

Impact of Social Networking Sites on Human Basic Privacy Rights

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Abstract *In recent era, Social networking sites (SNSs) have become an important source of communication and also became a matter of interest for researchers in several disciplines such as communications, technology and sociology. These Social networking sites including Facebook, Twitter etc. often reveal private data through the enclosure of public profiles, photographs, videos and messages send to the family, friends and general public. As it was not possible to conduct a survey in complete population, therefore sample of 250 respondents (50% males & 50% females) was selected from different universities and colleges of Lahore, city of Pakistan. In the process of survey, questionnaire technique has been used to obtain the quantitative data. The findings revealed that Social Networking Sites significantly violate the human basic privacy rights. Majority of the respondents were of the view that privacy rights are harmed by SNSs. 10.4% respondents were strongly disagreeing about the statement that Facebook privacy is a real problem, 18.0% were disagree, 20.4% were neutral about the problem while 38.4% said they are agreed and 12.8% were strongly agree. The results also suggested that social networking sites leak personal data and also become a reason for disclosure of personal information.*

Key Words: Social Networking Sites, Privacy Rights, Disclosure of Personal Information

Introduction

The wide adoption of internet in this era of technology has contributed to online Social networking sites (SNS)'s thriving popularity which can be seen through the attention given to such sites receives from both the academia and media. Now a day, majority of young generation is moving towards social media from electronic media. This obsession of social media has put a question about its influence on society while it is obvious that the SNSs affect the lives of people and their living style in several ways. Mahat and Mundhe (2014), conferred the burning issue of today's era that has been overlooked in recent days is the impact of social networking sites on the varying behavior of the youth. Its impact on users can be both good and awful because social media is the most powerful source all around the world including Pakistan. Social networks are actually a platform of online community to share information, ideas and anything what they want. Some of the users share their private data which includes demography, contacts, photos, location, and association with others without secure considerations. Therefore, social networks have a heap of private data in it.

There is no doubt the advancement in information technology brought a great change in social activities. But with this advancement in technology the major issue which has been arisen is the "security and privacy" of sensitive information. The "privacy paradox" depicts people's willingness to unveil personal information on SNSs regardless of stating high levels of concern. Mostly Privacy is considered as a universal human right, now what is believed to be "private" fluctuate from person to person, time to time, society to society and culture to culture. Moreover, the word "privacy" is so confusing that it may represent totally different thing to a lawyer than it does to amateur. According to Spinelli (2010) through vigilant scrutiny it can be determined how courts and policymakers can resolve these problems and can create more comprehensible definition of the legal obligations

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put on Facebook and MySpace. And after identifying privacy abuse on social media, Congress can apply more effective laws which will give higher security to individual privacy.

An editorial by Jessica Sidman mention different aspects of the Facebook. This social networking site is similar to other SNS which permit an individual to make a profile, look for other users with same hobbies and interests, and eventually add them in friend list. It is different because, according to Chris Hughes (Facebook spokesperson) the groups and social structure on the site model structures that are already exist in a physical sense. Due to its fame, Facebook earned an investment of \$13 million by Accel Partners (Sidman 2005). Furthermore, Chris says that Facebook regularly take delivery of several letters saying that the site has facilitated users to meet old friends or set new relationships. Powale and Bhutkar (2013) made an overview of privacy in social media. According to them, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are most familiar social networking sites and the privacy of such SNS users is the major concern today. Gangopadhyay and Dhar (2014) examined the effect of SNSs on the privacy of teenagers. Now a day, Social websites like Facebook, MySpace and Twitter has been receiving immense popularity between youngsters.

Shabir and Hameed (2014) as well scrutinized the impact of SNSs on youngsters through questionnaire technique. For this purpose, 300 sampled teenagers fill the questionnaire and rate of return was 97% after fill up the questionnaire. The result shows that bulk of the respondent are agree with the influences of social media. Facebook was declared as most favorite website by the respondents and the main problem which they face during the use of SNSs was unwanted messages. As we know, concerns related to human behavior have a critical role in the development of social media. For this purpose, Gupta and Dhami (2015) investigate the impact of privacy concerns of users on usage behavior and information sharing on social media like Facebook. This research work was empirically tested by using the extended TAM and social exchange theory. The finding shows that the users who have control over their personal information have more belief in Facebook. Furthermore, result suggested that perceived privacy and perceived security are precursors of perceived trust whereas there is a strong relationship between perceived trust and perceived privacy.

Social networking sites such as Facebook often reveal private data through the enclosure of public profiles, photographs, videos and messages send to the family, friends and general public. Acquisti and Gross (2006) find out that Facebook users stated greater levels of concern for issues related to privacy than for concerns linked to terrorism and the environment; despite of these concerns, users continued to reveal personal information on Facebook, including their birth dates, gender and political views.

A renowned tracking service Hitwise stated that Facebook alone contains around 7.07 percent of all internet visits (Reinan 2010). Moreover, My Space and Facebook consists of an approximately 249 million distinctive visitors on a monthly basis and on average Facebook users spend about 6 hours and 30 minutes on the site every month (ComScore 2008). While BBC news research (2013) discuss that 67 percent Facebook users, very familiar social media portico consists of students and the youth. In this way, it complements the fact that youth and students absorb more effect of social media. The unpleasant use of social media happens when students engage themselves in corrupt activities on social media, posting of futile information, and sharing of such types of pictures that are harmful to national pride and overseas association of country (Sekho, 2013).

Due to the open nature of social media seekers can easily found their targets by powerful tools and gathered information about their targets with the help of profile information, contacts, pictures, videos and joined groups. All these traits have raised considerable privacy and security concerns for users of these social networking sites.

Privacy Issues

The popularity of social networking sites has raised several privacy issues which ultimately affect the privacy rights of its users. These issues are:

Security Risks

The increased use of social media also raised numerous security risks. These risks are scam, identity theft, cyber bullying and phishing etc. individuals give their personal information on SNS such as Twitter, Facebook and MySpace. This information is amassed in SNS and due to inefficient security techniques executed in these sites, personal data is not secure.

Phishing

Phishing is just like fishing in a pond, but instead of catching fish Phishers try to steal private information. Phishing in Social media started in 2007. The main objective of Phishing is to spoil economically. Phishers strive to recover the profile information to know about the financial information of the users.

Identity Theft

Most of the hackers attack with the help of application in which they ask consent for accessing the information given in the profile of Facebook etc. When a user permits to do so, they received all the personal information and can easily mistreat it without the knowledge of users.

Profiling Risk

It is the menace linked with profile cloning. The hackers received the personal information of the users and create a clone of the profile. They do it for several reasons; they want to make bad social image of a user or for other objectives like knowing about the friends of casualty.

Fake Product Sale

The hackers advertise on the social networking sites for selling the products on cheap prices or offering large discount and when the user clicks on the advertisement their profile became hacked and their personal information goes to the hackers.

Statement of the Problem

There are many problems around us which we should to think ahead and act. Social Networking websites offer a platform for debate on several burning issues. One such major concern that has been concealed in today's picture is the impact of social networking sites in the violation of human basic privacy rights. This research has been conducted on youth. Before people try to keep their personal data private but now they like to post it public and screening wall posts, status updates, tweets and in fact every pleasure of their lives. In this way, we are violating our privacy and liberty to attract online users and even unknowns by ourselves.

That is why the researcher is concerned to investigate the impact of social networking sites (SNSs) on human basic privacy rights. This study examines whether or not these sites are proved to be harmful to privacy of the people.

Research Objectives

The main research objectives are:

- To examine human basic privacy rights in online social networks, such as facebook.
- To evaluate the impact of SNSs on privacy rights of the people.
- To explore the role of SNSs in violating the privacy rights among people.

The concerned of the scholar is to perceive the impact of SNSs such as Facebook on basic privacy rights among the people of Pakistan.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses are planned for the current exploration by the scholar which are the followings;

H1: Usage of Social Networking Sites is associated with revelation of personal information.

H2: Usage of Social Networking Sites harms basic human privacy rights.

Rationale of the Study

Social networking sites become very popular among people especially Facebook, due to the popularity people use such social media without knowing the flaws. People disturbed their privacy by sharing their events and plans willingly and unwillingly in craze of social media usage.

This research is pragmatic to pertain SNSs in right direction for public. Furthermore, it creates understanding among people that the correct use of social network become a solid instrument to educate, inform and trained them but along with it, these sites as well effect their basic privacy rights. With the help of this study, users may protect their basic privacy rights by securing their accounts and profiles through special precautionary measures.

Theoretical Framework

Following theory provides the theoretical framework to the current study.

Uses and Gratification Theory

The major purpose of Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) is to seek out the effect of the social media on people. It explained the fact that how people utilize social media for their own need and get gratification when their needs get fulfilled. The basic idea of uses and gratifications theory is that individuals will look for media among participants that accomplish their desires and direct to ultimate satisfaction and satisfaction (Lariscy et al., 2011).

In other words, the major focus of this theory is what public do with media rather than what social media does to them. UGT diverges from other theories because it has a user/audience centered approach. It investigates how individuals intentionally find out media to perform specific requirements or goals such as amusement, recreation, or socializing.

Due to the importance of UGT different researchers uses it in their studies. Shabir and Hameed (2014) correlates their study "The Impact of Social Media on Youth: A Case Study of Bahawalpur City" with UGT in the sense that when user use social media he/she would like to get more and more gratification, after that the usage of media and its influence on its users can be seen easily. So, it has diverse consequences on its users that can be positive or negative.

Whiting and Williams (2013) as well explore the significance of uses and gratifications theory to social network. For this purpose, researchers have conducted an exploratory study and 25 in-depth interviews were taken with individuals who make use of social networking sites. The study found ten uses and gratifications for using social network. These are information seeking, entertainment, social dealings convenience utility, information sharing, recreation, pass time, communicatory utility, knowledge about others and expression of opinion.

Methodology

The survey method is applied to collect the quantitative data from a large number of representatives. The basic aim of adopting survey method was that it will help researcher in gathering information unswervingly from the university and college students that are using social networking sites and affecting their personal privacy in any aspect. The effects on the behavior and attitude of college and university students have hence sorted out through the information provided on a quantitative scale.

Due to the time limitation and budget constraint only few universities such as Superior University Lahore, Punjab University, Lahore Garrison University and Government College Township Lahore were covered in this the study. In the current research, the sample size comprises of the 250 respondents.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

This work is about the impact of social networking websites on human basic privacy rights of the people. To examine the impact of SNS on privacy rights, the researcher has chosen sample size which has dissimilar demography.

Researcher has chosen demography of the sample gender and the gender included both male and female.

Overall sample size comprises of 250 respondents. For demographic for gender 125(50%) were male and 125(50%) were female respondents.

H1: Usage of Social Networking Sites is associated with disclosure of personal information.

Table 1. Chi-square Test for Association: Usage of social Networking site’s Association with Disclosure of Personal Information

Items	Variables	Chi-square	D.F	Conclusion
Facebook disclose personal information	Pearson Chi-Square	21.809	12	Significant
Facebook an unsecure SNS	Pearson Chi-Square	35.571	12	Significant
	Total Respondents	250	-	-

The chi-square test has been applied in the table 4.4 and the values of chi-square ($X^2 = 21.809$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.05$), ($X^2 = 35.571$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.05$) subsequently against the questions whether Facebook disclose personal information and whether Facebook is an unsecure SNS indicates that there is a significant association among usage of social networking site and disclosure of personal information. Chi-square value in the above table illustrates that the H1 is accepted at significance level $p < 0.05$.

Chi-square test has been applied to examine the association between the usages of social networking sites and disclosure of personal information. In the table 1 value of chi-square indicates that there is a significant association between them which approves the hypothesis.

H2: Usage of Social Networking Sites harms basic human privacy rights.

Table 2. Chi-Square Test for Association: Usage of Social Networking site’s Association with Harms Human Privacy Rights

Items	Variables	Chi-square	D.F	Conclusion
Facebook privacy is a real problem	Pearson Chi-Square	21.200	12	Significant
Facebook is responsible for fake identities	Pearson Chi-Square	14.842	12	Significant
	Total Respondents	250	-	-

The result of chi-square test in the table 4.5 shows the following values of chi-square ($X^2 = 21.200$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.05$), ($X^2 = 14.842$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.05$) subsequently against the questions whether Facebook privacy is a real problem and whether Facebook is responsible for fake identities or not. The findings indicate that there is a significant association between usage of social networking site harms human basic privacy rights. Chi-square value in the table illustrates that the H2 is accepted at significance level $p < 0.05$.

According to the table 2 there is a significant association between usages of Social Networking Site harms human basic privacy rights. The value of Chi-Square in the table determined that H2 is accepted.

Limitations

This study has its limitations. Due to the time limitation and budget constraint only few universities and colleges were covered in this research work. A larger and diverse assortment of respondents would be more beneficial for future researches. Moreover, the correlation and chi-squared analysis used in this study no doubt provide a good starting point for research into the impact of social networking sites on human basic privacy rights.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this era of internet, online Social Networking Sites are much vast and much slacker than real life. Majority of the users of such social networks have a large number of friends in their profiles but hardly few one’s are actual friends most of them are totally unknown and still personal information is publicly available on their profiles. Based on this sensitive information, users of these sites expose themselves to various privacy and security risks. Moreover, there are several security, seclusion and trust related issues that need to be tackle and solved for the users of SNS. First, the personal information provided in the profiles of SNS users can lead to numerous threats such as phishing, identity theft and profile hacking. Second, the features of social networking websites such as newsfeeds and creation of groups to address issues can make private information easily available and perceptible to other users. However, social network operators have offered several security tools for protecting the seclusion of users. Regardless of these features, the effect of privacy and security on sharing personal information needs to be addressed.

That's why researcher of this study aimed to observe the impact of Social Networking Sites on human basic privacy rights. Several studies have been previously done on the issue of privacy in social media in western countries. (Azimi & Ghomi 2011; Powale & Bhutkar 2013; Gangopadhyay et al. 2014) examined numerous issues related to privacy in social media and found that social networking sites significantly effects privacy of individuals. Mohtasebi & Borazjani (2010) as well investigated the privacy in Facebook and their result suggested that teenagers want to share their personal information on Facebook and secondly they believe that they are well aware about privacy threats but they still did not use any preventive measures. Mostly, the work on the social media and privacy concerns have been done in western countries but this study raised that issue with reference to Pakistan. The survey data is collected from several universities and colleges of Pakistan to examine the impact of Social Networking Sites (SNS) in the domain of Human basic privacy rights. The social networking site which is used in this research as a tool is Facebook. The findings suggest that Social Networking Sites significantly violate the human basic privacy rights. Hence, it is necessary when a user involves in the social networking site he/she should be aware and vigilant of the privacy and security risks. At the end, the only solution of SNS privacy threats is to be well aware of the ways in which one can get be deceived.

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