

Social Networking Experiences on Facebook: A Study on the Students' of Comilla University

Belal HM*

Comilla University, Kotbari, Comilla, 3500, Bangladesh

Abstract

This study was to identify the students' experiences on the uses of their favourite social networking site like Facebook. The overall purpose was to detect the using pattern, advantages, disadvantages and effects Facebook on their daily life. A survey was conducted on one hundred ninety (190) students' from the six faculties of the Comilla University. This study was based on mainly primary data. Data were collected by using a questionnaire during July to October, 2016. Majority of the respondents (67%) replied that they used Facebook for communication with their friends and others, getting information, educational purpose, sending birthday greetings, job purpose and entertainment etc. This study also suggested that there is a need for higher education policy makers in Bangladesh to properly connect the students' involvement in social networking to their academic purposes.

Keywords: Social networking; Facebook; Students experiences

Introduction

Recently, the world has been shaped and updated by the development of the Internet. It is the most popular communication medium in the world. A large portion of the people in the world is connected by social networks through the Internet [1]. Social networking websites are the technological tool used by Internet users to as a platform to develop eventually mutual relationships for personal interests, business, games or academic purposes from the global perspective, the numbers of social networking sites are used as a channel for transforming multiple areas of knowledge [2]. The networking through internet particularly the Facebook has become popular with the pace of the global arena. Young people of the country have been using Facebook for social networking purpose more in the recent time. Considering this reality, this study has been conducted to provide the descriptive information about the uses of social networking site like Facebook by the students' of Comilla University.

Social networking

Social networking has been a common use on the internet in today's generation. Throughout the past, we had social networking sites which did not make it uphold a longer life than those which have ended up being very popular. Social networking websites are Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, MySpace, Friendster, LinkedIn, Live Journal, and Bebo, are member-based Internet groups that allow users to post profile information, such as a username and photograph, and to communicate with others in innovative ways such as sending public or private messages or sharing photos. These sites disclose important information about how university students are interacting with one another in the information age.

Social networking in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is in South Asia having more than 160 million people [3]. Fifty percent of the people in Bangladesh maintain their living standards below the international poverty line. Five percent of the people (approximately 33.43 million people) of our country are habituated to use the Internet and out of them 95% use mobile devices to connect to social networks. In Bangladesh, Facebook and YouTube are the most useful social networking sites. The rapid growth rate of social networking in Bangladesh is 2% or around 50,000 people per year. Based on our national economics, Bangladeshi people are not

still familiar with social networking due to the limited income level. There is a dominant age-group (18-24) in the user pool of social networking [2].

Facebook

According to 2008 edition of the Collins English Dictionary, Facebook is, "a popular social networking website", and as a verb, meaning "to search for (a person's profile) on the Facebook website." Facebook (www.Facebook.com) is a free-access social networking website that is operated and privately owned by Facebook, Inc. Users can join networks organized by city, workplace, school, and region to connect and interact with other people. People can also add friends and send them messages, and update their personal profile to notify friends about themselves. Facebook gives the opportunity to chat with friends, upload photos or videos, share anything, and create page or applications.

Facebook is one of the important social media that promotes the exchange of messages between people across the world. Facebook.com originated in February, 2004 to facilitate social interaction exclusively among college students by Mark Zuckerberg. There are over 500 million users in the world with a population of 6.8 billion, which means that about 1 out of 14 people have a Facebook account. According to Mark Zuckerberg, "If Facebook were a country, it would be the 6th most populated country in the world." Mark Zuckerberg along with Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes and Eduardo Saverin founded Facebook while they were students of Harvard University in February 2004. Initially, its membership was limited to Harvard students. Then it expanded to other colleges, it later expanded further to include any university student. In September 2005 Facebook was expanded to high school students, and, finally, in September 2006, to anyone aged 13

***Corresponding author:** Md. Belal Hossain, Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Comilla University, Kotbari, Comilla, 3500, Bangladesh, Tel: +880 817-0015; E-mail: belal.cu12@gmail.com

Received February 23, 2017; Accepted April 10, 2017; Published April 13, 2017

Citation: Belal HM (2017) Social Networking Experiences on Facebook: A Study on the Students' of Comilla University. J Mass Communicat Journalism 7: 333. doi: 10.4172/2165-7912.1000333

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and over. Now Facebook has over 700 employees and the directors' board is consisted of seven members. On 1st January 2009, according to the Facebook statistics it has over 140 million active users all over the world. The head quarter of the company is in Palo Alto, Calif. U.S [4].

Literature Review

Previous studies have found that more than 90% of university students use Facebook. Roknuzzaman [5] has conducted a survey on internet access in a large public university. Mostofa [6] has scanned the access and use of internet among business studies students of a private university of Bangladesh. Mahmud [7] has checked up the private university student's attitudes towards internet. Alam [8] has investigated the future prospect of '3G' network in Bangladesh. Rahaman and Ullah [9] have explored the factors that are influencing Facebook privacy awareness of Bangladeshi undergraduate university students. But none of them have investigated the reasons of the use of social networking sites on students' academic perspective. Asad et al. [10] who have surveyed the effect of social networking sites to the lifestyles of teachers and students; on the other hand, apart from Bangladesh few study have found on Facebook. In one study, U.S. college students reported using Facebook an average of 10 to 30 min daily [11]. Another study found that about half of 12-17 year olds with social networking site memberships log on daily: 22% logged on to social networking sites several times per day, 26% once a day, 17% three to five days per week, 15% one or two days per week, and only 20% every few weeks or less [12]. A recent survey of college students in the U.S. showed that social networking sites are used for social interaction with offline acquaintances in order to maintain friendships rather than to make new friends [13].

The use of such sites is nearly universal. For example, a large survey of college students from several universities in the Midwest U.S. found that 91% of respondents use the site Facebook.com [14]. Most of the students originally activated their Facebook account during the summer before college (53.26%), though some did so after they began college (38.04%). On average, respondents had been using Facebook for about 2 years ($M=24.32$ months, $SD=9.93$). Only students who had a Facebook account participated in this study, but almost all of the students in the classes were members of Facebook [14].

Another study found that, students would often use the Facebook walls to describe and sometimes deliberate on their most recent instances of the university experience – be it lectures seminars or, on occasion, library visits and individual encounters with teaching staff. For example, students would use Facebook to 'go over' their experiences of recently finished lectures [15].

Social networking sites provide web design services that allow users to build a profile within a compact system [11]. A number of social networking sites diversify the technological affordances made available to millions of people around the world including the 33.43 million people of Bangladesh. Developing relationships with fans or friends is a basic characteristic of social networking. Students use social networking sites for fun, passing time, communicating with existing friends or finding new ones [11].

All class of students like secondary, higher secondary, graduate and postgraduate use social networking sites not only for connecting with friends but also for sharing information, circulating guidelines, cases, assignments, etc., about classes, examinations, tutorials, class presentations and other purposes like concerts, sports, games, parties, or any other related interests etc. Graduate and postgraduate

students also use social networking sites to ask questions about their field of the study and to make comparisons between class materials and the experience from the field. By these literatures, students are benefited from the contributions of social networking, but what are the actual perceptions of university students who use Facebook for their individual purposes? How can we encourage students to use the social networking sits for academic purposes? This research paper is focused on these research questions. 'Digitalization' is the basic slogan of Bangladeshi economy. For effective digitalization, proper education and appropriate application are the prerequisites. Social networking is the technological improvement enclosed in the traditional education system. No other research papers were found about the student's experiences on social networking in Bangladesh.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to explore the students' social networking experiences on Facebook. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Identify the using pattern of Facebook on students' daily life;
- Assess the advantages of using Facebook by the students';
- Explain the disadvantages of using Facebook by the students'; and
- Find out the effects of using Facebook on their daily life.

Study Methods

This study was conducted on the survey among one hundred ninety (190) students' (114 male and 76 females) from the six faculties of 19 disciplines of Comilla University. Six students from each department with six males and four females were selected as sample. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed in this study. The majority of students of those faculties were aged between 18- 25 years in which just over three-quarters were females. They were selected according to their level of experiences of using social networking sites, especially on Facebook. This study was conducted through purposive sampling. Data were collected through administering a questionnaire having both open-ended and close ended questions during Sunday July 17 to Thursday October 16, 2016.

Findings and Analysis

Demographic profile of the respondents

This study has 190 samples. Here, the data has been considered as basic characteristics of the respondents. They are: respondents' name, age, profession, sex, department, academic year, address, internet facility and the time of being member of the Facebook etc.

Sex of the respondents

It was tried to gather data equally from both sex groups to make the study representative. It has been almost achieved as there were 60% male respondents and 40% female respondents. This study ensured that male students were more interested to use Facebook than the female students. The detailed data are presented in Table 1.

Using pattern of Facebook on students' daily life

Social networking sites like Facebook provide new venues for the students' to express themselves and to interact with others. They are getting information by reading news feed about what friends are doing or looking at others' profiles or pictures. They also posted different

information to their Facebook walls and posting pictures for others to observe in a public communication style. The study finds that the different patterns of using Facebook on students' daily life are:

Reasons of using Facebook: Data show that students answered an open-ended question about their reasons for using Facebook. Most of the respondents (64%) used Facebook for entertainment and communication, getting information, educational purpose and getting old friends, updated with friends and being closed with friends, sending birthday greetings etc. 14% used only for communication, 11% for getting information, 8% entertainment and communication, 7% for gossip and time passing. Here, this study established that most of the users 'used Facebook for getting different information and staying connected with their friends and other people. The detailed data are presented in Table 2.

Information sharing in the Facebook: Data shows that majority of the respondents (87%) shared their name, gender, email address, picture, high school, college and their university name, birthday, political view, religion, country, phone number and relationship status. 8% shared favourite music, books, movies and TV shows, but 5% respondents shared no information in their Facebook account. From this finding, the study confirmed that most of the students' used Facebook for sharing their personal information at all. The detailed data are presented in Table 3.

Duration of using Facebook: The survey data show that the total times spend on Facebook was dispersed throughout the day. In response to an open-ended questions, most of the respondents (29%) claim that they spend one per day by using Facebook, 26% passed two hours, 18% spend three hours, 8% four hours, 4% five hours and 15% spend above five hours by using Facebook. Analyzing the data, this study concludes that Most of the users spend a big amount of time in using Facebook.

Sex	Number of respondents	Percentages (%)
Male	114	60
Female	76	40
Total	190	100

Source: Field survey, 2016.

Table 1: Distribution of the sex by the respondents.

Reasons	Number of respondents	Percentages (%)
Communication, Getting Information, Educational Purpose and Getting Old Friends, Updated With Friends and Being Closed With Friends, Sending Birthday Greetings, Job Purpose and Entertainment Etc.	121	64
Communication	27	14
Getting Information	21	11
Entertainment and Communication	15	8
Gossip and Time Passing	14	7

Source: Field survey, 2016. (Multiple responses).

Table 2: Reasons of using Facebook by the respondents.

Information	Number of respondents	Percentages (%)
Name, Gender, Email, Picture, High School, College, University, Birthday, Major Interests, Political View, Religion, Country, Phone Number and, Relationship Status	165	87
Favourite Music, Books, Movies and TV Shows	16	8
No Information	10	5

Source: Field survey, 2016. (Multiple Responses).

Table 3: Information sharing in the Facebook by the respondents.

All over the world, users spend an average of three hours per month in Facebook (com Score press release, April 15, 2009). So, the rate of spending time in Facebook is quietly higher in the Comilla University. The detailed data are presented in Table 4.

Interest level of using Facebook: Another open-ended question asked students what they found most interesting about Facebook. There was a great deal of variability in responses to this question. As seen in Table 5, majority of the respondents (41%) are moderate interesting of using Facebook, 35% very interesting, 10% very high Interesting, 9% less interesting and, 5% are not interesting about using Facebook. The findings confirmed that most of the students' are sensible interest of using Facebook on their daily life.

Internet using facility: Facebook is most useful social media in the modern age but there is very little internet facility in Bangladesh. Most of University campuses are not Wi-Fi connected. Broadband connections are also very limited in the university campus, residential hall etc. So, the findings reveals that most of the respondents (75%) used internet by their Mobile phone for using Facebook, 6% used Laptops, 14% used Mobile and Laptop, 5% used Mobile and Desktop. Study found that very few of the students' used Laptop and Desktop computers for using Facebook. The detailed data are presented in Figure 1.

Time of being member of Facebook: Facebook using is relatively new practice in Bangladesh. It is a form of new media for connecting with friends and others. However, the findings from the survey stated that 19% of the respondents became member of Facebook before one year. 16% respondents opened Facebook before two years, 20% respondents opened before three years, 16% respondents opened before four years, 10% before five years, 12% opened more than before five years. The detailed data are presented in Table 6.

Number of account holders in the Facebook: As Facebook is very important technological tool for using internet, so most of the users' have more than one or two accounts. Some are fake accounts also. But the present studies find that most of the respondents (81%) have one Facebook account, 17% respondents have two Facebook accounts but only 2% respondents have more than two Facebook accounts. The detailed data are presented in Figure 2.

Duration	Number of respondents	Percentages (%)
One hour	55	29
Two hours	50	26
Three hours	35	18
Four hours	15	8
Five hours	7	4
Above five hours	28	15
Total	190	100

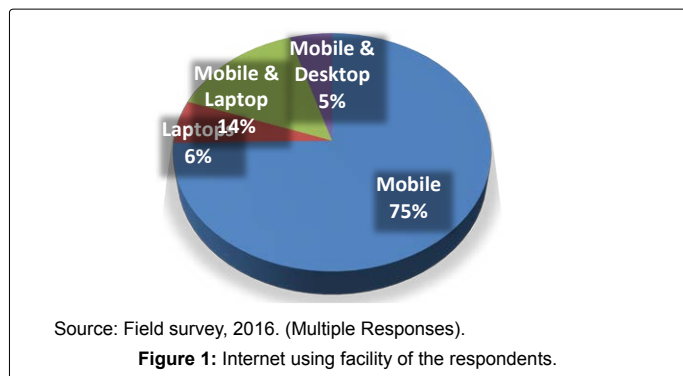
Source: Field survey, 2016.

Table 4: Duration of using Facebook by the respondents.

Level of Interest	Number of Respondents	Percentages (%)
Very High Interesting	19	10
Very Interesting	67	35
Moderate Interesting	77	41
Less Interesting	18	9
Not Interesting	9	5
Total	190	100

Source: Field survey, 2016.

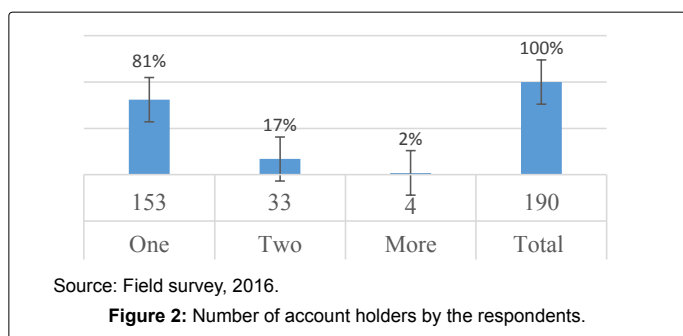
Table 5: Interest level of using Facebook by the respondents.



Duration	Number of respondents	Percentages (%)
1 year	36	19
2 years	31	16
3 years	38	20
4 years	30	16
5 years	19	10
Above 5 years	23	12

Source: Field survey, 2016. (Multiple Responses).

Table 6: Opening time of Facebook account by the respondents.



Time	Number of respondents	Percentages (%)
Morning	18	10
Afternoon	10	5
Evening	7	4
Night	31	16
No fixed time	124	65
Total	190	100

Source: Field survey, 2016.

Table 7: Time of using Facebook by the respondents.

Time of using Facebook: Most of the students' used to spend the time of using Facebook in different activities. Chatting, gossiping, updating status in their Facebook wall, uploading photos etc. This study reveals that Sixty five percent respondents have no fixed time for using Facebook. A big portion (16%) of the respondents used Facebook at night, 10% used at morning, 5% used at afternoon, and 4% used at evening. The detailed data are presented in Table 7.

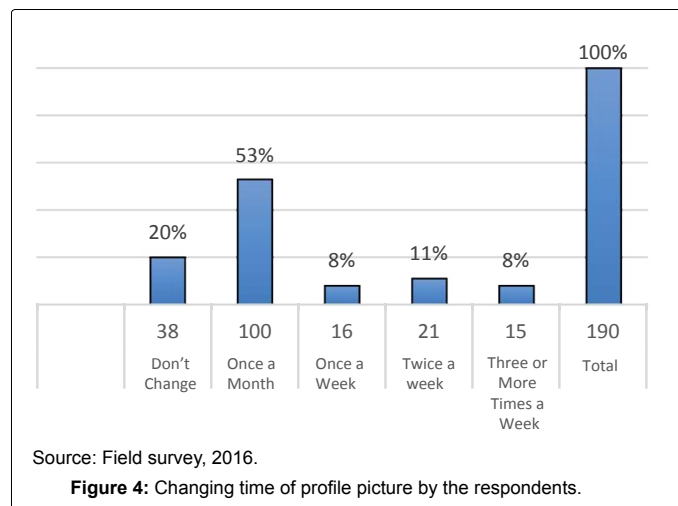
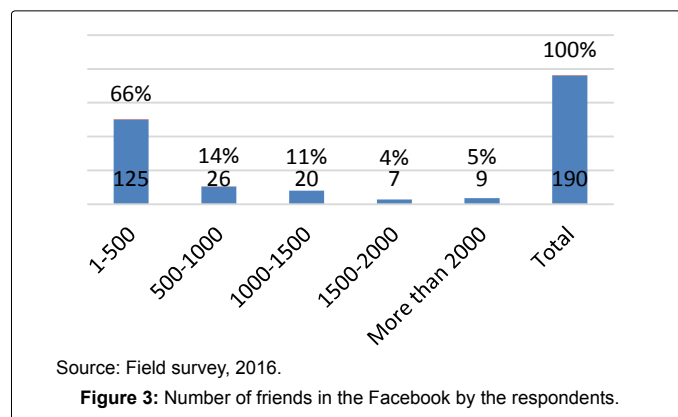
Number of friends in the Facebook: One of the main advantages of using Facebook is the users' ability to make friends. The study finds that users have many friends in Facebook. Most of the respondents (66%) have 1-500 friends, 14% respondents have 500-1000 friends and another 11% also have 1000-1500 friends, 4% have 1500-2000 friends

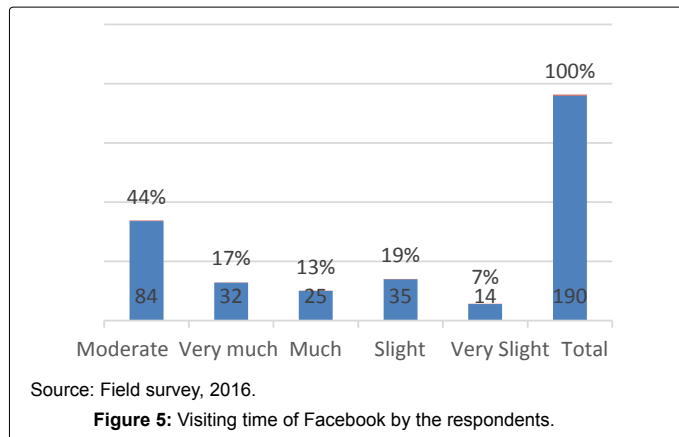
and only 5% have more than 2000 friends in their Facebook account. The detailed data are presented in Figure 3.

Changing time of profile picture: Photo mania is a new trend for the Facebook users. Most of the users' changes their profile and cover picture for the several times in a day. It is one kind of phobia for the users'. But the survey data of this study concluded that Fifty three percent respondents changed their profile picture once a month, 8% changed once a week, 11% changed twice a week, 8% changed three or more times a week but 20% of the respondents don't change their profile picture in the Facebook. The detailed data are presented in Figure 4.

Visiting time of Facebook in a day: Most of the users are frequently visit their Facebook account in a day. Some are connecting with friends, some are getting information about the contemporary world and some are for educational purpose etc. This study finds that twenty five percent respondents visited their Facebook account 1-2 times in a day, 20% visited 2-3 times, 11% used for 3-4 times, 8% used for 4-5 times but 36% respondents used for Facebook many times in a day. The detailed data are presented in Figure 5.

Message of comment in the Facebook wall: The data of survey show that users mainly express their emotional, personal, social, professional and educational information posted on their Facebook wall. Emotional status updates have greater appeal to Facebook friends. Most of the comments to status update and photos are positive. As seen in Table 8, Majority of the respondents (34%) commented emotional, personal, social, professional and educational information





Comment	Number of respondents	Percentages (%)
Emotional	16	8
Personal	50	26
Professional	7	4
Educational	13	7
Social and Political Issues	26	14
Contemporary Affairs	14	7
Emotional, Personal, Professional, Educational and Social information	64	34

Source: Field survey, 2016. (Multiple Responses).

Table 8: Message of comment in the Facebook wall by the respondents.

on their Facebook wall, 26% shared personal information, 14% posted on social and political issues, 8% emotional matters, 7% educational and contemporary issues but only 4% respondents commented about professional information on their Facebook wall.

Advantages of using Facebook

Social networking sites have become prominent in the society and integrated into our everyday lives. It is very suitable and effective to communicate with people around the world. Specially, Facebook initiate learning through the exchange of messages and the sharing of links, information, and resources. It has online sources where people can stay socially connected to their friends, family, peers, and acquaintances. Students also gets educational and social information, updated with contemporary world, reduces communication cost, developed social network systems, remove loneliness and also find different job related information by using Facebook. As seen by Table 9, 28% respondents used Facebook for getting educational and social information, 29% for stay connected with their friends, 11% for updated with contemporary world, 11% for developing social network and 4% only for job related information, 17% for entertainment and others.

Disadvantages of using Facebook

On the other hand, there are many disadvantages of using Facebook also. For example, Facebook would take far more time with a slow internet connection, expensive internet megabyte, less security of personal pictures, sometimes harassment by the hackers etc. As seen in the Table 10, Twenty two percent respondents claimed that Facebook is very much responsible for their study hampered, 22% said Facebook disclose their personal privacy in to general peoples, 18% for wastage of time, 16% discloses of political views, 13% respondents think that expensive internet megabyte, 6% faces huge friend requesting problems and 5% faces many other problems etc..

Advantages	Number of respondents	Percentages (%)
Getting Educational and Social Information	54	28
Stay Connected with Friends	55	29
Updated with Contemporary World	20	11
Develop Social Networking Systems	20	11
Getting Job Related Information	7	4
Entertainment and others	33	17

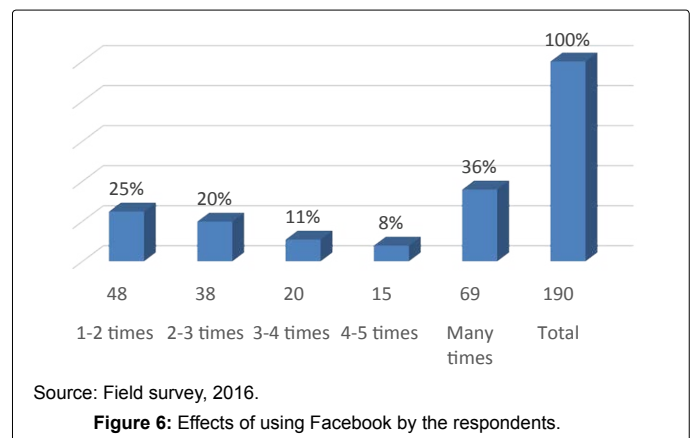
Source: Field survey, 2016. (Multiple Responses).

Table 9: Advantages of using Facebook by the respondents.

Disadvantages	Number of respondents	Percentages (%)
Discloses Personal Privacy	40	21
Expensive Internet Megabyte	25	13
Huge Friend Request Accepting	11	6
Wastage of Time	34	18
Hampered Study	41	22
Discloses Political Views	30	16
Others	9	5

Source: Field survey, 2016. (Multiple Responses).

Table 10: Disadvantages of using Facebook by the respondents.



Effects of using Facebook

This study reveals that student's affiliation with Facebook in just a small proportion with academic usage. They are mostly driven by followed by social needs. Moreover, Facebook is used for different purposes such as fraud, transferring misinformation, unusual presentation and copy of the statements of people in order to create misunderstandings among the users. These patterns negatively affect the students' and divert their concentration from academic purpose to others. The survey data indicate that 44% respondents have moderate effects by using Facebook, while 17% respondents mentioned very much effect, 19% slight effects, 13% much effect and 7% very slight effects by using Facebook on their daily life. The detailed data are presented in Figure 6.

Discussion

This study has investigated on what are the using pattern of students' social networking, especially on Facebook, why they use it, and how they interact with each other on this website, how much time they spent by using Facebook, what are the advantages and

disadvantages of using Facebook, and what are the effects of using this site etc. The demographic data shows that male students are more prone to use Facebook than female students. This study reveals that Facebook is the part of their everyday experiences, most of the respondents are using Facebook for sharing educational and social information, for staying connected with their friends and others, sending birthday greetings, job purpose and entertainment etc. This study found that most of the respondent also use Facebook for sharing personal identity such as name, gender, email, picture, high school, college, university, birthday, major interests, political view, religion, country, phone number and, relationship status etc. This study also suggested that the communication systems of the past are changing day by day in the modern age. Most of the users used to spend the time of Facebook using in different activities. They had to change their social, familial, personal and study life, career etc. by using Facebook. This study concluded that there is a dramatic change is happened in whole daily life of the students'.

Conclusion

Finally, it can be said that the findings of the study can help to understand the using pattern of Facebook users in the Comilla University. Based on data, the study concludes that though Bangladesh is not that much advanced in technology, the users of Facebook are very much active. They don't just log on to Facebook but use many options of the site. Most of the students' don't use Facebook only for entertainment but many of the users use it for constructive purposes like sharing information, feelings, or educational matters with others. This study revealed that there a lot of limitation of using Facebook like slow internet connection, expensive internet megabyte, less security of personal pictures, sometimes harassment by the hackers etc. So, the policy makers like the Ministry of Education and concerned authorities should assist the development of a digital education system that takes advantage of the potentially beneficial uses of Facebook for the students'.

Recommendation

As Facebook is not an old medium of communication in the world as well as in Bangladesh, this study can be seen as a simple research about Facebook. This study hasn't attempted to critically analyze the using pattern of Facebook. Based on the users' data, it has just tried to explore the using practices. So a lot of things remain uncovered in this study. But as Facebook is a popular medium, there is a lot of scopes are there to conduct further research about Facebook. However, this study can recommend some suggestions for further research about Facebook. The suggestions are stated below:

- This study has been conducted within a short time frame with only 190 samples. Further research can be done on a wider scale with a large sample so that every aspect of using Facebook gets in-depth attention.
- This study has only tried to explore the using practices of Facebook. Further research can be conducted to measure the impacts of using Facebook.
- This study has been conducted with only the Facebook users. Further research can be conducted on the general internet users to find the rate of using Facebook.

- A comparative study can be conducted to find the difference of using of male-female, and new-old members.
- A comparative study can be conducted to find the difference of using pattern of other social networking sites.

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Citation: Belal HM (2017) Social Networking Experiences on Facebook: A Study on the Students' of Comilla University. J Mass Communicat Journalism 7: 333. doi: [10.4172/2165-7912.1000333](https://doi.org/10.4172/2165-7912.1000333)

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