

MEDIA LITERACY SURVEY REPORT



BHUTAN MEDIA FOUNDATION



This project is funded by the European Union



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BACKGROUND

This Media Literacy Survey conducted by **Bhutan Media Foundation (BMF)** is a modest attempt to understand the pattern of media use by different sections of the Bhutanese population. It is, by no means, a stand-alone, fully-fledged survey. The small questionnaires were administered to the participants of the Media Literacy Workshops conducted by the Foundation in four different locations of the country.

BMF conducted the Basic Media Literacy Workshop for the villagers of Sakteng in Trashigang and Kazhi in Wangdiphodrang, Intermediate Media Literacy Workshop in the College of Language and Culture Studies (CLCS) for the students of the college and Taktse Central School, and Advanced Media Literacy Workshop in Thimphu for working professionals, including parliamentarians and senior public servants. The workshops were part of a year-long project titled ‘Inclusive Media Literacy for Democratic Empowerment’ supported by the EU and Helvetas Bhutan.

This small survey was part of these workshops. The objective is to understand how the Bhutanese from different walks of life use the media. This will enable us to plan our media literacy programmes better based on needs and media use patterns. The findings of the survey will enable us to custom-design our media literacy workshops and training for different sections of the population.

What the survey lacks in size is compensated by the variety of data from the Bhutanese from different age groups, educational levels, and the place of residence. The respondents include herders, farmers, students, and senior public servants whose media preference and use are as varied as their educational levels and life experiences.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach was employed to find out the usage of media including social media by different sections of the population in Bhutan. A survey was carried out for all the participants of the Media Literacy Workshop (Basic, Intermediate and Advanced).

A total of 273 people participated in the survey and completed the questionnaires. Of the total, 151 were female and 122, male.

Participants by Gender

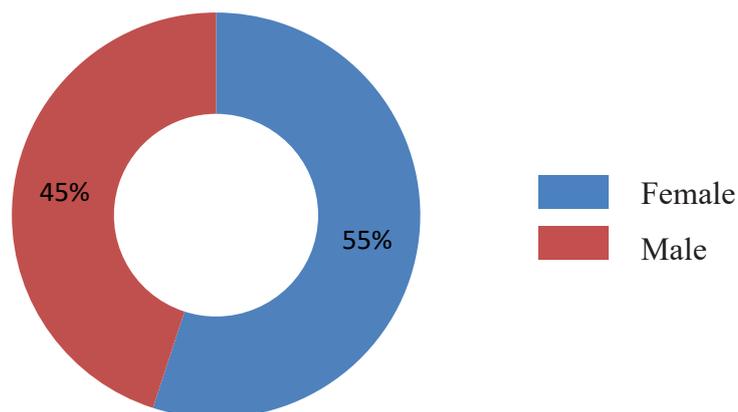


Fig 1: Participants by gender

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The online media use has accelerated dramatically since the inception of the Internet in 1999 and mobile phones in 2003. Today, for the majority of the Bhutanese, life without smartphones and the Internet is unimaginable.



FINDINGS

BASIC MEDIA LITERACY

The Basic Media Literacy was carried out in two communities of Sakteng in Trashigang and Kazhi in Wangdiphodrang for the illiterate and semi-literate people. A total of 76 people participated in the survey. A little more than half of the respondents were male (51%), with females accounting for 49%.

Participants by Gender

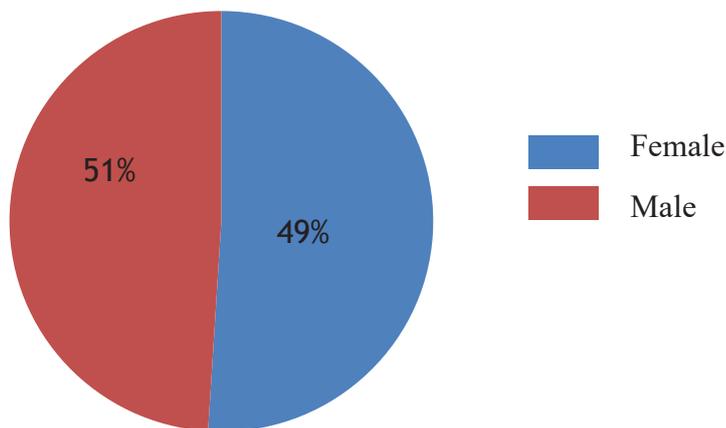


Fig 1: Participants by gender

About one-third of the respondents received no formal education while 15.79% of them received Non-Formal Education. About 6% of them received primary education and 10.53% of them went to high school. One-fourth of the respondents did not reveal their educational attainment.

Education

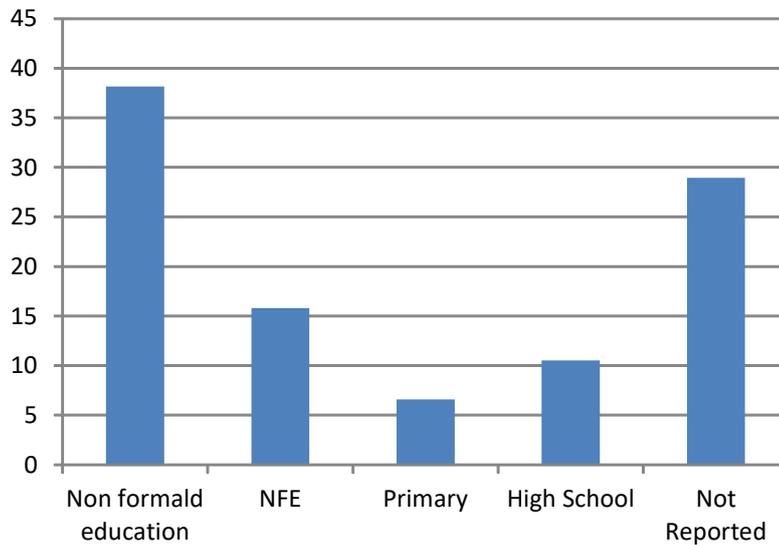


Fig 2: Education

Respondents were grouped in five age brackets: ≤ 25 , 26-35, 36-45, 46-55 and ≥ 56 . We had the majority of the respondents aged between 46-55 yrs (25%), followed by older people aged more than 56 years (22%), then people aged between 36-45 yrs (21%), people aged between 26-35 yrs (17%) and people less than 25 years with 15%. Of the total respondents, 68% of them owned a smartphone while 32% did not own a smartphone. The survey revealed that people who did not own a smartphone were mostly the ones aged more than 56 years. This indicates that younger age groups display a higher proportion of using social media.

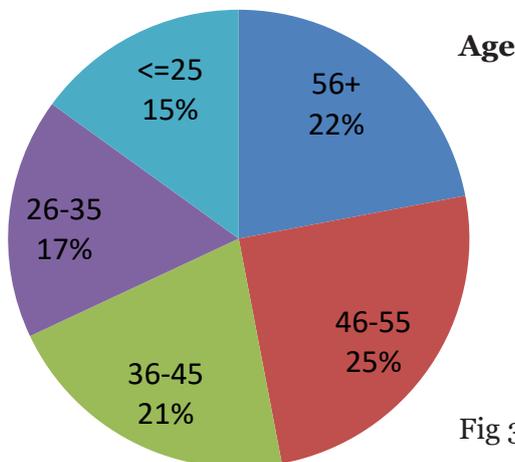


Fig 3: Age



Own smartphone

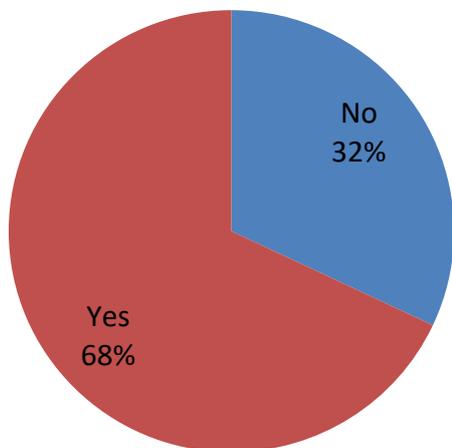


Fig 4: Own smartphone

From the above data, it is clear that, although the majority of the respondents are illiterate, they still own a smartphone and use social media, especially WeChat. The survey revealed that people in the communities mostly use WeChat as a communication tool. Their lives have become so much easier with WeChat.

Social Media Usage

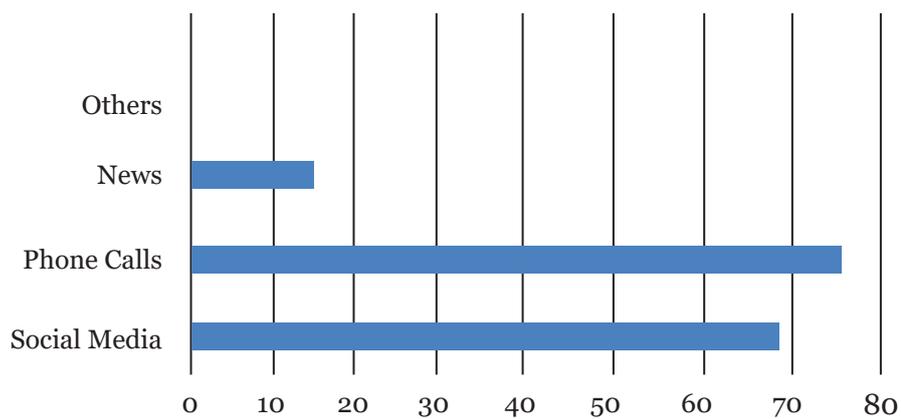


Fig 5: Social Media Usage

Most Commonly used social media apps

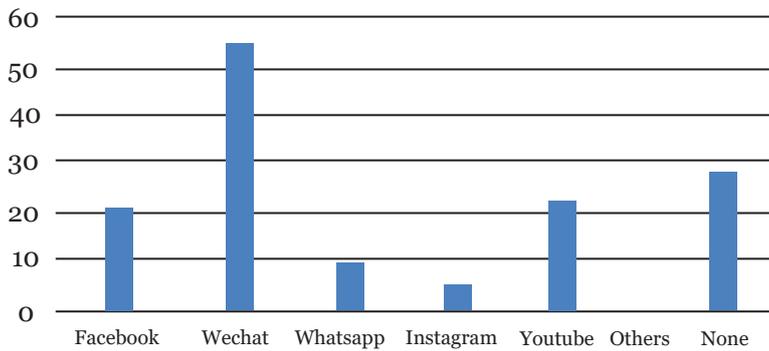


Fig 5: Social Media Usage

INTERMEDIATE MEDIA LITERACY

The Intermediate Media Literacy was conducted for the students of the College of Language and Culture Studies and Taktse Central School. Access to social media is widespread amongst the students and has become a part of their lives. The students were asked questions about how they access and use social media. On the question of their use of smartphones as a communication tool, it is clear that it is used predominantly for social networking and entertainment purposes. Of the 153 students who participated in the survey, 147 students owned a smartphone and 82.3% of them use their smartphones mostly for social media.

% of students who use their smartphone for

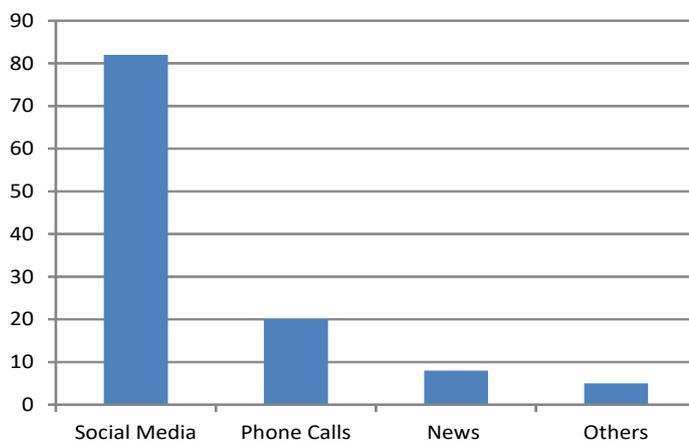


Fig 6: % of students who use their smartphone for



Since the majority of the students use their phones for social media, there is no doubt that they spend most of their time on their phones. The survey results revealed that Facebook dominates student’s everyday usage (85.6% of the students use Facebook), followed by WeChat (46.4%), YouTube (39.9%), Instagram (20.9%), and WhatsApp (11.8%). A little more than 1% responded ‘None’ since they do not own a smartphone.

Most popular social media app among students

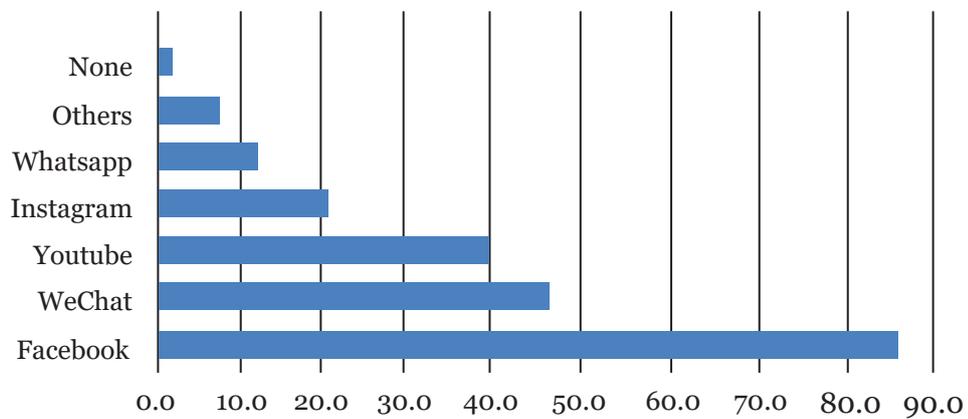


Fig 7: Most popular social media app among students

Most popular social media app among students by gender

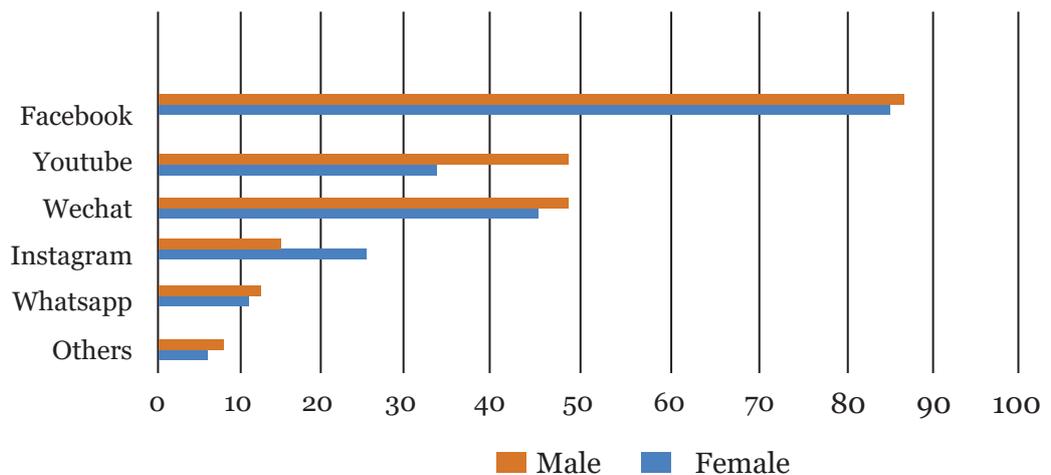


Fig 7: Most popular social media app among students by gender

The survey results also indicate that the students spend most of their time using social media for chatting (62.8%), followed by accessing news and seeing photos/videos (49.7% and 23.5% respectively). This indicates that the students prefer to use social media for connecting and communicating instantly with others and for entertainment.

Most common use of social media

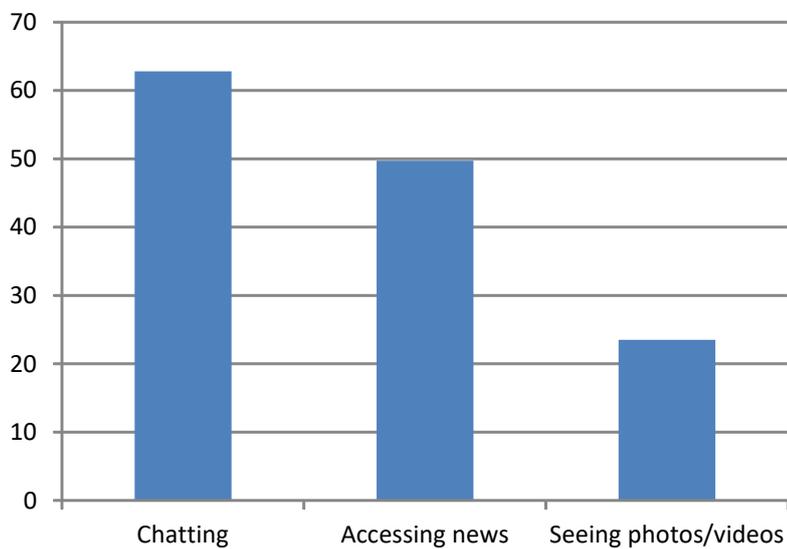


Fig 8: Most common use of social media

Despite the use of social media for largely entertainment purposes, the survey found that students use digital technology for educational purposes too. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents reported using google apps. The 2% that does not use google apps is probably the ninth-graders who do not have access to computers or smartphones.



Use Google Apps

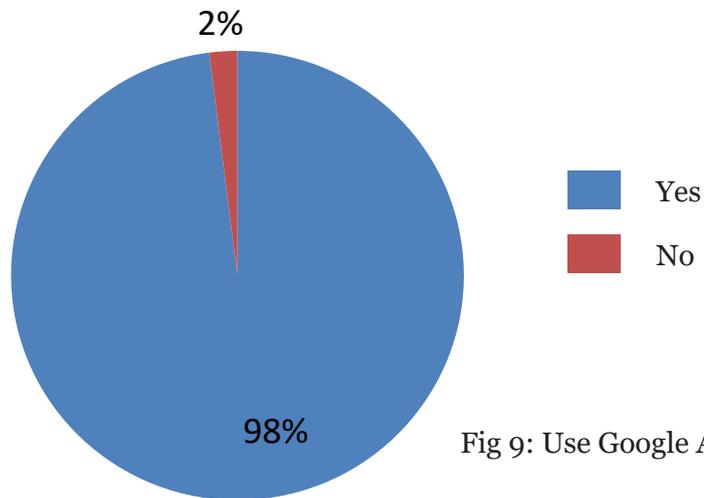


Fig 9: Use Google Apps

Asked about the Social Media Policy for the Royal Government of Bhutan, a little more than half of the respondents were aware of the policy.

Aware of Social Media policy

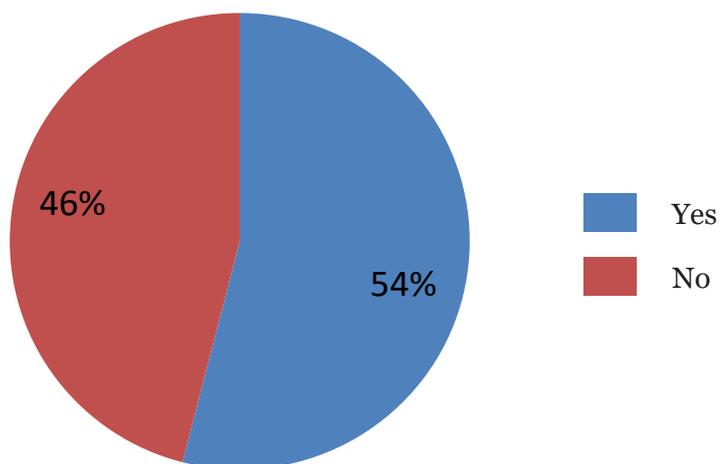


Fig 10: Aware of Social Media Policy

ADVANCED MEDIA LITERACY

The Advanced Media Literacy workshop was conducted for working professionals, including the parliamentarians, in Thimphu. A total of 44 participants took part in the survey. Of the total, 56.82% was female and 43.18% male. The participants included representatives from government agencies, corporations, private companies, media houses, parliamentarians, civil society organisations, schools, and colleges.

Participants by gender

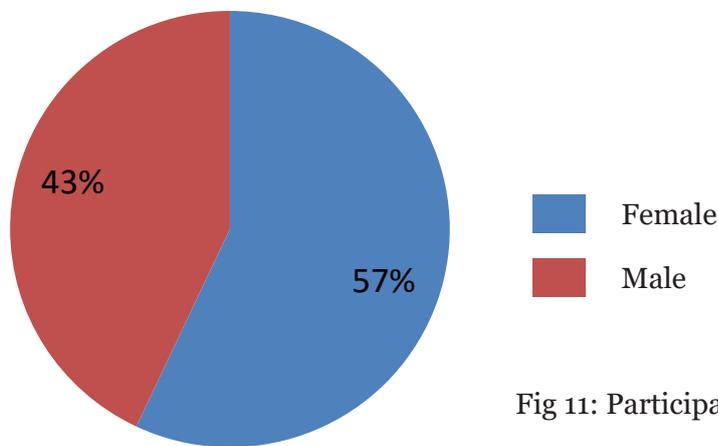


Fig 11: Participants by gender

Just like the students, the working professionals also use their smartphones mainly for social and entertainment purposes (79.5%) followed by phone calls (77.3%) and news (22.7%).

Usage of Smart Phone

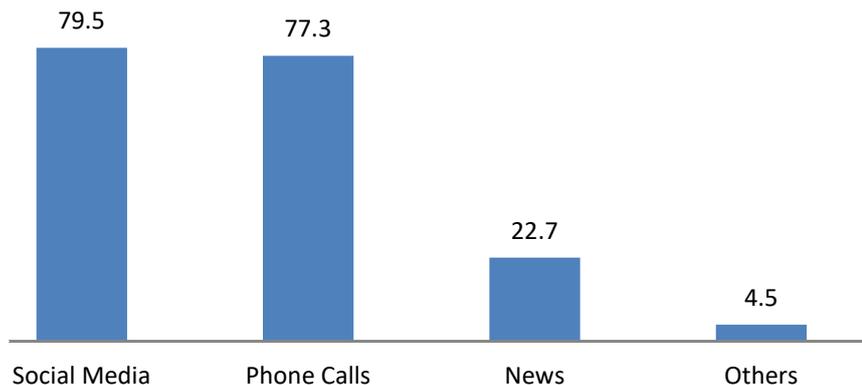


Fig 12: Usage of Smart Phone



The traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers have long been the primary outlet for advertising campaigns. Through this survey, we also wanted to find out what kind of traditional media people consume today. The survey data revealed that more than half of the respondents (65.9%) watch television, about 34.1% of them read newspapers and around 4.5% of them listen to the radio. This indicates that not many people read newspapers. They prefer watching television to reading newspapers. Since this cohort includes working professionals, it is evident that the respondents listen to the radio only in their cars.

Use of traditional media

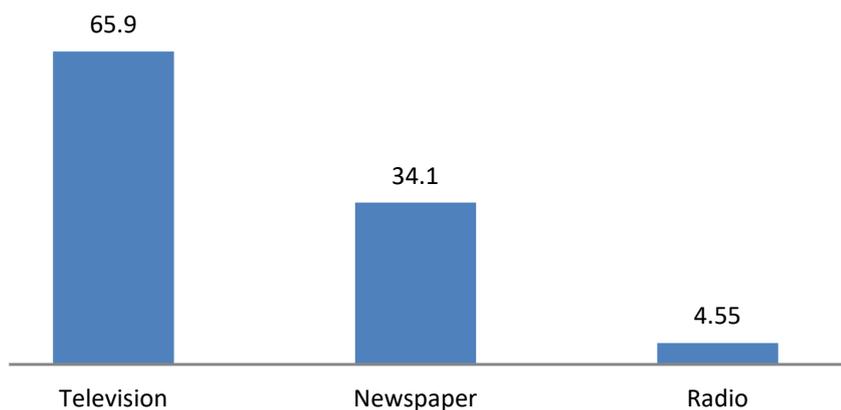


Fig 13: Use of traditional media

The majority of the respondents from this cohort use Facebook the most, followed by Instagram, WeChat, WhatsApp, YouTube and others. Asked what type of content they find on these platforms, 82% of them stated that they find a mix of both positive and negative contents. About 14% said they find mostly positive contents, 2% said they find negative contents and the remaining 2% of the respondents was not sure.

Most frequently used social media

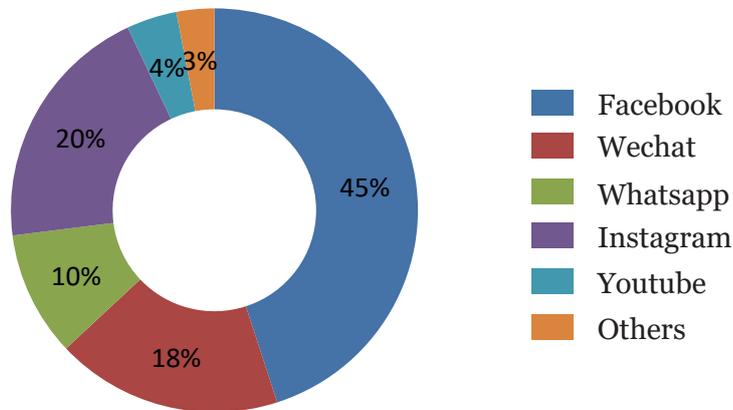


Fig 14: Most frequently used social media

Type of content on social media

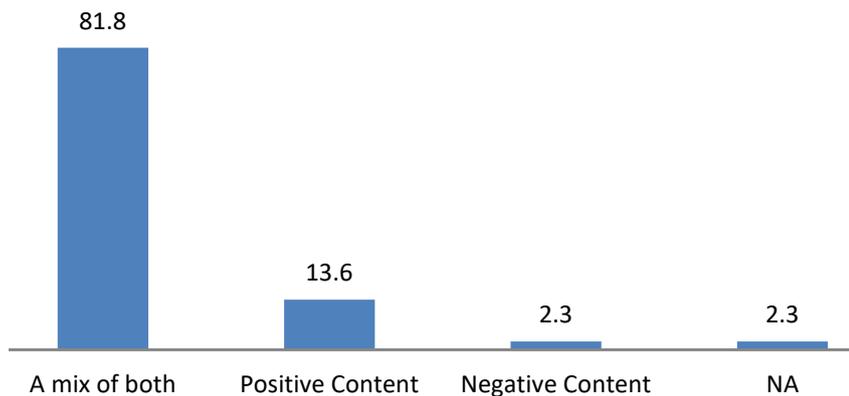


Fig 15: Type of content on social media

The data also revealed that a little more than half of our respondents limited their time on social media to three hours per day. Some 30% of the respondents reported spending about 4-7 hours per day on social media while 9% of the respondents reported spending more than eight hours per day on social media. The advent of smartphone devices offers its users unprecedented access to online content. This may have created a strong need to check their phones regularly to see if anything ‘new’ has happened.



Time spent on social media

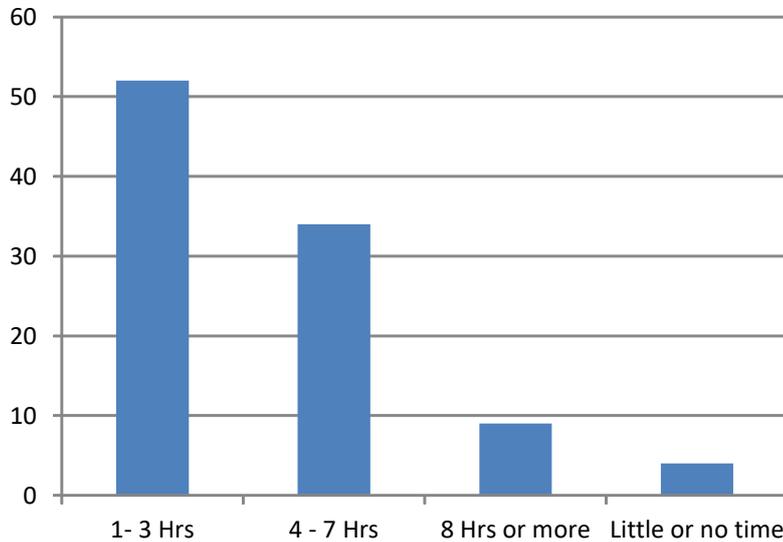


Fig 16: Time spent on social media

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The survey findings reveal that the Bhutanese across all age groups and educational levels use social media mostly for social networking and entertainment. It is important to educate them on healthy social networking and entertainment. Meanwhile, future surveys need to find out the specifics of social networking and entertainment that engage them.
2. The survey reveals that social media is widely used irrespective of age or educational level. Therefore, media literacy at any level (basic, intermediate, advanced) must have a strong component on social media.
3. WeChat and Facebook feature strongly among social media apps the Bhutanese use. While WeChat is the most popular among illiterate and semi-literate people living in rural areas, Facebook is the most popular among the youth and working professionals. Even among the youth, WeChat is next only to Facebook in terms of use. So, the use of WeChat needs to receive special focus in terms of media literacy.

ANNEXE 1: BASIC MEDIA LITERACY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you have access to the following media?
 - TV
 - Radio
 - Newspaper
 - None

2. Do you own a smartphone?
 - Yes
 - No

3. What do you access most on your smartphone?
 - Calling/Receiving calls
 - Social media
 - News

4. Which of the following social media platforms do you use? (Tick more than one)
 - Facebook
 - WeChat
 - Instagram
 - WhatsApp
 - YouTube
 - Others:
 - None

5. How do you access news?
- o Newspaper
 - o Radio
 - o TV
 - o Social Media
 - o None
6. What do you use traditional media for?
- o News
 - o Entertainment
 - o Sports
 - o Movies

ANNEXE 2: INTERMEDIATE MEDIA LITERACY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you own a smartphone?
 - Yes
 - No

2. (If the answer to Question 1 is Yes) What do you access most on your phone?
 - Calling/Receiving calls
 - Social Media
 - News websites
 - Others:

3. Which of the following media do you use?
 - TV
 - Radio
 - Newspaper
 - None

4. Which of the following social media platform do you use?
 - Facebook
 - WeChat
 - Instagram
 - WhatsApp
 - YouTube
 - Others:
 - None

5. Which social media platform do you use most frequently?
 - o Facebook
 - o WeChat
 - o Instagram
 - o WhatsApp
 - o YouTube
 - o Others:

6. What do you use social media for most frequently?
 - o News
 - o Uploading pictures/videos
 - o Chatting
 - o Watching videos

7. Do you use Google apps?
 - o Yes
 - o No

8. What do you use YouTube for?
 - o Watch Videos
 - o Upload/download videos

9. Are you aware of RGoB's Social Media Policy?
 - o Yes
 - o No

ANNEXE 3: ADVANCED MEDIA LITERACY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What do you access most on your phone?
 - Calling/Receiving calls
 - Social Media
 - News websites
 - Others:

2. Which of the following media do you use?
 - TV
 - Radio
 - Newspaper
 - Others:

3. Which social media platform do you use most frequently?
 - Facebook
 - WeChat
 - Instagram
 - WhatsApp
 - YouTube
 - Others:

4. What do you use social media for most frequently?
 - News
 - Professional Networking
 - Promoting my Organization
 - Entertainment
 - Others:

5. Are you aware of RGoB's Social Media Policy?
 - Yes
 - No

6. What do you notice most on your social media platforms?
 - Positive Content
 - Negative Content
 - Not sure

7. How much time do you spend on social media daily?
 - 1-3 hrs
 - 4-7 hrs
 - 8 hrs or more
 - Little or no time



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