

## IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNS) ON HUMAN BASIC PRIVACY RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

*Use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) has become an integral part of communication and lifestyle of people in today's world. Because of the wide range of services offered by SNSs mostly for free of cost, users occupy more time on Social Networking Sites than other recreational activities. Since many of the users are not aware of the data thefts associated with information sharing, they freely share their personal information with SNSs. Therefore, a study was intended in an attempt 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 the University and college students. The investigator has used the survey research method and data was collected through the questionnaire method and interview method. 250 respondents fill the questionnaires. The findings show that most of the respondents were strongly agree with these influences of social media that Facebook leaks personal information. Whereas 35% of respondents as well declared Facebook as an unsecured Social Networking Site. Finally, results revealed that chi-square indicates that there is a significant association between the usages of social networking sites and disclosure of personal information and also there is a significant association between usages of Social Networking Site harms human basic privacy rights. It was recommended that 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.*

**Keywords:** Social Networking Sites (SNS), Human privacy rights, Impacts, Facebook.

### INTRODUCTION

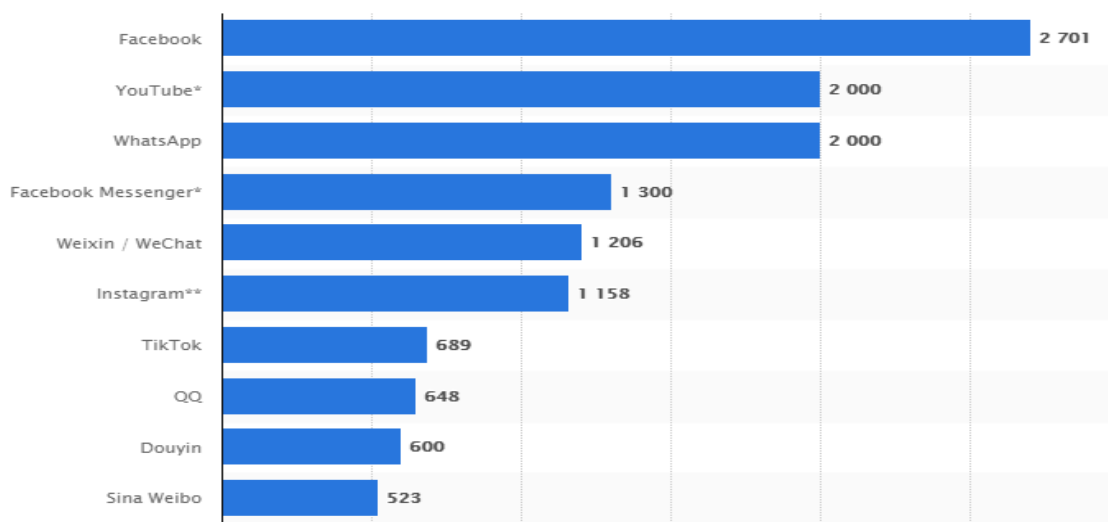
The wide adoption of the internet in this era of technology has contributed to online Social Networking Sites (SNS) thriving popularity which can be seen through the attention given to such sites receives from both the academia and media. Now a day, the majority of the young generation is moving towards 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. 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 a platform of an 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 security 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 a different thing to a lawyer than it does to an amateur.

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 the 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 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 per cent of all internet visits (Reinan, 2010). Moreover, Google +, LinkedIn, Myspace and Facebook consist of approximately 249 million distinctive visitors every month and on average Facebook users spend about 6 hours and 30 minutes on the site every month (ComScore, 2008). Figure 1 shows the most heavily-used social media in the world is Facebook and became the most popular SNS in 2019, Facebook has approximately 2701 million monthly active users (Statista 2019, Figure 1). While BBC news research (2013) discuss that 67 per cent of 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 on 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). Figure 1 shows the top 10 popular SNS which is most heavily-used social media in the world.



**Figure 1. The most heavily-used social media in the world (number of active users in millions)**

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. The following issues are the given below.

### **Security Risks**

The increased use of social media also raised numerous security risks. These risks are a scam, identity theft, cyberbullying and phishing etc. individuals give their personal information on SNS such as Google +, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and My Space. 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 hacker's 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**

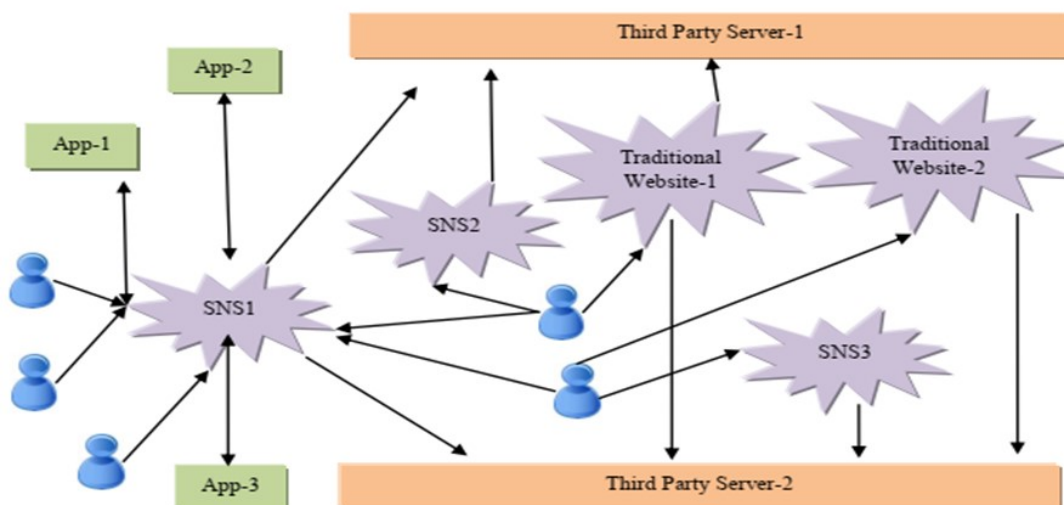
It is the menace linked with profile cloning. The hackers received the personal information of the users and create a clone of the profile. They do it for several reasons, they want to make a bad social image of a user or for other objectives like knowing about the friends of casualty.

### **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.

### **Flow of Information**

Figure 2 shows the flow of information among SNS, external applications, third-party servers and traditional websites.



**Figure 2. Flow of information**

One can see that a single user can be a member of multiple websites including SNSs as seen in Figure 2. At the same time, some third-party servers are active on many of these sites. A third-party server can collect user information from multiple sites and can link user profiles over multiple SNSs or websites in order to track user's behavior. The figure also shows the information flow between external applications and SNSs. This information sharing is often hidden from the user. It is difficult for the user, to know and control the various entities, which can gain access to one's information and limit oneself in such a way that one does not get the full advantage of various features of SNS.

### **Statement of the Problems**

There are many problems around us which we should 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 data private but now, they like to post it public and screening wall posts, status updates, tweets and 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 (SNS) on human basic privacy rights. This study examines whether or not these sites are proved to be harmful to the privacy of the people.

### **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 the craze of social media usage. This research is pragmatic to pertain SNSs in the right direction for the public. Furthermore, it creates understanding among people that the correct use of the social network becomes a solid instrument to educate, inform and train them but along with it, these sites as well affect 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.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main research objectives are: (1) examine human basic privacy rights in online social networks, such as Facebook, (2) evaluate the impact of SNSs on privacy rights of the people, and (3) 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.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The researchers attempted to find out answers to the following questions.

1. Do Social Networking Sites disclose people's personal information?
2. Does basic human privacy rights are harmed by Social Networking Sites?
3. Do Social Networking Sites dishonoring the laws of privacy?

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **Uses and Gratification Theory**

The major purpose of Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) is to seek out the effect of 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 the public does with media rather than what social media does to them. UGT diverges from other theories because it has a user/audience centred 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) correlate their study “The Impact of Social Media on Youth: A Case Study of Bahawalpur City” with UGT in the sense that when a user uses 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 as explore the significance of uses and gratifications theory to the 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.

### **Research Hypotheses**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Usage of Social Networking Sites is associated with revelation of personal information.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Usage of Social Networking Sites harms basic human privacy rights.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Sample and Data Collection**

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2010), “a sample is the small portion of the population which represents the whole population”. It is not possible to survey the complete population. Sampling allows the scholar to gather information from a large population. Extensive time, money, support and material are essential even in a simple and modest-sized survey. Thus, the researcher has applied a simple random sampling method for data collection. In the current research, the sample size comprises of the 250 respondents from Superior University Lahore, Punjab University, Government College Township Lahore and Lahore Garrison University. The reason behind this selection is to get some diversity among the respondents of these universities so that the researcher became able to study the impact of social networking sites on human basic privacy rights, the most of the students were youngsters and the selected gender was both male and female and also the selection of these universities and colleges is that these universities and colleges provide students and professionals from all type of class, age-groups and gender.

### **Survey**

In this study, the investigator has used the survey method to collect quantitative data from a large number of representatives. The basic aim of adopting the survey method was that it will help the 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. This study was conducted from October 2018 to March 2019. This data was assembled in January 2019 and February

2019. The process of the survey can normally be divided into two types; questionnaire method and interview method. The instrument of this study is a questionnaire technique. The questionnaire is self-constructed and close-ended in nature. In this research, the social networking site is taken as an independent variable, whereas the dependent variable is human basic privacy rights.

### Statistical Analysis

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) has been used in this study for analyzing the data. Sample data has been examined discretely to observe every research question and hypothesis. Research questions have been scrutinized through frequency tables. As the study evaluated the impact of Social Networking Sites on human privacy rights that's why, statistical method, chi-square test has been applied for hypothesis testing.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

To examine the impact of SNS on privacy rights, the researcher has chosen sample size which has dissimilar demography. The 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.

#### RQ1: Do Social Networking Sites disclose people's personal information?

**Table 1. Frequency table of people towards disclosure of personal information**

| Variables                                     | Strongly disagree | Disagree  | Neutral   | Agree     | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>Facebook leaking of personal data</b>      | 8(3.2%)           | 62(24.8%) | 41(16.4%) | 82(32.8%) | 57(22.8%)      |
| <b>Facebook disclose personal information</b> | 11(4.4%)          | 77(30.8%) | 50(20.0%) | 84(33.6%) | 28(11.2%)      |
| <b>Facebook an unsecure SNS</b>               | 13(5.2%)          | 50(20.0%) | 46(18.4%) | 89(35.6%) | 52(20.8%)      |
| <b>Facebook keep posts private</b>            | 21(8.4%)          | 74(29.6%) | 73(29.2%) | 75(30.0%) | 7(2.8%)        |

Table 1 shows that 3.2% of respondents strongly disagree that Facebook reveals personal data where 24.8% disagree, 16.4% remained neutral, 32.8% agreed and 22.8% of them strongly agreed. When asked about whether Facebook discloses personal information 4.4% respondents strongly disagreed about the statement, 30.8% disagreed, 20% were neutral, 33.6% said they are agreed and 11.2% strongly agreed. Furthermore, 5.2% respondents said that they strongly disagree that Facebook is an insecure SNS, 20% disagreed, 18.4% were neutral, 35.6% agreed to the statement and 20.8% strongly agreed. When asked about whether Facebook keeps post private 8.4% respondents were strongly disagreed about the statement, 29.6% disagreed, 29.2% were neutral and 30% said they are agreed and only 2.8% strongly agreed.

Whereas Table 2 shows that 1.6% of respondents strongly disagree that Facebook harms personal space whereas 29.6% disagree, 19.2% remained neutral while 36.4% agreed and 13.2% of them were strongly agree. When asked about whether Facebook privacy is a real problem. 10.4% of respondents were strongly disagreed about the statement, 18.0% disagreed, 20.4% were neutral about the problem while 38.4% said they are agreed and 12.8% strongly agreed. Furthermore, 18.4% respondents said that they strongly disagree that data should be posted on Facebook, 44.4% disagreed, 23.6% were neutral, 10.4% agreed to the statement

and only 3.2% strongly agreed. When asked about whether Facebook harms interpersonal relationships 6.8% respondents were strongly disagreed about the statement, 11.6% disagreed while 13.2% were neutral, 34.8% said they are agreed and 33.6% strongly agreed.

### RQ2: Does basic human privacy rights are harmed by Social Networking Sites?

**Table 2. Frequency table for SNS harmed human basic rights**

| Variables                              | Strongly disagree | Disagree   | Neutral   | Agree     | Strongly agree |
|--|-------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| Facebook harms your personal space     | 4(1.6%)           | 74(29.6%)  | 48(19.2%) | 91(36.4%) | 33(13.2%)      |
| Facebook privacy is a real problem     | 26(10.4%)         | 45(18.0%)  | 51(20.4%) | 96(38.4%) | 32(12.8%)      |
| You should post your data on Facebook  | 46(18.4%)         | 111(44.4%) | 59(23.6%) | 26(10.4%) | 8(3.2%)        |
| Facebook harms interpersonal relations | 17(6.8%)          | 29(11.6%)  | 33(13.2%) | 87(34.8%) | 84(33.6%)      |

Table 3 shows that 2.4% of respondents strongly disagree about the statement privacy policies of SNS are effective whereas 34.8% disagree, 25.6% remained neutral, 30.4% agreed and only 6.8% of them were strongly agree.

### RQ3: Do Social Networking Sites dishonoring the laws of privacy?

**Table 3. Frequency table for SNS dishonoring the laws of privacy**

| Variables   | Strongly disagree | Disagree  | Neutral   | Agree     | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| Privacy policies are effective in                         | 6(2.4%)           | 87(34.8%) | 64(25.6%) | 76(30.4%) | 17(6.8%)       |
| Facebook is responsible for fake identities               | 15(6.0%)          | 28(11.2%) | 28(11.2%) | 73(29.2%) | 106(42.4%)     |
| Fake profiles on Facebook are violation of privacy rights | 7(2.8%)           | 43(17.2%) | 27(10.8%) | 70(28.0%) | 103(41.2%)     |

When asked to the respondent whether Facebook is responsible for fake identities 6.0% respondents strongly disagreed about the statement, 11.2% disagreed, 11.2% were neutral while 20.2% said they are agreed and 42.4% strongly agreed. Moreover, 2.8% respondents said that they strongly disagree that fake profiles on Facebook are a violation of privacy right, 17.2% disagreed, 10.8% were neutral, 28.0% agreed to the statement and 41.2% strongly agreed.

**H<sub>1</sub>: Usage of Social Networking Sites is associated with disclosure of personal information.**

**Table 4. Chi-square test for association: usage of Social Networking Sites 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<br>Total respondents | 35.571<br>250 | 12<br>- | Significant<br>- |

The chi-square test has been applied in table 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 discloses personal information and whether Facebook is an insecure SNS indicates that there is a significant association among usage of a social networking site and disclosure of personal information. Chi-square value in the above table illustrates that the H1 is accepted at a significance level  $p < 0.05$ .

## **H<sub>2</sub>: Usage of Social Networking Sites harms basic human privacy rights.**

**Table 5. Chi-square test for association: usage of Social Networking Sites association with harms human privacy rights**

| Items  | Variables          | Chi-square | D.F | Conclusion  |
|--|--------------------|------------|-----|-------------|
| <b>Facebook privacy is a real problem</b>          | Pearson Chi-square | 21.200     | 12  | Significant |
| <b>Facebook is responsible for fake identities</b> | Pearson Chi-square | 14.842     | 12  | Significant |
|  | Total respondents  | 250        | -   | -           |

The result of chi-square test in table 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 the usage of the social networking site harms human basic privacy rights. Chi-square value in the table illustrates that the H<sub>2</sub> is accepted at a significance level  $p < 0.05$ .

## **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 ones 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 tackled 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.

That's why the 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 affect the 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 of privacy threats but they still did not use any preventive measures. Mostly, the work on social media and privacy concerns have been done in western countries but this study raised that issue regarding Pakistan. This survey data is collected from several universities and colleges of Pakistan to examine the impact of social networking sites 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 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. In the end, the only solution to SNS privacy threats is to be well aware of how one can get be deceived.

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