

Leisure in Lockdown: Use of Media by University Students of Bangladesh during Lockdown and Impact on Mental Health

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Abstract

Mass media has always been a helpful tool to spend leisure hours with. Because of the changed scenario due to the corona situation, many people got a lot of leisure hours with no scope of going outside. For this it is expected mass media has been a big help for many people to spend these leisure hours. This study aims to find out the frequency and usefulness of mass and social media and their impact on mental health of Bangladeshi university students during the lockdown period. The most and least used media during lockdown are using social media and reading books respectively. The study finds that reading books and watching movies have been significantly helpful for the mental health of Bangladeshi students during lockdown whereas the study has not found any significant impact of social media on the mental health of Bangladeshi university students during lockdown.

keywords:

1 Introduction

Mass media has always been a helpful tool to spend leisure hours with. Among many functions of mass media, helping to withdraw from day to day life and providing entertainment has been some important ones. Some people use mass media to escape from monotony. Many have mentioned watching movies or reading books as their favorite pass-time in many cases. The changed scenario due to the corona situation has brought new aspects in our day-to-day life. People have been spending all of their time inside the house and working from home. Because of this changed scenario, many people got a lot of leisure hours with no scope of going outside. For this it is expected mass media has been a big help for many people to spend these leisure hours. In Bangladesh, situation has not been very different. The first case of COVID-19 were discovered in Bangladesh on 8 March, 2020. The last date up until which all educational institute in Bangladesh were open was 16 March, 2020. After that all schools, colleges, universities have been closed in Bangladesh for more than two to three months more or less. After that period many educational institutions including universities started online distant learning initiatives to continue academic program. As a result, the whole population of students in Bangladesh were spending their time in their respective houses without any academic works for a time period of two to three months in the months from March to June. During this global lockdown due to the spread of COVID-19 their leisure choices and activities has been deeply affected. Tertiary level students pursuing Bachelor or Master Degrees in various public or private universities of Bangladesh are mainly educated youth society of the country. They are expected to be high frequency users of social media and mainstream media. They spend a lot of time using different media like reading books, watching television or cinema, using social media like YouTube, Facebook or using streaming sites like Netflix or Amazon prime in the normal situation. In lockdown situation the dependency on media usage may vary from normal time. Also media can play a vital role in providing escape from the monotony of life under lockdown and entertain the users. The researchers try to find out the frequency, type and mode of media usage of university students of Bangladesh during lockdown and if and how media has helped audience or users to cope up with the lockdown situation. Receiving news of deaths every day through various sources including media and the uncertainty surrounding the corona situation may create anxiety and stress or the sheer fact of being stuck at home can create boredom and monotony. Mass and social media can be helpful in these aspects. The study attempt to find out the effect or influence of mass and social media on the mental health of Bangladeshi university students in these aspects during lockdown.

2 Research question

This study aims to find out:

What is the frequency of usage of different media by Bangladeshi university students during lockdown? How has different media been useful during the lockdown among Bangladeshi university students?

What is the influence of mass and social media on the mental health of Bangladeshi university students in these aspects during lockdown?

3 Literature review

A paper by Gammon and Ramshaw considers the role of nostalgia-based leisure in the present COVID-19 pandemic. Enforced lockdowns and social distancing initiatives have been met with various media channels replaying famous sport matches, classic films and memorable concerts from the past. The paper states that Nostalgia may well end up being one of the primary coping mechanisms for all generations of enduring isolation, fear and a general loss of freedom [Gammon and Ramshaw \[2020\]](#).

An analytical report published in May 2020 by Dr. Antonios Vlassis states that Netflix is one of the companies benefiting from the great lockdown due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The subscription video on demand (SVOD) platform doubled its forecasts with respect to new subscribers in the first quarter of 2020. The platform got 182.9 million subscribers in May 2020 compared to 167.1 million at the end of January 2020 [Vlassis \[2020\]](#).

4 Theoretical framework

Uses and Gratification model has been used as theoretical framework for this study. The uses-and-gratifications model suggests that audience members have definite needs or drives that are gratified by using both non-media and media sources [Dominick \[2010\]](#). This study will be concerned with media-related sources of indulgence. The definite needs satisfied by the media are called media gratifications. Among various categories of uses-and-gratifications the most related and significant category to this study is diversion.

Diversion has many forms like stimulation, relaxation, emotional release, and catharsis. Pursuing emotional or intellectual stimulation is an intrinsic drive in human beings. Many people use media solely to pass time. The media have taken benefit of this need to elude boredom in many ingenious ways. Too much stimulation, however is detrimental. When challenged with sensory overload, people tend to seek respite. Using media can be a pleasing diversion from frustrations and complications of everyday life. Some individuals identify with media heroes and partake vicariously in their triumphs. Such a progression palpably enables these people to outlet some of the frustrations associated with their normal life [Dominick \[2010\]](#).

5 Methodology

Survey is a method of collecting primary data which is used in testing concepts, reflecting attitude of people, and a set of other purposes. It can be explained as a research method involving the use of uniform questionnaires or interviews to collect data about people and their preferences, thoughts, and actions in a systematic manner [Bhattacharjee \[2012\]](#). A survey questionnaire was distributed online among students of different universities. As the researchers are either university student or teacher it was easier for them to distribute the online survey questionnaire through other teachers and students as the researchers know many of them personally. Total 434 responses were gathered among which 413 were considered for the study after carefully deducting the incomplete and irrelevant answers. Minimum 3 to maximum 112 responses were collected from any university. Responses were collected from 9 to 30 July 2020.

Total 413 students from more than 60 departments of 16 universities participated in the survey.

Table 1

Serial	Name of the University	Number of students
1	University of Dhaka	112
2	Bangladesh University of Professionals	98
3	Jagannath University	75
4	Stamford University	39
5	Metropolitan University	30
6	Jahangirnagar University	27
7	Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology	5
8	North South University	3
9	University of Chittagong	3
10	Shahjalal University of Science and Technology	3
11	Daffodill International University	3
12	BRAC University	3
13	East West University	3
14	Comilla University	3
15	Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology	3
16	University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh	3
	Total	413

The researchers used the SPSS software to store, code and analyze data.

DATA ANALYSIS Data were collected and stored in total of 36 variables categories of 4 sections. Find-ings from the data are presented below.

Table 2: How much time do you spend watching television?

Frequency of usage	Number of students	Percentage
1 -2 hours daily	93	22.5
3 - 4 hours daily	48	11.6
5 - 6 hours daily	6	1.5
I don't watch television daily	98	23.7
I never watch television	40	9.7
Less than one hour daily	128	31.0
Total	413	100.0

The study finds that 128 students among 413 participants that amounts up to 31 percent students watch television for less than one hour daily during lockdown period. 22.5 percent student watch television for 1-2 hours daily. 11.6 percent watch for 3-4 hours and 1.5 percent watch television for 5-6 hours daily. 98 participants among 413 which amounts up to 23.7 percent students said they don't watch television daily. Only 9.7 percent said they never watched television during lockdown period.

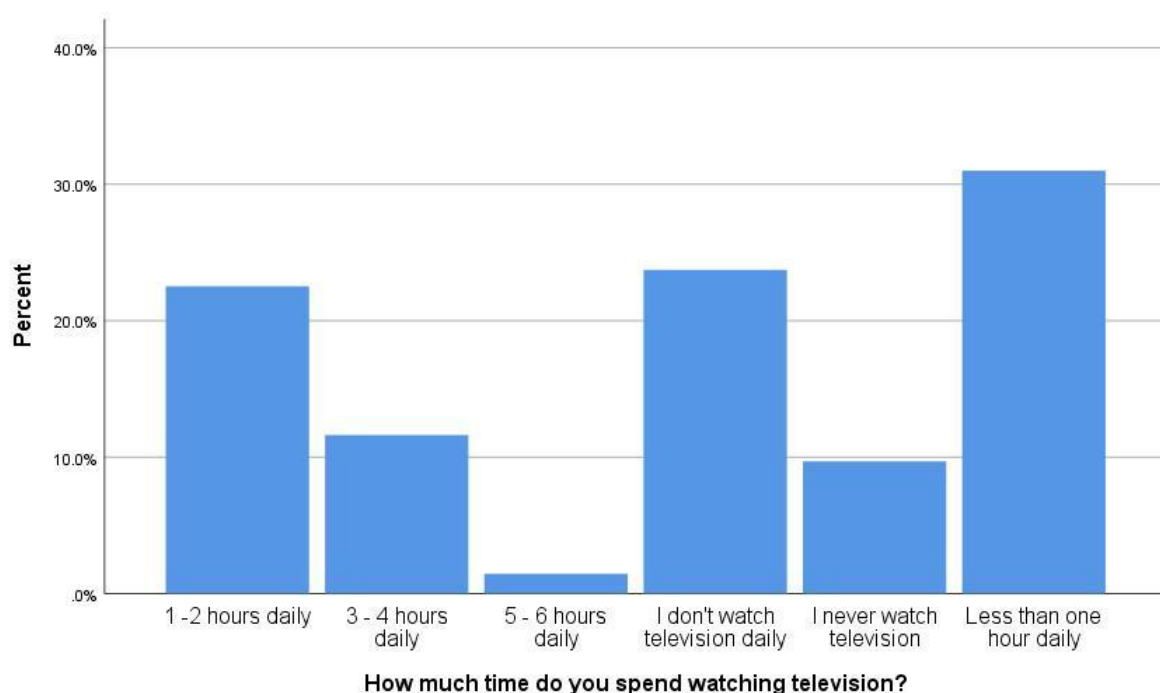


Figure 1: How much time do you spend watching television?

Table 3: How many books have you read during lockdown?

Number of books	Number of students	Percentage
0	105	25.4
1-10	249	60.3
11-20	39	9.4
21-50	13	3.1
51-100	4	1.0
More than 100	3	.7
Total	413	100.0

The study finds that 249 students among 413 participants that amounts up to 60.3 percent students have read 1-10 books during the three months lockdown period. 9.4 percent student have read 11-20 books during lockdown in Bangladesh. 3.1 percent read 21-50 and 1 percent read 51-100 books during lockdown. Only 3 participants say they read more than 100 books during this period which is only 0.7 percent. 105 participants among 413 which amounts up to 25.4 percent students said they haven't read any book during the three months period of lockdown in Bangladesh.

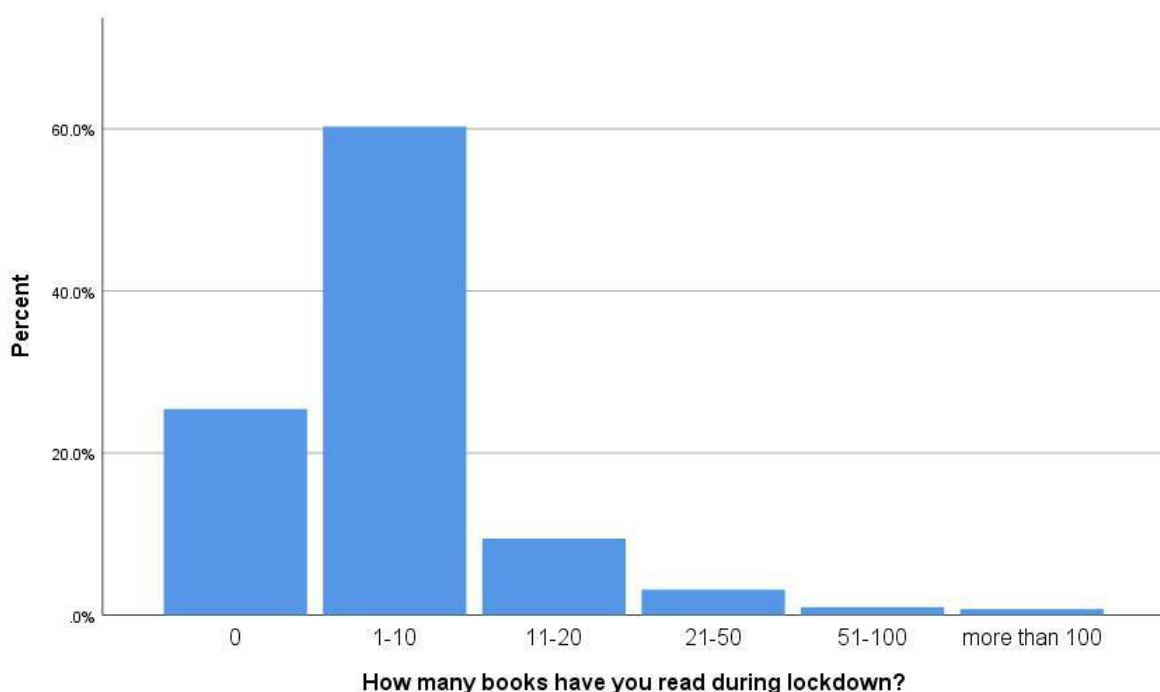


Figure 2: How many books have you read during lockdown?

Table 4: How many movies have you watched during lockdown?

Number of movies	Number of students	Percentage
0	21	5.1

Table 4 continued from previous page

Number of movies	Number of students	Percentage
1-10	171	41.4
11-20	109	26.4
21-30	40	9.7
31-50	30	7.3
51-100	27	6.5
More than 100	15	3.6
Total	413	100.0

The study finds that 171 students among 413 participants that amounts up to 41.4 percent students have watched 1-10 movies during the three months lockdown period. 26.4 percent students have watched 11-20 movies during lockdown in Bangladesh. 9.7 percent watched 21-30 movies, 7.3 percent watched 31-50 movies and 6.5 percent watched 51-100 movies during lockdown. 15 participants say they watched more than 100 movies during this period which is 3.6 percent. 21 participants among 413 which amounts up to 5.1 percent students said they haven't watched any movie during the three months period of lockdown in Bangladesh.

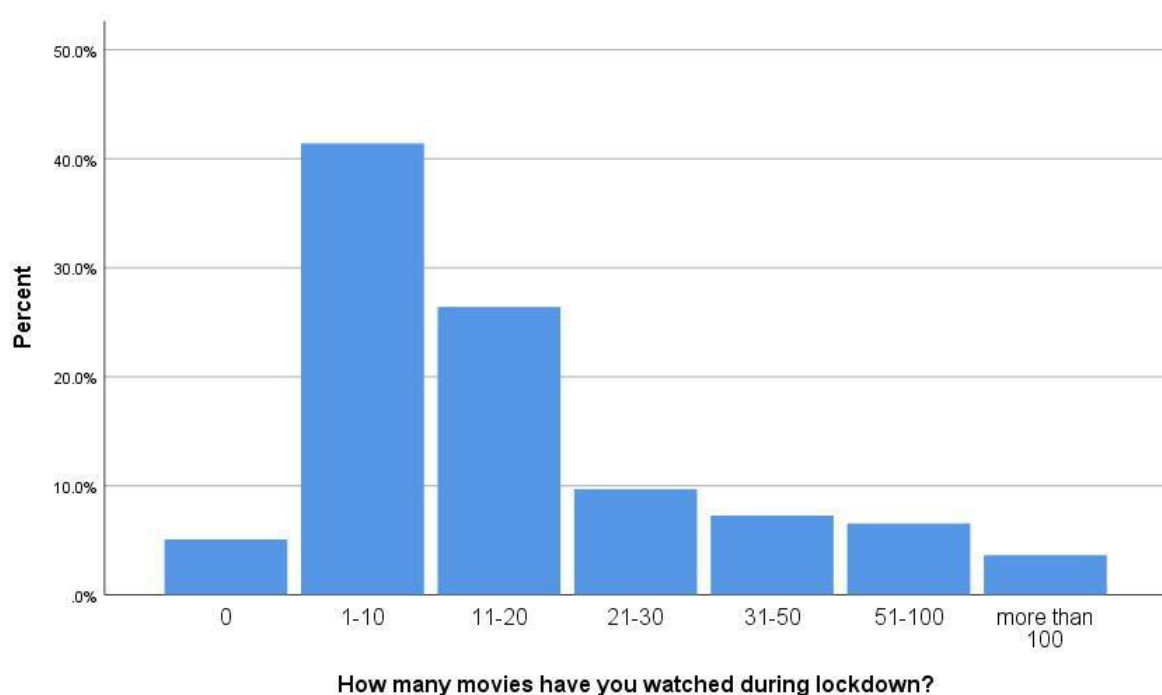


Figure 3: How many movies have you watched during lockdown?

Table 5: How much time do you spend in social media?

Frequency of usage	Number of students	Percentage
I don't use social media daily	8	1.9
Less than 1 hour daily	6	1.5
1-2 hours daily	50	12.1
3-4 hours daily	128	31.0
5-6 hours daily	83	20.1
7-8 hours daily	46	11.1
9-12 hours daily	14	3.4
More than 12 hours daily	10	2.4
I keep checking on different social media all the time I am awake.	68	16.5
Total	413	100.0

The study finds that 128 students among 413 participants that amounts up to 31 percent students use social media for 3-4 hours daily during lockdown period. 20.1 percent student use social media for 5-6 hours daily and 16.5 percent keep checking on different social media all the time they are awake. 1.5 percent use for less than 1 hour, 12.1 percent use for 1-2 hours, 11.1 percent use for 7-8 hours, 3.4 percent use for 9-12 hours and 2.4 percent student use social media for more than 12 hours daily. Only 1.9 percent said they did not use social media on a daily basis during lockdown period.

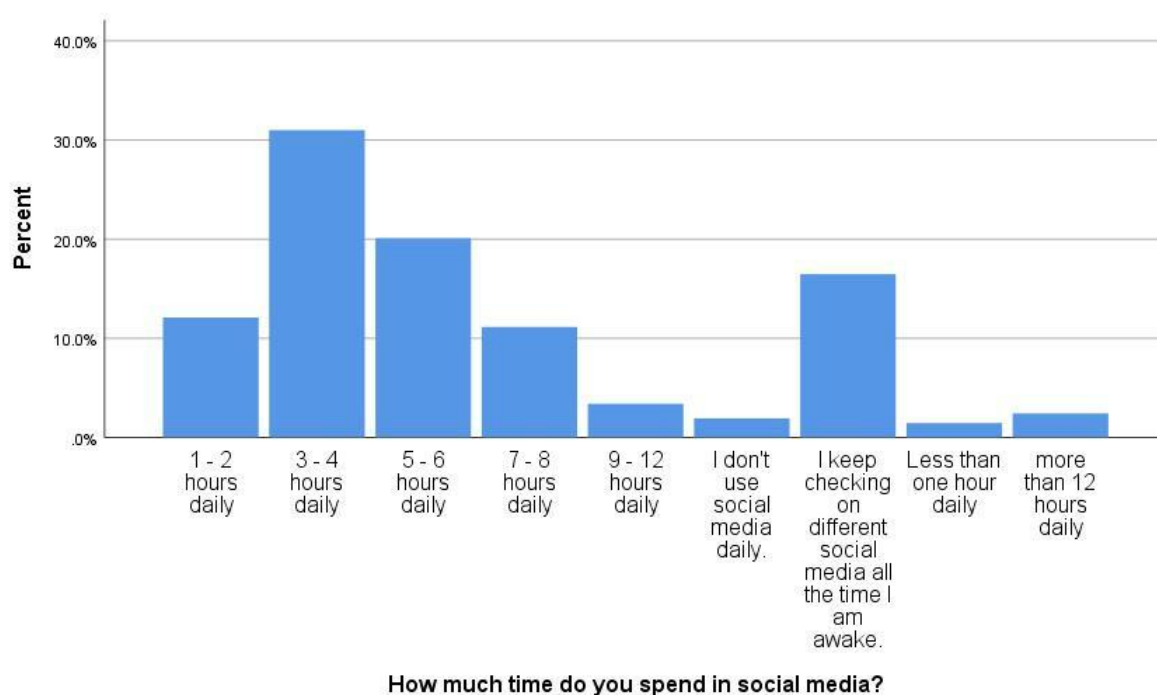


Figure 4: How much time do you spend in social media?

Table 6: How much time do you spend watching Netflix?

Frequency of usage	Number of students	Percentage
1-2 hours daily	46	11.1
3-4 hours daily	42	10.2
5-6 hours daily	24	5.8
7-8 hours daily	9	2.2
9-12 hours daily	3	.7
I don't watch Netflix daily.	67	16.2
I never watch Netflix.	209	50.6
Less than one hour daily.	13	3.1
Total	413	100.0

The study finds that 209 students among 413 participants that amounts up to 50.6 percent students never watch Netflix during lockdown period. 11.1 percent student watch Netflix for 1-2 hours daily, 10.2 percent watch for 3-4 hours, 5.8 percent watch for 5-6 hours, 2.2 percent watch for 7-8 hours, 0.7 percent watch for 9-12 hours and 3.1 percent student watch Netflix for less than one hour daily. 16.2 percent said they did not watch Netflix on a daily basis during lockdown period.

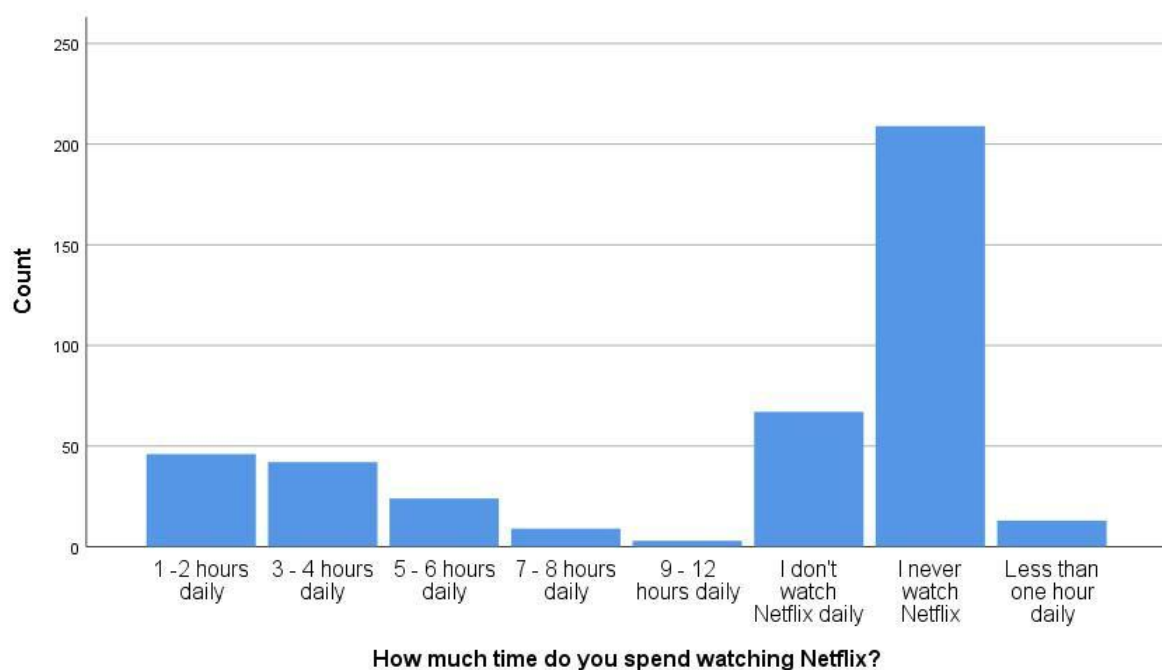


Figure 5: How much time do you spend watching Netflix?

Table 7: Reading books has helped me release stress during lockdown.

Reading books has helped me release stress during lockdown.	Number of Students	Percentage	Total
Strongly Agree	96	23.2	52
Partially Agree	119	28.8	
Strongly Disagree	6	1.5	3.7
Partially Disagree	9	2.2	
Neutral	95	23.0	44.3
I did not read any book during lockdown.	88	21.3	
Total	413	100.0	100

The study finds that 52 percent students strongly or partially agree that reading books has helped them release stress during lockdown. Only 3.7 percent students strongly or partially disagree with the notion. 44.3 percent students either expressed a neutral position or did not read any books during lockdown.

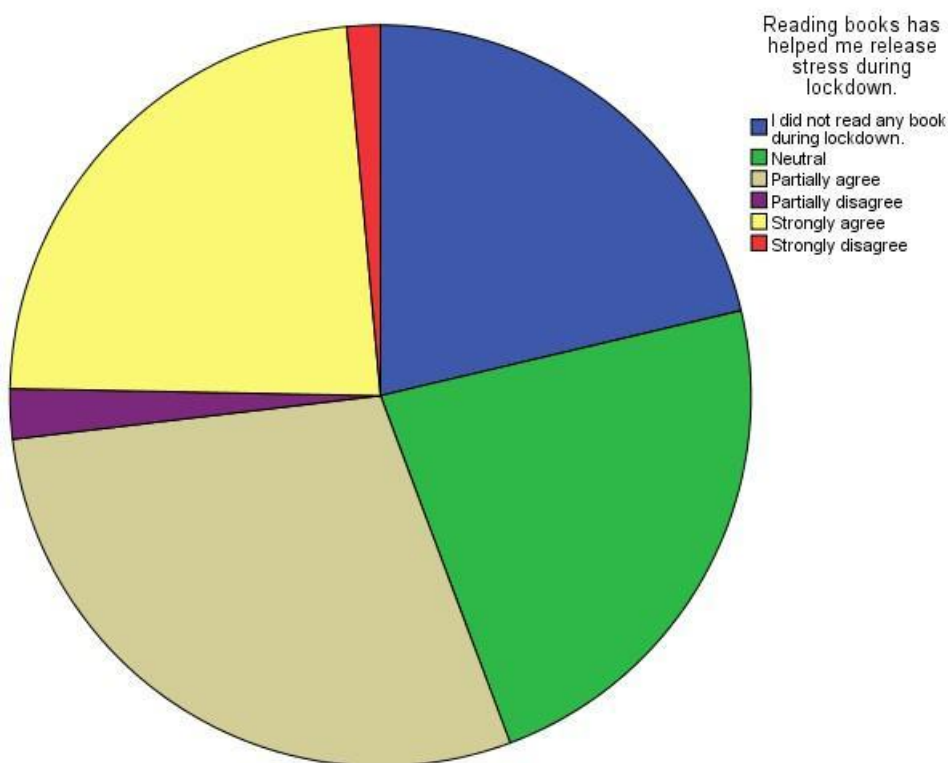


Figure 6: Reading books has helped me release stress during lockdown.

Table 8: Watching movies has helped me to release stress during lockdown.

Watching movies has helped me to release stress during lockdown.	Number of Students	Percentage	Total
Strongly Agree	150	36.3	72.6
Partially Agree	150	36.3	
Strongly Disagree	9	2.2	3.7
Partially Disagree	6	1.5	
Neutral	83	20.1	23.7
I did not watch any movie during lockdown.	15	3.6	
Total	413	100.0	100

The study finds that 72.6 percent students strongly or partially agree that watching movies has helped them to release stress during lockdown. Only 3.7 percent students strongly or partially disagree with the notion. 23.7 percent students either expressed a neutral position or did not watch any movies during lockdown.

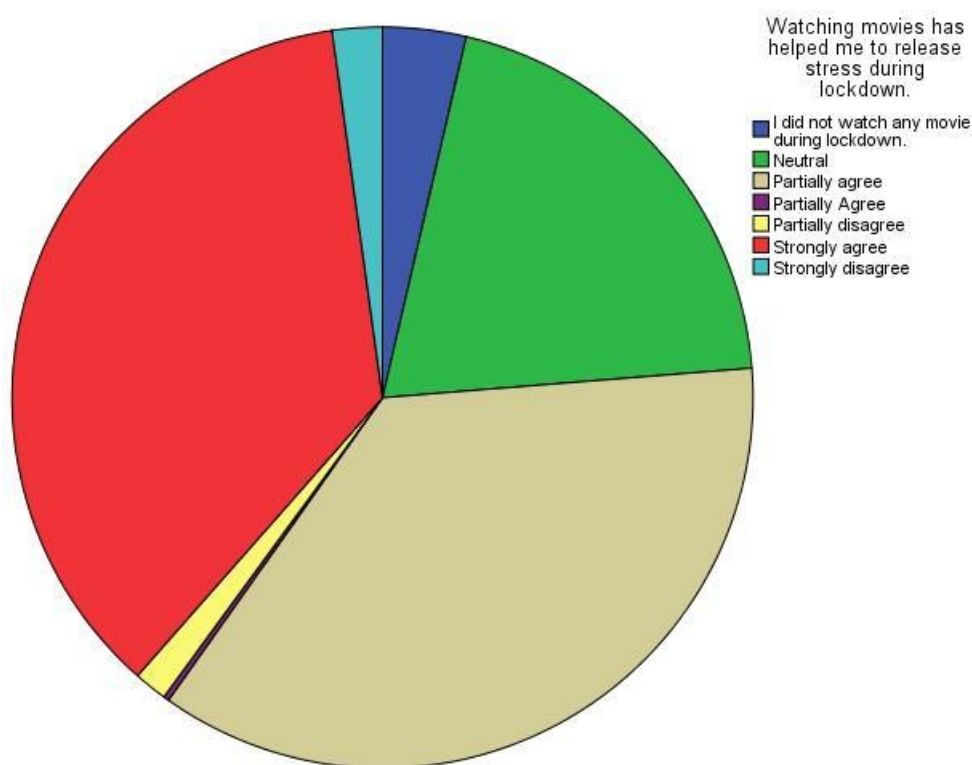


Figure 7: Watching movies has helped me to release stress during lockdown.

Table 9: Watching movies has helped me to cope with anxiety during lockdown.

Watching movies has helped me to cope with anxiety during lockdown.	Number of Students	Percentage	Total
Strongly Agree	96	23.3	64.5
Partially Agree	170	41.2	
Strongly Disagree	10	2.4	5.5
Partially Disagree	13	3.1	
Neutral	110	26.6	30.0
I did not watch any movie during lockdown.	14	3.4	
Total	413	100.0	100

The study finds that 64.5 percent students strongly or partially agree that watching movies has helped them to cope with anxiety during lockdown. Only 5.5 percent students strongly or partially disagree with the notion. 30 percent students either expressed a neutral position or did not watch any movies during lockdown.

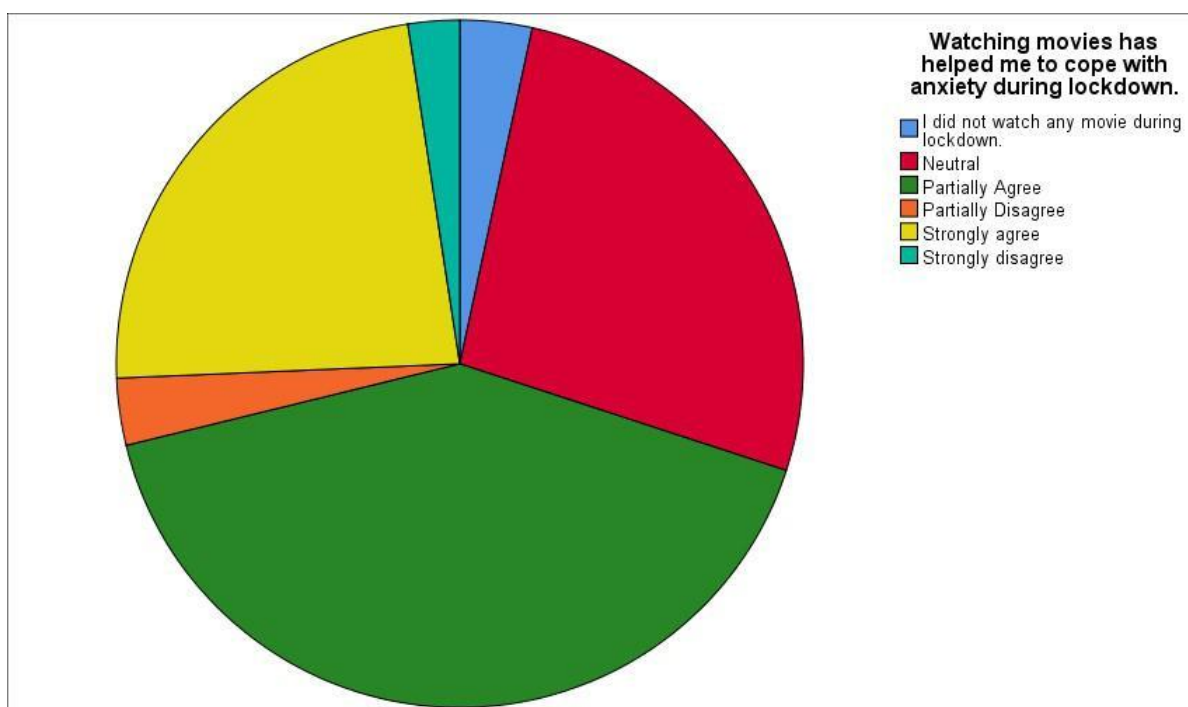


Figure 8: Watching movies has helped me to cope with anxiety during lockdown.

Table 10: Watching movies has distracted me from threat of corona virus during lockdown.

Watching movies has distracted me from threat of corona virus during lockdown.	Number of Students	Percentage	Total
Strongly Agree	109	26.4	56.4
Partially Agree	124	30.0	

Table 10 continued from previous page

Watching movies has distracted me from threat of corona virus during lockdown.	Number of Students	Percentage	Total
Strongly Disagree	21	5.1	10.4
Partially Disagree	22	5.3	
Neutral	123	29.8	33.2
I did not watch any movie during lockdown.	14	3.4	
Total	413	100.0	100

The study finds that 56.4 percent students strongly or partially agree that watching movies has distracted them from threat of corona virus during lockdown. Only 10.4 percent students strongly or partially disagree with the notion. 33.2 percent students either expressed a neutral position or did not watch any movies during lockdown.

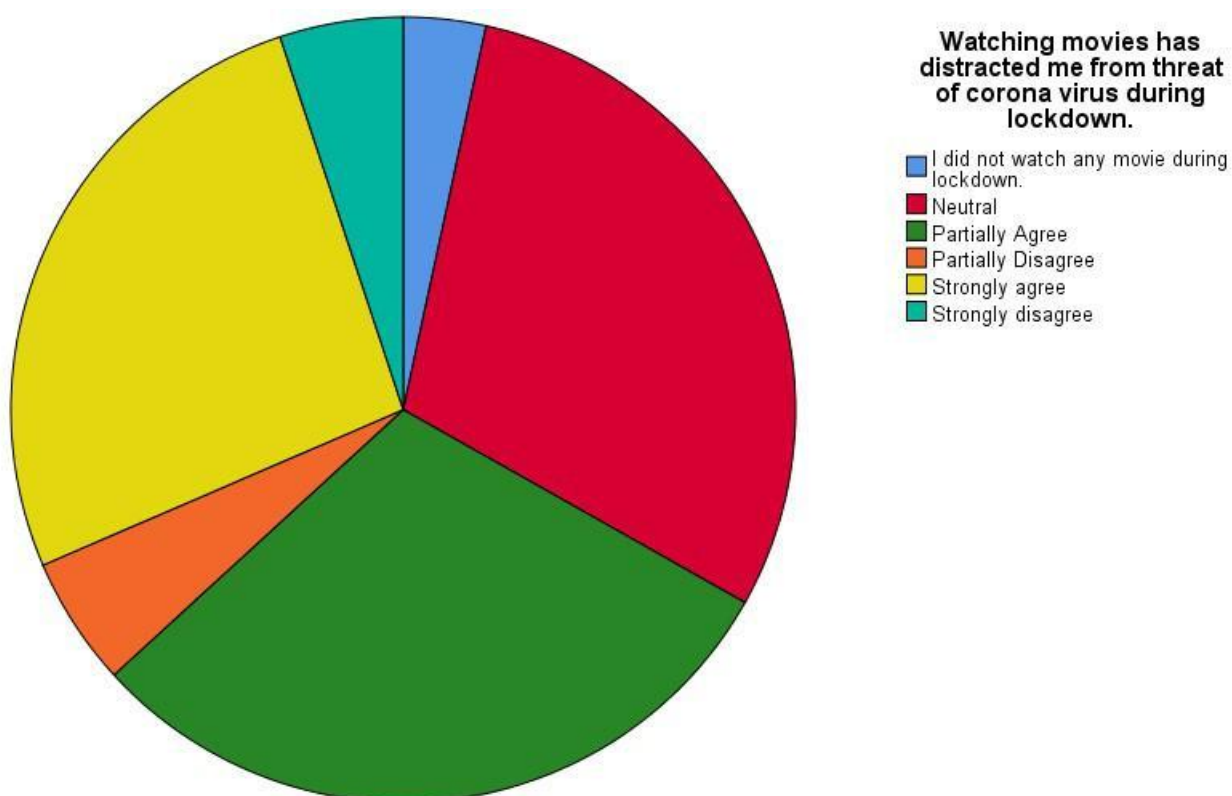


Figure 9: Watching movies has distracted me from threat of corona virus during lockdown.

Table 11: Watching movies has helped me to alleviate boredom during lockdown.

Watching movies has helped me to alleviate boredom during lockdown.	Number of Students	Percentage	Total
Strongly Agree	172	41.7	74.6
Partially Agree	136	32.9	
Strongly Disagree	5	1.2	2.4
Partially Disagree	5	1.2	
Neutral	82	19.9	23.0
I did not watch any movie during lockdown.	13	3.1	
Total	413	100.0	100

The study finds that 74.6 percent students strongly or partially agree that watching movies has helped them to alleviate boredom during lockdown. Only 2.4 percent students strongly or partially disagree with the notion. 23 percent students either expressed a neutral position or did not watch any movies during lockdown.

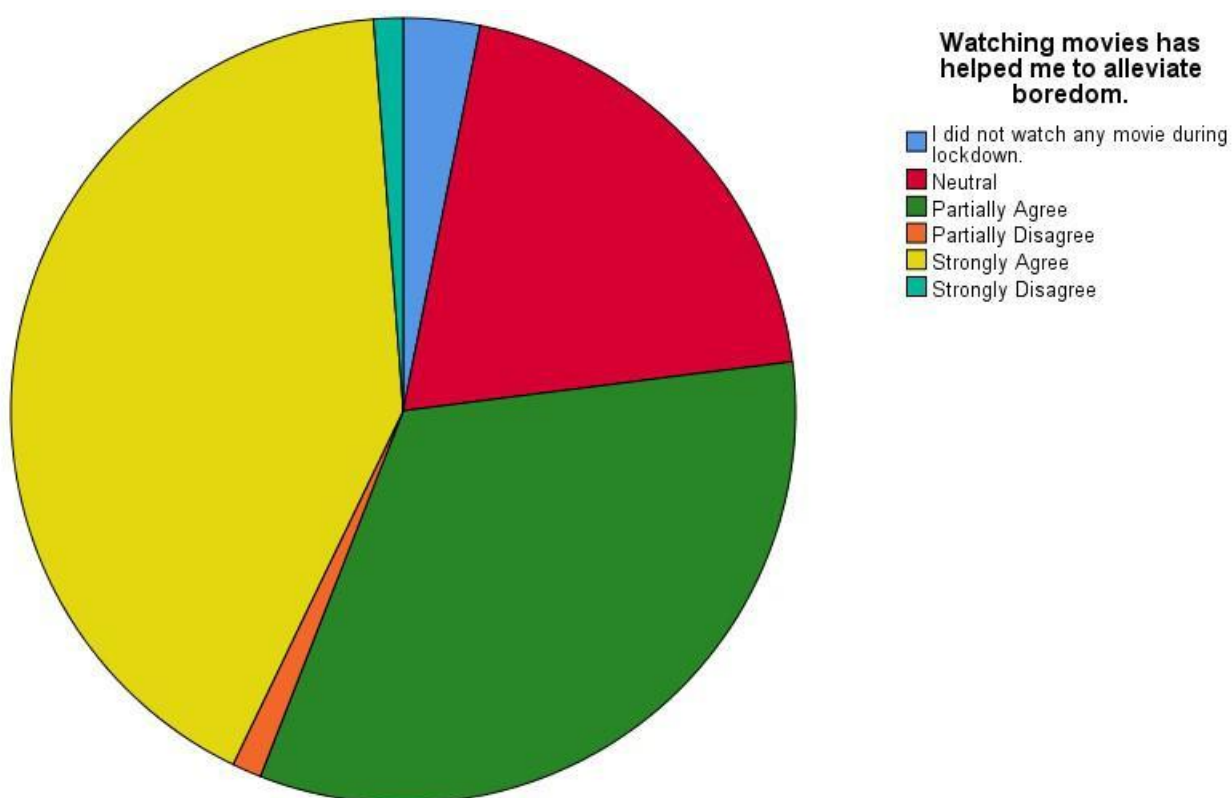


Figure 10: Watching movies has helped me to alleviate boredom during lockdown.

Table 12: Using social media has helped me release stress during lockdown.

Using social media has helped me release stress during lockdown.	Number of Students	Percentage	Total
Strongly Agree	75	18.2	53.3
Partially Agree	145	35.1	
Strongly Disagree	44	10.7	22.3
Partially Disagree	48	11.6	
Neutral	100	24.2	24.4
I did not use any social media during lockdown.	1	0.2	
Total	413	100.0	100

The study finds that 53.3 percent students strongly or partially agree that using social media has helped them release stress during lockdown. 22.3 percent students strongly or partially disagree with the notion. 24.4 percent students either expressed a neutral position or did not use any social media during lockdown.

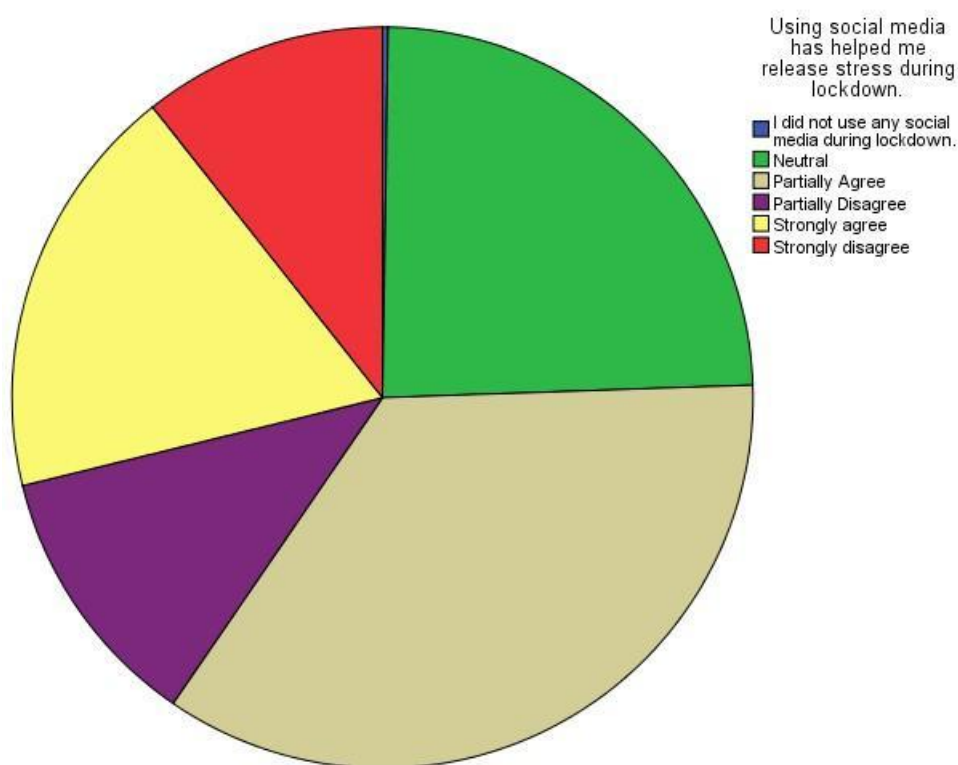


Figure 11: Using social media has helped me release stress during lockdown.

Table 13: Using social media helped me to distract myself from anxiety during lockdown.

Using social media helped me to distract myself from anxiety during lockdown.	Number of Students	Percentage	Total
Strongly Agree	89	21.6	53.8
Partially Agree	133	32.2	
Strongly Disagree	34	8.2	21.5
Partially Disagree	55	13.3	
Neutral	101	24.5	24.7
I did not use any social media during lockdown.	1	0.2	
Total	413	100.0	100

The study finds that 53.8 percent students strongly or partially agree that using social media helped them to distract themselves from anxiety during lockdown. 21.5 percent students strongly or partially disagree with the notion. 24.7 percent students either expressed a neutral position or did not use any social media during lockdown.

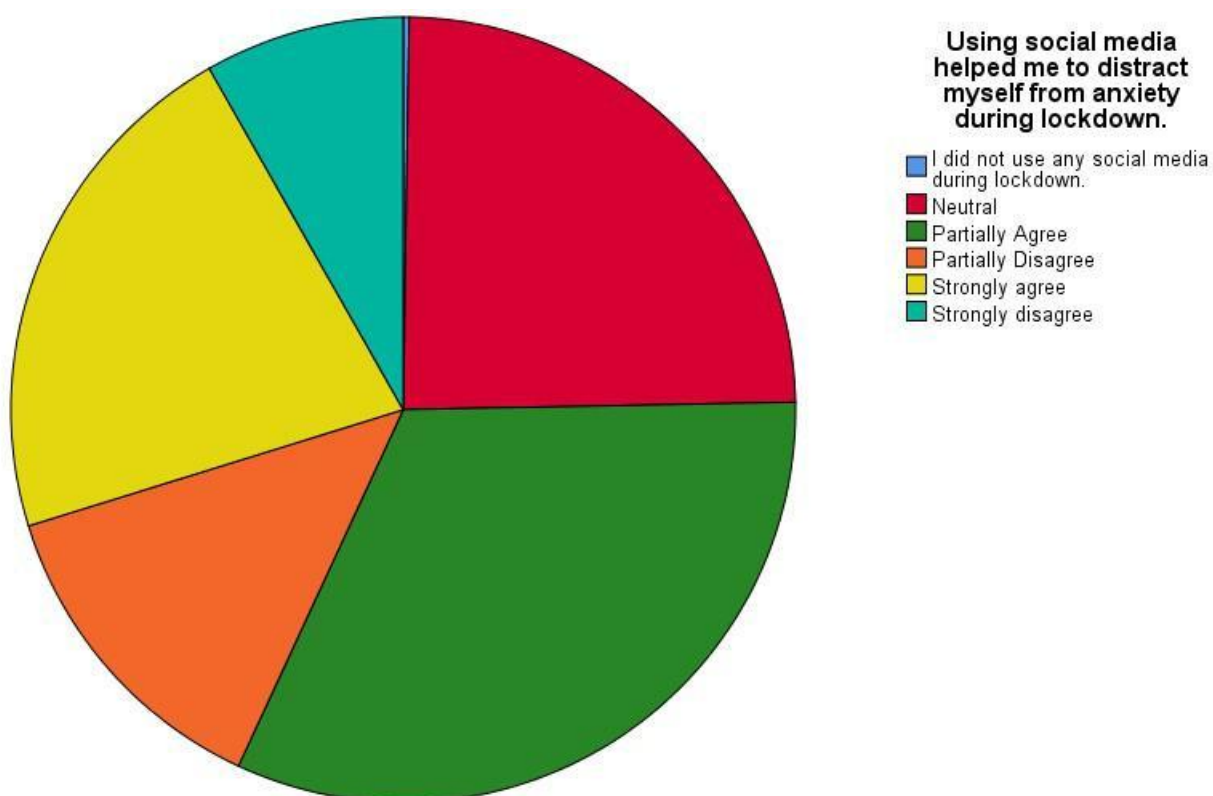


Figure 12: Using social media helped me to distract myself from anxiety during lockdown.

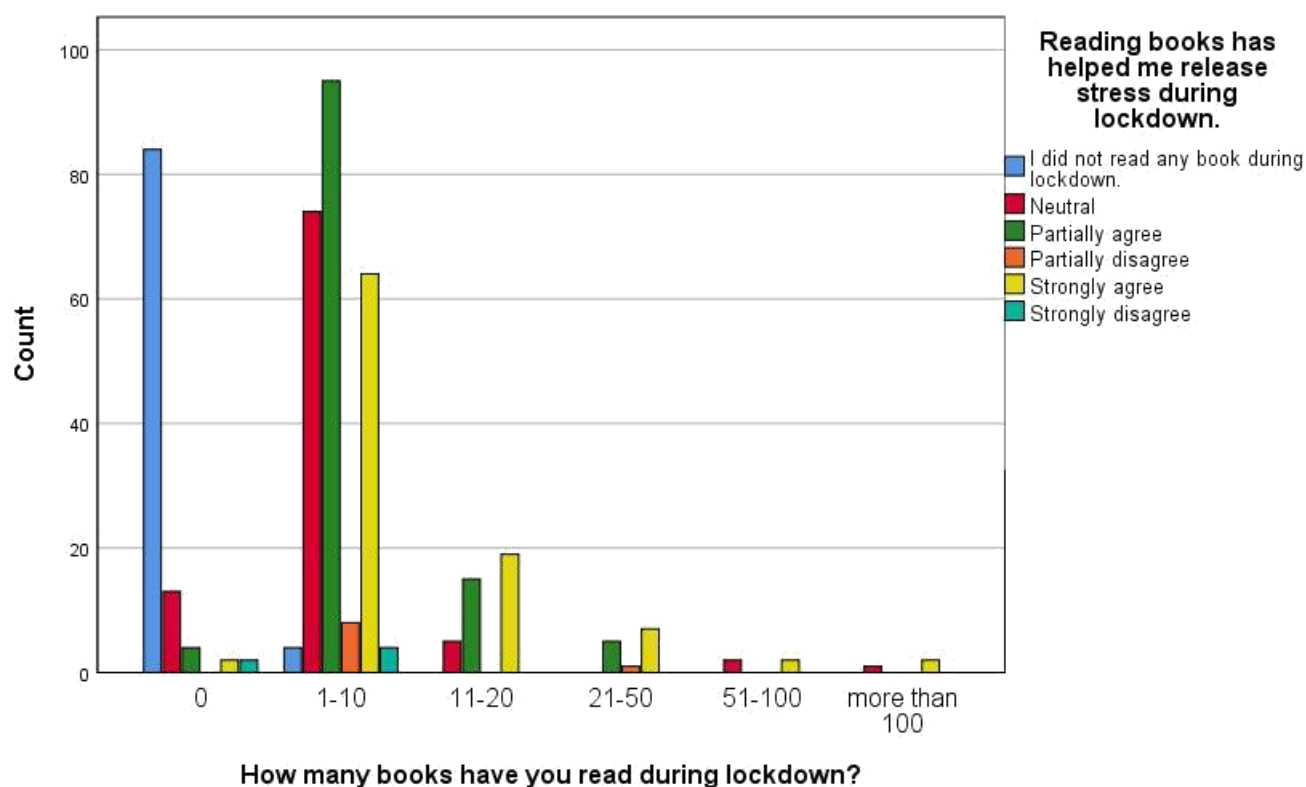


Figure 13: Relation between reading books and releasing stress

From the graph, it is visible that all categories of respondents partially or strongly agree that reading books has helped them to release stress during lockdown. From Pearson chi-square test it is also plausible that there is a statistically significant correlation between reading books and releasing stress.

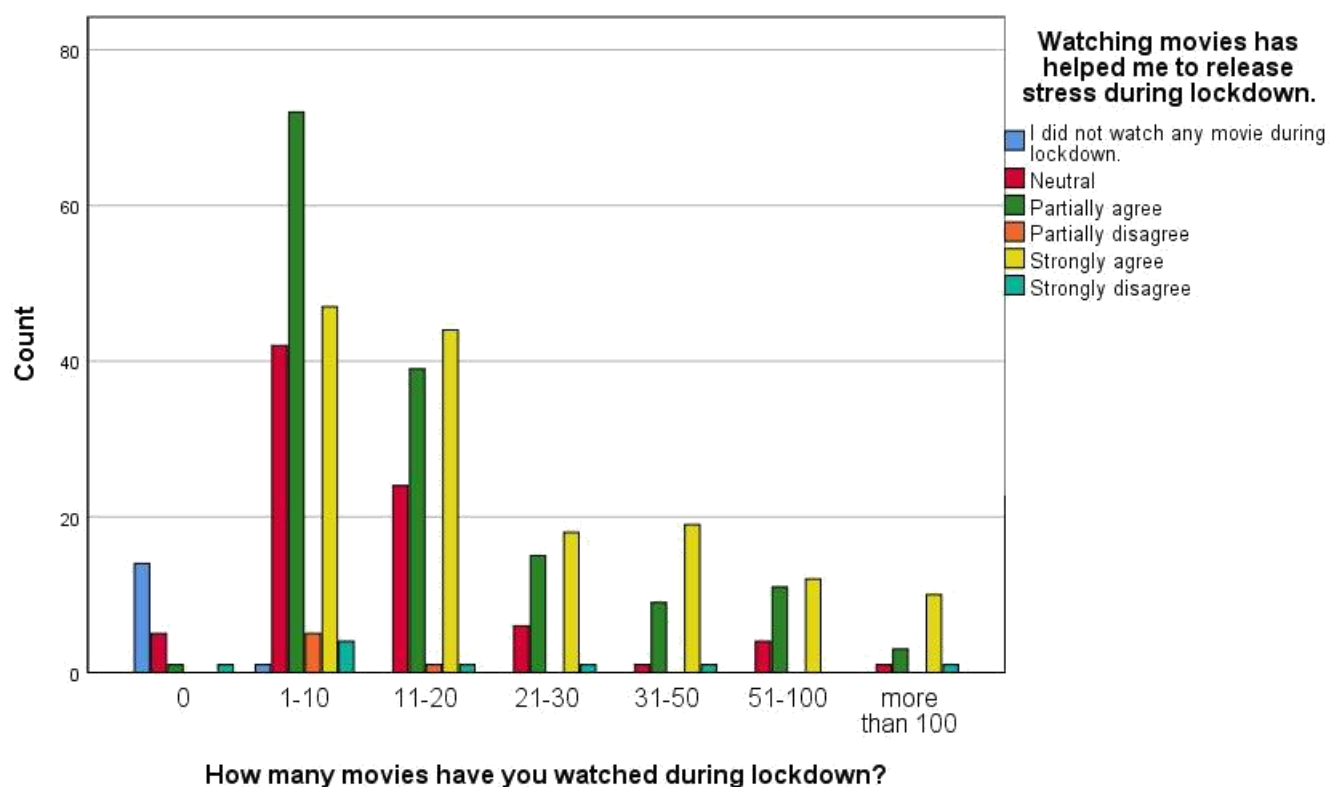


Figure 14: Relation between watching movies and releasing stress

From the graph, it is visible that all categories of respondents partially or strongly agree that watching movies has helped them to release stress during lockdown. From Pearson chi-square test it is also plausible that there is a statistically significant correlation between watching movies and releasing stress.

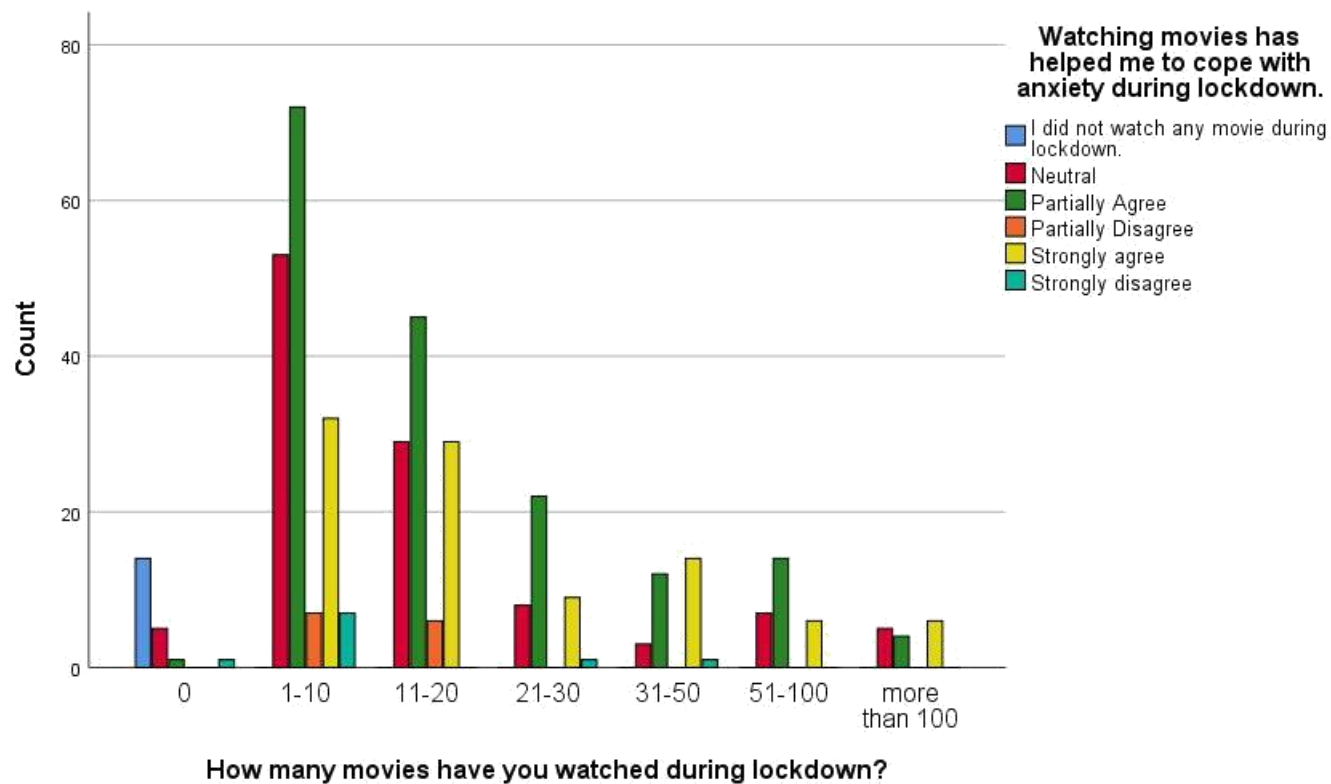


Figure 15: Relation between watching movies and coping with anxiety

From the graph and from chi-square test it is shown that there is statistically significant correlation between watching movies and coping with anxiety similar to the previous result.

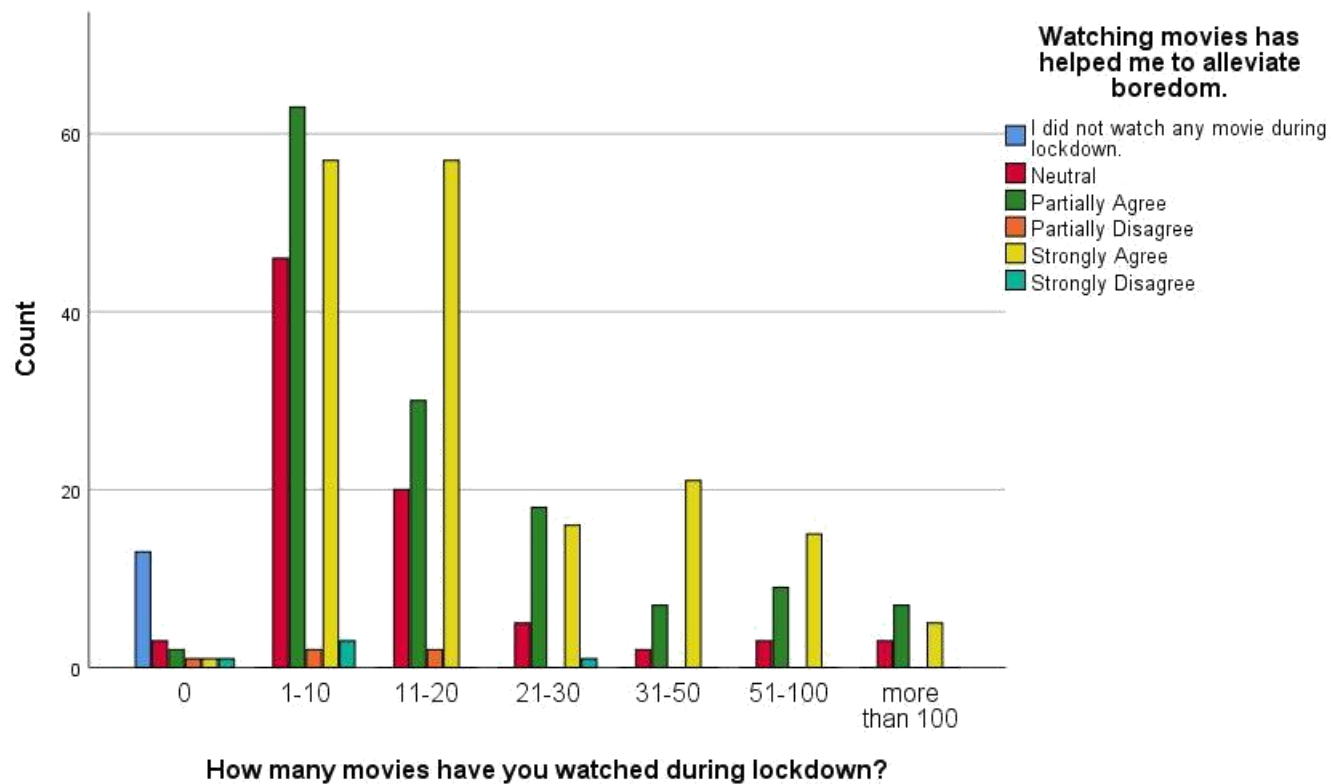


Figure 16: Relation between watching movies and alleviating boredom

From the graph and from chi-square test it is shown that there is statistically significant correlation between watching movies and alleviating boredom similar to the previous result.

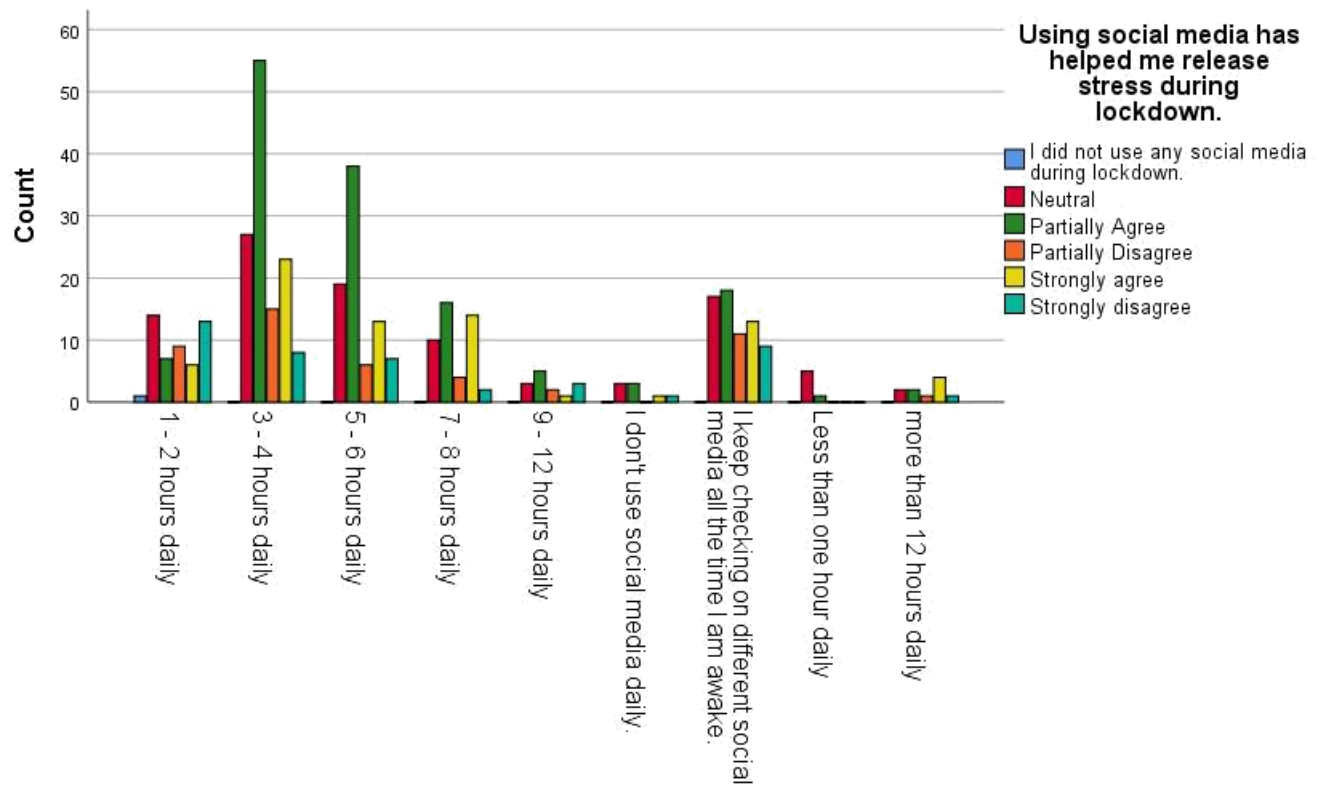


Figure 17: Relation between using social media and releasing stress

From the graph and from Pearson chi-square test it is shown that there is a statistically significant correlation between using social media and releasing stress.

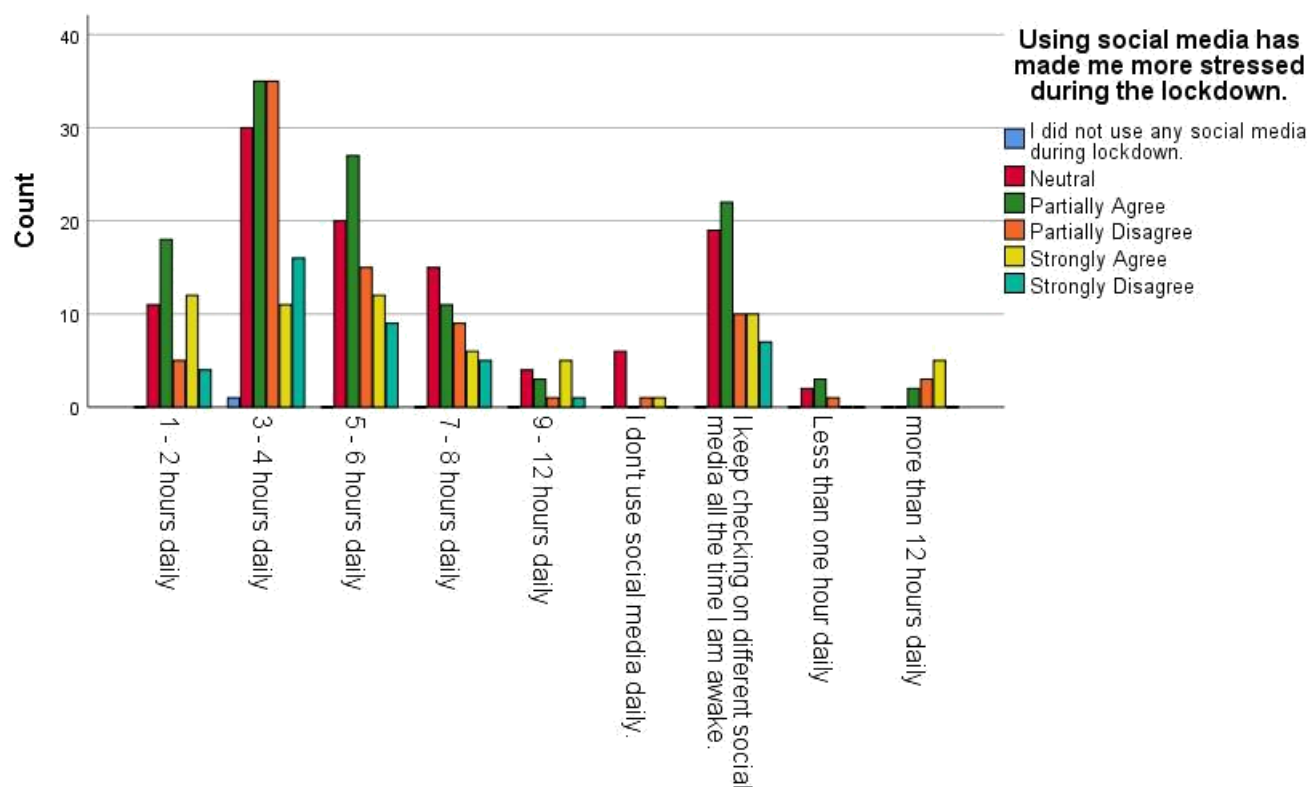


Figure 18: Relation between using social media and stress

The researchers asked a reverse question to the previous one. From the graph and from Pearson chi-square test it is verified that there is no statistically significant correlation between using social media and getting more stress.

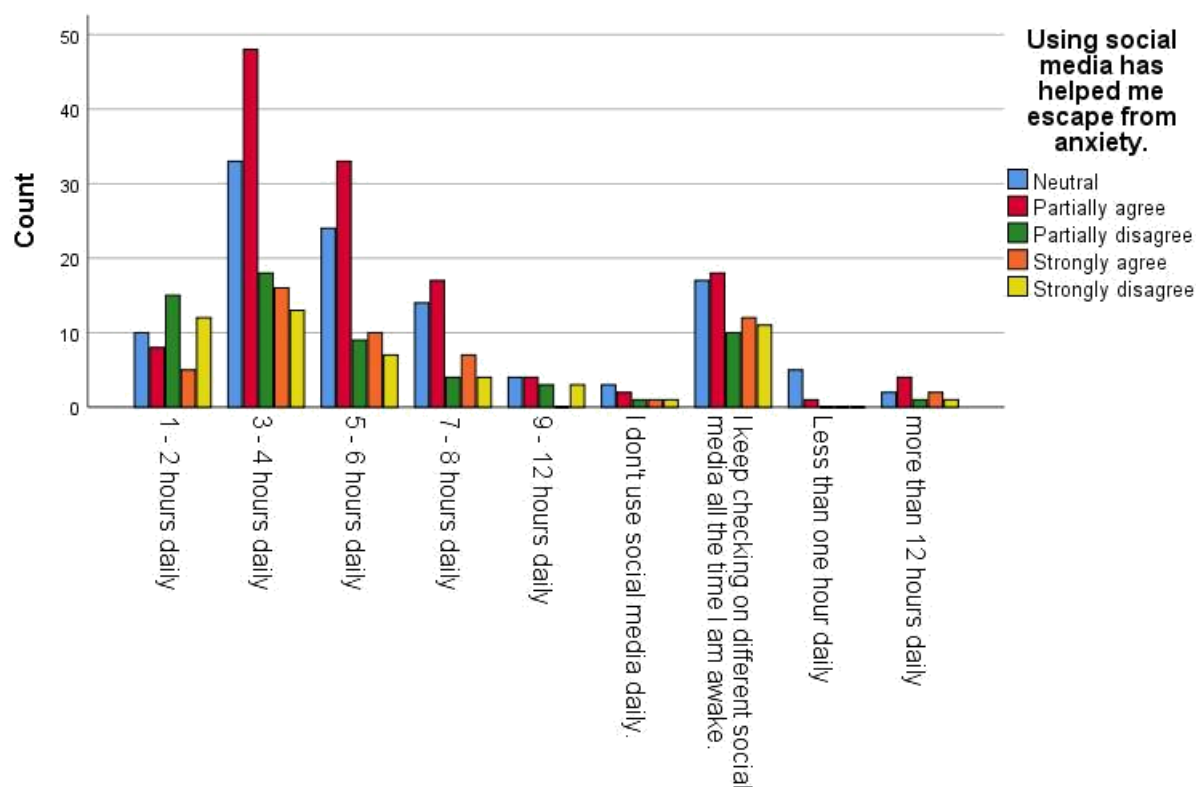


Figure 19: Relation between using social media and escaping anxiety

Similarly, the researchers have found from the graph and from chi-square test that there is no statistically significant correlation between using social media and escaping from anxiety.

RESULT

1. What is the frequency of usage of different media by Bangladeshi university students during lockdown? The study finds that the most used media during lockdown by Bangladeshi university students is social media. 84.5 percent student have said that they use social media for more than two hours daily during the lockdown period (see table 6.4). Only 1.9 percent student said that they did not use any social media during the lockdown period. The rest used social media for less than two hours daily during the period. The second most used media by Bangladeshi university students during the lockdown period according to this study is movies. 53.5 percent student have said that they watched more than 10 movies during the period (see table 6.3). Only 5.1 percent student said they did not watch any movies during this period. The rest watched less than 10 movies during this period. The third most used media by Bangladeshi university students during the lockdown period according to this study is television. 13.1 percent student have said that they watched television for more than 2 hours daily and 22.5 percent student said that they watched television for less than 2 hours daily during this period (see table 6.1). Only 9.7 percent student said that they never watched television during this period. The rest seldom watched television. The study finds that the least used media by Bangladeshi university students during the lockdown period are books and Netflix.

2. How has different media been useful during the lockdown among Bangladeshi university students? The study finds that reading books has helped 52 percent student to release stress (see table 6.6). The study also finds that watching movies has helped 72.6 percent student to release stress (see table 6.7), 64.5 percent student to cope with anxiety (see table 6.8), 56.45 percent to distract from the threat of corona virus (see table 6.9) and 74.6 percent student to alleviate boredom during lockdown (see table 6.10). Furthermore, this study finds that using social media has helped 53.3 percent student to release stress (see table 6.11) and 53.8 percent student to distract from anxiety (see table 6.12)
3. What is the influence of mass and social media on the mental health of Bangladeshi university students in these aspects during lockdown?

The study finds that reading books and watching movies have been significantly helpful for the mental health of Bangladeshi students during lockdown whereas the study has not found any significant impact of social media on the mental health of Bangladeshi university students during lockdown. The study finds that reading books and watching movies has significant correlation with releasing stress, alleviating boredom and coping with anxiety (see figure 6.13, 6.14, 6.15 and 6.16) and there is significant correlation between using social media and releasing stress (see figure 6.17), but no significant correlation is found between using social media and escaping from anxiety (see figure 6.19). Moreover, the study finds no significant correlation between using social media and getting more stressed (see figure 6.18).

CONCLUSION

The researchers think the reason for reading books and watching Netflix being the least used media during the lockdown period is different for the two media. Reading books is becoming an unpopular pass-time among Bangladeshi university students with each day whereas watching Netflix has not yet become a popular pastime among them. The researchers predict though reading books has proven to be helpful for the mental health of Bangladeshi university students, the frequency of reading books will not increase in the near future in both print and e-book format. However, the frequency of watching Netflix is likely to rise as it is becoming popular among many Bangladeshi university students. In the meanwhile, using social media, watching movies and television have been the most used media during the lockdown period and these will continue to be the most used media in the near future. The researchers recommend conducting further study on the impact of social media on the mental health of Bangladeshi university students as they could not reach to any particular conclusion regarding this matter through this research.

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