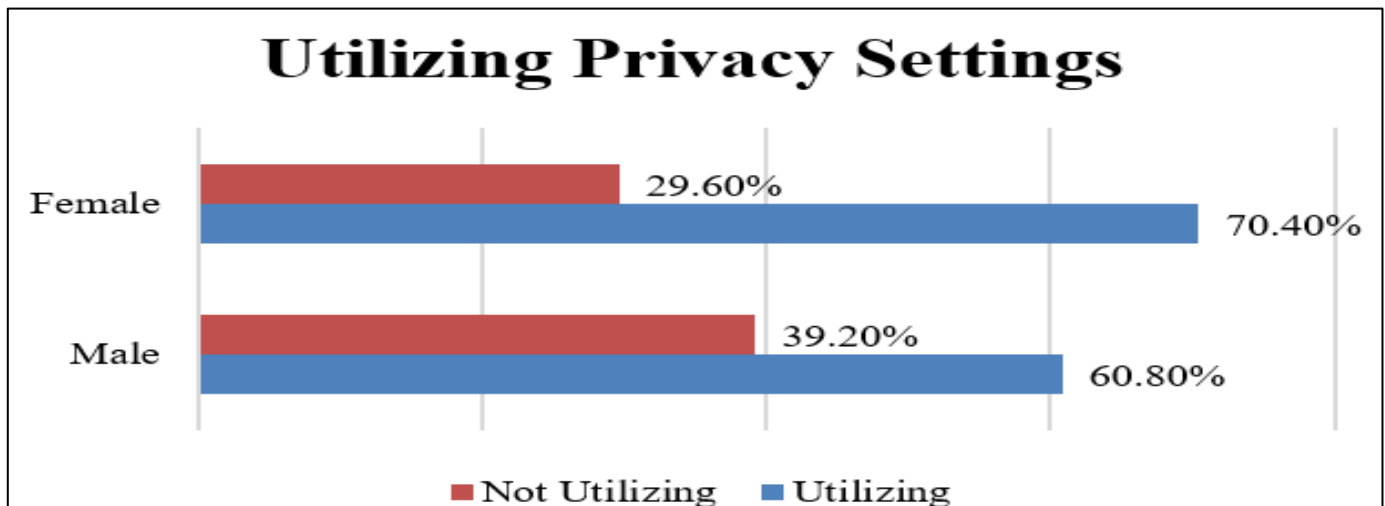


Fig 13: Utilizing Privacy Settings

Table 13 exhibits the modification of privacy settings in social networking applications by male and female students. 60.80% of male students (N=76) have the habits of adjusting their privacy settings, whereas 39.20% (N=49) don't. Among female students, 70.40% (N=88) adjusting their privacy

settings, whereas 29.60% (N=37) are not doing it. Female students demonstrate a stronger tendency to modify their privacy settings than male students, as seen by this comparison.

Table 14: Formal Education or Training on Privacy and Security Practices Related to Social Media

Training/Education	Frequency	Percentage
Received	47	18.80
Not Received	203	81.20
Total	250	100

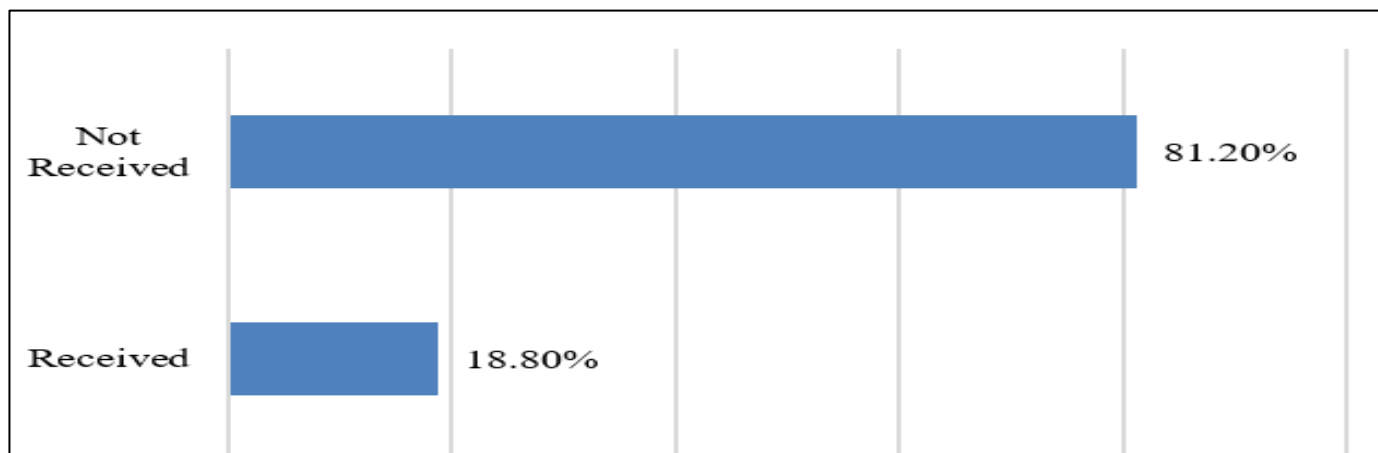


Fig 14: Formal Education or Training on Privacy and Security Practices Related to Social Media

Table 14 presents the distribution of respondents regarding formal education or training on privacy and security practices related to social media. Among the respondents, 18.80% (N=47) reported receiving such education or training, while the majority, 81.20% (N=203),

reported not receiving it. This indicates that a significant portion of the respondents has not received formal education or training on privacy and security practices related to social media.

Table 15: Habits of Taking Up Privacy Check Up

Privacy Check Up	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Regularly	29	23.20	21	16.80
Occasionally	62	49.60	81	64.80
Never	34	27.20	23	18.40
Total	125	100	125	100

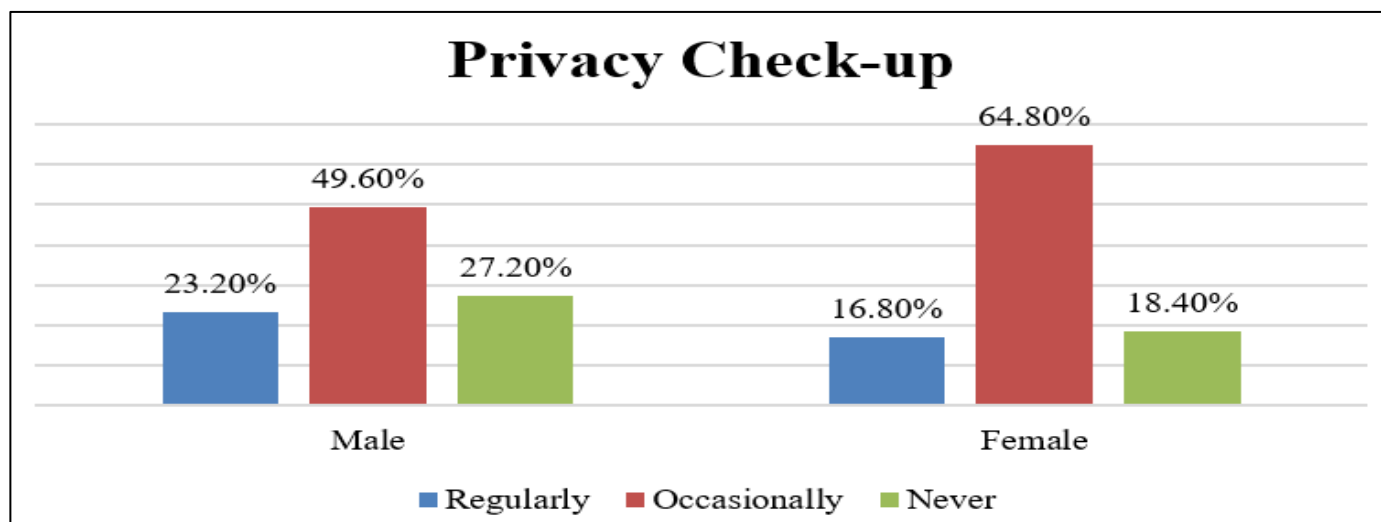


Fig 15: Privacy Check Up

Table 15 describes the behaviors of male and female students in relation to participating in privacy check-ups. 23.20% of male students (N=29) reported regularly performing privacy check-ups, whereas 49.60% (N=62) reported doing it sometimes. Among female students, 16.80% (N=21) reported regularly performing privacy check-ups,

whereas 64.80% (N=81) reported doing this sometimes. 27.20% (N=34) of male students and 18.40% (N=23) of female students stated that they never undergo privacy check-ups. Female students have a higher tendency to do privacy check-ups than male students.

Table 16: Habits of Changing Social Media Account Passwords

Password Change	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Regularly	18	14.40	7	5.60
Occasionally	68	54.40	74	59.20
Never	39	31.20	44	35.20
Total	125	100	125	100

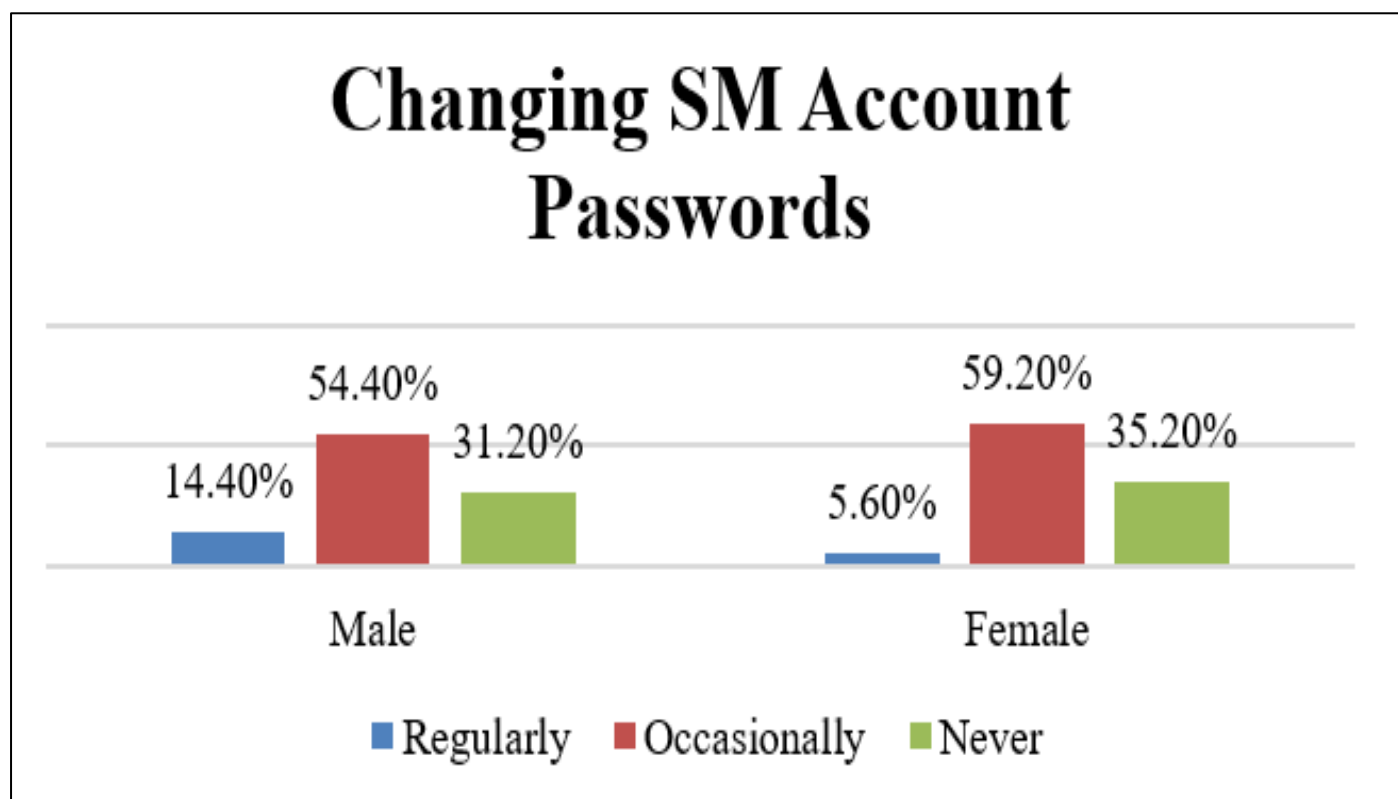


Fig 16: Changing Social Media Account Passwords

Table 16 depicts the habits of male and female students in relation to changing social media account passwords. 54.40% of male students (N=68) reported occasionally changing their passwords, whereas 31.20% (N=39) reported never doing it. Comparatively, 59.20% (N=74) of female students reported occasionally changing their passwords,

while 35.20% (N=44) reported never doing so. Furthermore, only 14.40% (N=18) of male students and 5.60% (N=7) of female students stated that they change their passwords regularly. Female students exhibit slightly larger tendency for changing their passwords when compared to male students.

Table 17: Awareness of Two Factor Authentication

2FA Awareness	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Have	57	45.60	48	38.40
Don't Have	68	54.40	77	61.60
Total	125	100	125	100

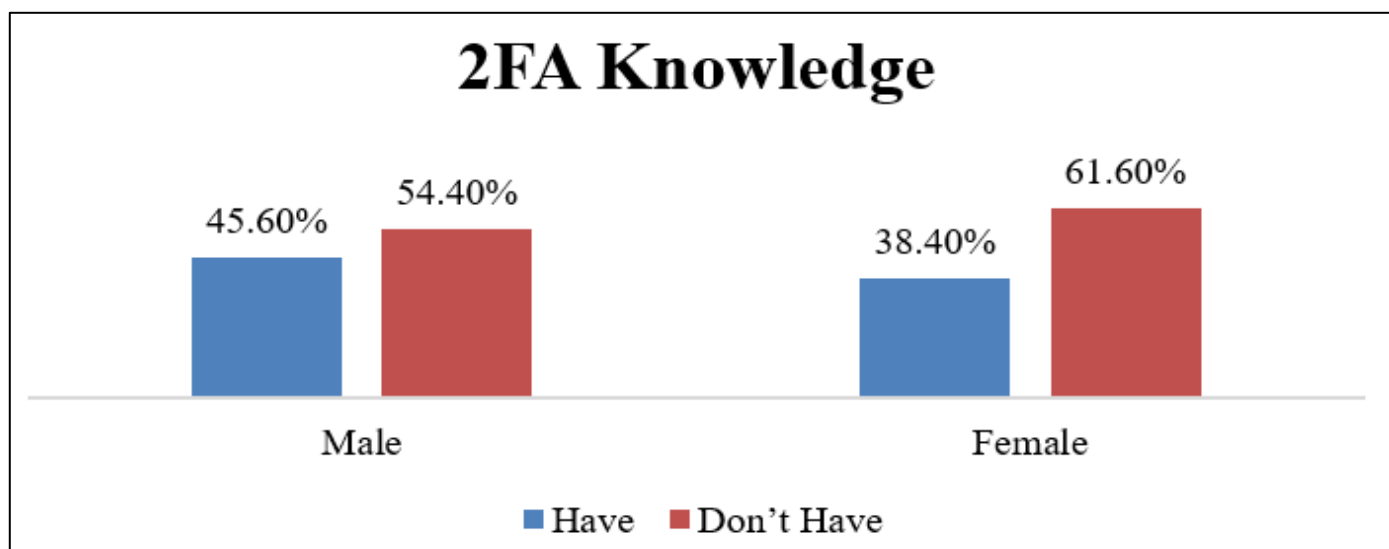


Fig 17: 2FA Knowledge

Table 17 illustrates the knowledge of two-factor authentication (2FA) among male and female students. 45.60% of male students (N=57) were aware of 2FA, whereas 54.40% (N=68) were not aware of it. Among female students,

38.40% (N=48) were aware of 2FA, whereas 61.60% (N=77) were not aware of it. Male students have a greater awareness of 2FA compared to female students based on this comparison.

Table 18: Habits of Adjusting Privacy Setting Before Uploading Posts

Adjusting privacy setting	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Always	8	6.40	14	11.20
Sometimes	46	36.80	59	47.20
Never	71	56.80	52	41.60
Total	125	100	125	100

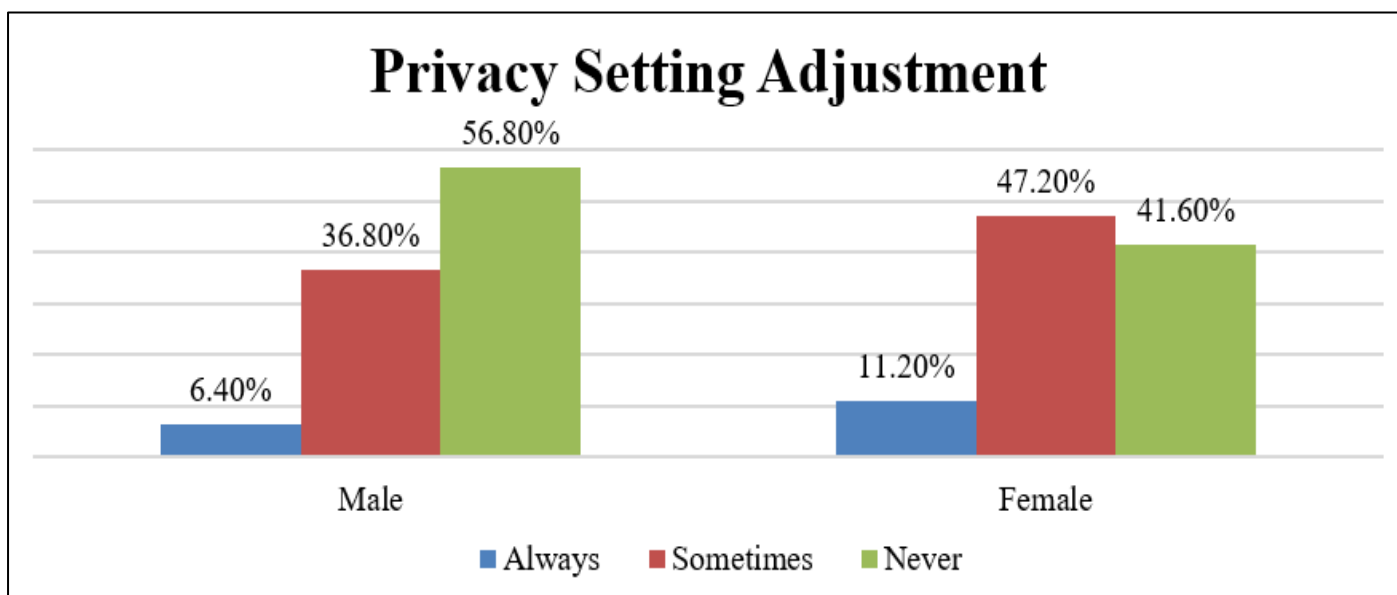


Fig 18: Privacy Setting Adjustment

Table 18 indicates the habits of male and female students in relation to modifying privacy settings prior to posting on social media. Most male students (56.80%, N=71) never alter privacy settings, whereas 36.80% (N=46) do so sometimes, and just only 6.40% (N=8) regularly adjust private settings. Among female students, 47.20% (N=59)

reported sometimes altering privacy settings, 41.60% (N=52) reported never doing so, and 11.20% (N=14) reported they always adjust privacy settings. A larger proportion of female students occasionally modify privacy settings in comparison to male students.

Table 19: Level of Satisfaction about Security Provided for Personal Information

Level of satisfaction	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfied	85	68.00	66	52.80
Not Satisfied	40	32.00	59	47.20
Total	125	100	125	100

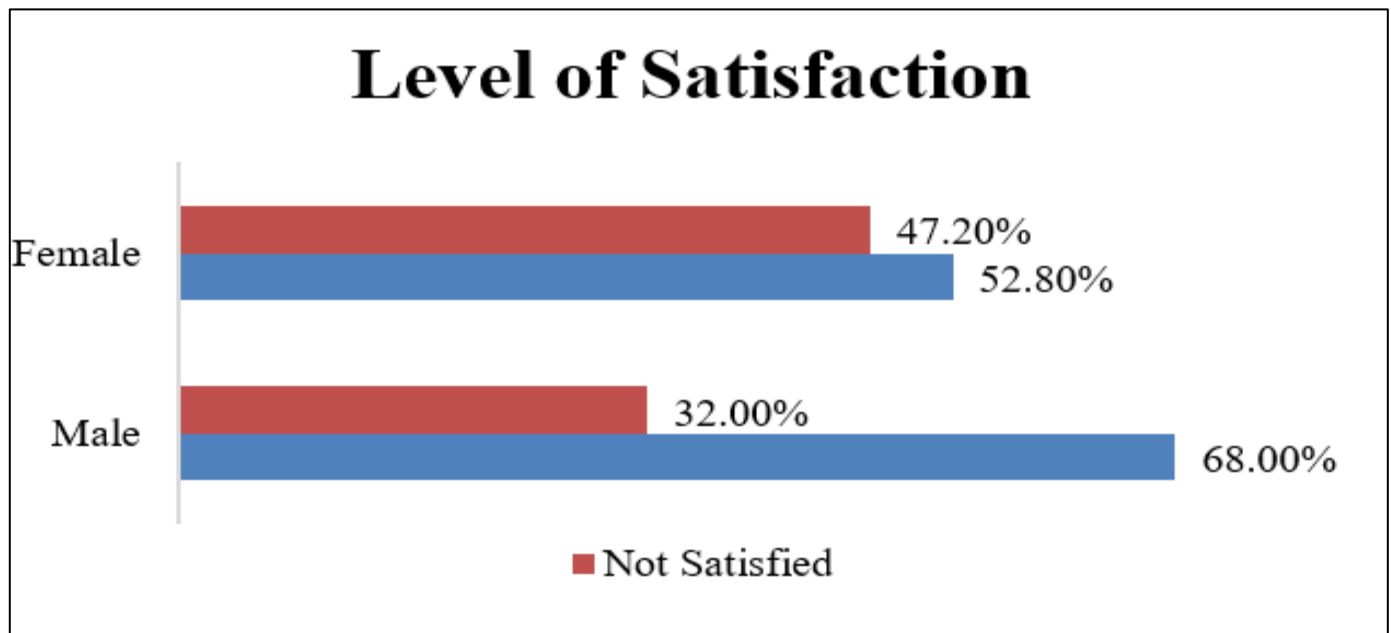


Fig 19: Level of Satisfaction

Table 19 indicates the satisfaction levels of security for personal information in social media among male and female students. 68.00% (N=85) of male students were satisfied, whereas 32.00% (N=40) were dissatisfied. Among female students, 52.80% (N=66) were satisfied, while 47.20% (N=59) were dissatisfied. Male students have a greater satisfaction rate with the protection of their personal information compared to female students.

V. CONCLUSION

The study focused to thoroughly investigate the awareness, worries, and behaviors related to cyber security issues on social media platforms among male and female students. The findings provide valuable information on several elements of social media usage and behaviors connected to cyber security, offering significant insights. The survey concluded that Smartphones are the primary device students use to access social media. Social media usage serves entertainment purposes of majority of the students, followed by information and education seeking. Participants reported engaging in private discussions and creating posts as their primary social media activity. Male students showed greater responses to messages from unfamiliar sources and a more comprehensive knowledge of privacy settings in comparison to female students. Female students reported more privacy breaches than male students, suggesting possible risks in their online security.

The survey also pointed up variations in privacy-related behaviors among male and female students. Male students conducted privacy check-ups less frequently but reported updating their social media account passwords more regularly than female students. Conversely, female students had a greater tendency to adjust privacy settings before to sharing content on social networking platforms. Male and female students showed different privacy behaviors, yet had different levels of satisfaction with the protection of their personal information on social media sites. Male students often showed greater satisfaction percentages than female students.

Ultimately, the research highlights the need of promoting knowledge regarding privacy and cyber security protocols on social media platforms, especially among female students who may be more vulnerable to privacy violations. It is crucial to educate students about privacy settings and promote proactive privacy protection measures to create a safer online environment. Further study is needed to investigate the variables causing gender differences in privacy-related behaviors and satisfaction levels. The goal is to provide specific solutions to improve online privacy and security for all users.

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