

The Issue of Disclosure of Personal Information on Social Media among Teenagers

Emie Sylviana Binti Mohd Zahid, Nurfahiratul Azlina Binti Ahmad, Shahirah Binti Said, Zaiton Binti Din

Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS), Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau Pinang Kampus Permatang Pauh, 13500 Permatang Pauh, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on teenagers' awareness of the consequences of disclosing personal information on social media and identifying the factors that encourage the disclosure of personal information on social media among teenagers. This leads to, unraveling the steps that should be taken as a smart and responsible social media user. The approach used in this study is to use a questionnaire method to students of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering of Universiti Teknologi MARA Penang Branch. This study uses a cross-sectional design where data is collected only once in a short period of time. The results of the study found that almost the majority of students are exposed to the issue of disclosure of personal information on social media. The involvement of the highest percentage of respondents is from bachelor's degree studies which is 53.8 percent while diploma is only 46.2 percent. This shows that the majority of respondents are from students who are currently pursuing a bachelor's degree program. The implications of this disclosure of personal information have shown that individuals, social media platforms, and governments have their own and important roles in creating a safe online environment. With that, it can significantly reduce the risk of disclosure of personal information on social media as well as being able to protect user privacy.

Keywords: Disclosure of Personal Information, Social Media

INTRODUCTION

Media in Kamus Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Fourth Edition (2013) is a communication tool or channel in the form of either print or online publication. Furthermore, social media refers to online platforms or applications that allow users to share information, interact, spread ideas, interests, and information content with other social media users either within a community or social network around the world. In following a previous study by B.K. Lewis (2010) from an article entitled "Social Media and Strategic Communication: Attitudes and Perceptions Among College Students" social media is a digital platform that allows users to interact, share information and communicate online. This sophisticated technology can be used through various social media applications available now, for example, WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, Twitter, Wechat and others. In the meantime, referring to Dailey, (2009) social media is a content that is easily generated using information technology that is available on the internet. In the meantime, it is common when social media has become one of the important things in the modern life of students. This is so, allowing students to always interact and obtain information easily and distance is no longer a barrier to obtain one piece of information. Furthermore, students can benefit from the development of information technology for the purpose of class assignments, case studies, teaching materials and learning.

The development of information technology on social media among students has existed for several reasons. Referring to Nurfazira A.H. in the article "The Disclosure of Personal Information on Twitter" (2019), among the main causes that lead to the sharing of personal information on social media are personal factors, emotions, and leading to self-satisfaction. If seen from the results of this study, the disclosure of this information leads to the feelings of students who make social media a space to share information related to students' daily lives. If examined, students' emotions play a big role in finding the cause of this sharing of personal information on

social media. This is said to be so because, students tend to share personal information when a student feels happy or sad without realizing the dangers or risks that will be faced later. Studies from the perspective of student self-satisfaction, show that by sharing student self-information on social media, students will feel more confident and satisfied. This is triggered because of the advantages provided by information technology that students will gain when gaining popularity on the social media "platform" better known as "Tweetfamous" (Nurfazira A.H., 2019).

In the article "The Disclosure of Personal Information on Twitter" (2019) by Nurfazira A.H. discusses the positive and negative effects of exposing personal information on social media experienced by students. If viewed from a marketing strategy perspective, exposing students' personal information on social media has the potential to help empower the business that the student is running. The last positive effect discussed is that through the process of sharing information on social media, students have the opportunity to increase self-motivation. This is said to be so because, through the process of sharing personal information on social media, students gain peace and emotional support from the community on the internet. This allows the student to have the emotional strength to continue living with more enthusiasm and positivity (Nurfazira A.H., 2019). However, it cannot be denied that through sharing personal information, students are also exposed to negative effects.

Among the negative effects discussed and faced by students is the first being a victim of account forgery. This is said to be the case because, exposing personal information on social media has the potential for an individual to become a victim of fraud and account forgery created by irresponsible social media users for self-interest (Nurfazira A.H., 2019). In addition, sharing personal information on social media such as current location, personal content and student photos will increase the risk of the student becoming a victim of spying for immoral individuals. This is said to be the case because, although the hair is the same black but the heart is different. On social media networks there are spies who are looking for victims for immoral work that has the potential to threaten the safety and dignity of students in the real world. As a result, students will face depression and potentially face mental health problems. This is due to the negative reactions received by students either as a result of the actions of immoral social media users or as a result of negative comments received by students from social media applications (Nurfazira A.H., 2019).

Tracing the current of the development of science and information technology in the current era, human life is becoming more sophisticated and challenging. In the meantime, social media has opened up a lot of space and helped the development of information for teenagers, especially regarding current affairs, including foreign and domestic news. In addition, social media is also one of the important mediums in the daily life of students where the technology used is able to help students interact with each other, despite being at a distance (Mohd Hamizi, M. A. F., 2023). However, at the same time social media has also contributed towards negative effects in a person's life if not treated. This is because social media is now a platform that dominates our daily lives (Jiwadamai, 2023).

Many teenagers lack the necessary digital literacy to understand the privacy settings on social media platforms. Despite most platforms offering privacy controls, these tools can be complicated or confusing, leading to an overexposure of personal data. Moreover, teenagers may not fully understand how their information can be exploited by advertisers, data brokers, or malicious actors.

Digital literacy programs, such as Teens & Screens by the Black Dog Institute (2024), aim to educate teenagers about online privacy and digital well-being. Similarly, Google's Applied Digital Skills Program (n.d) offers flexible lessons to help students develop essential digital skills.

Cyberbullying remains a significant concern, with one in six school-aged children experiencing it (Comparitech, 2024). Teenagers often share personal details online, which can be exploited by bullies or predators. For instance, sharing information about family life or social activities can make them vulnerable to harmful comments or threats (Pew Research Center, 2022).

There is growing evidence that excessive social media use, especially when it involves sharing personal information, can negatively impact teenagers' mental health. Constant exposure to online criticism,

comparison, and the pressure to conform to unrealistic standards can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (Abderrahman M Khalaf, Abdullah A Alubied, Ahmed M Khalaf & Abdallah A Rifaey, 2023; University of Utah Health, 2023). Additionally, the oversharing of personal details can exacerbate feelings of vulnerability or contribute to an unhealthy obsession with online validation (Yale Medicine, 2023).

Therefore, a study needs to be conducted to find out the level of awareness of teenagers about the consequences of disclosing personal information on social media in terms of security and privacy. This group of teenagers is estimated to be between 18 and 22 years old (Jiwadamai, 2023).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to a systematic method of planning, collecting and analyzing data to provide strong support for a study. In other words, methodology is a plan that guides the research process by explaining how the study was conducted from beginning to end (Liyana, 2024). The main purpose of the methodology is to ensure that the study is conducted objectively, systematically and can be reused by other researchers. The specific purpose of the research methodology is to explain in detail to facilitate understanding of the methods used to obtain data and draw conclusions regarding the research process.

This study uses a questionnaire method among students of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Universiti Teknologi MARA Penang Branch. This method was chosen because it was seen as suitable for obtaining numerical data that could be analyzed statistically because statistical analysis is considered more objective and capable of providing more measurable results. The main purpose of this study is to provide an overview of the level of awareness, knowledge, and steps taken by students regarding the disclosure of personal information on social media. In addition, with this study, the relationship or linkage between several variables related to this issue can be studied. This study uses a cross-sectional design where data is collected only once in a short period of time, namely for a week from November 24, 2024 to December 1, 2024 using a questionnaire from 'Google Form' which was distributed online via the 'WhatsApp' platform to all Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. This design is seen as suitable for providing a clear picture of the situation during the study and that is why it was chosen. The questionnaire distributed to students is expected to obtain a sample size that represents the entire population of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering to increase the accuracy of the study results.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The use of social media has become very important in daily life, especially among students. Although social media provides convenience and many benefits, it also presents challenges, especially in the personal information security sector. Excessive exposure will result in various risks, such as misuse of personal data and privacy violations. Therefore, we have provided a feedback form on the issue of disclosure of personal information on social media among students.

Jantina
65 responses

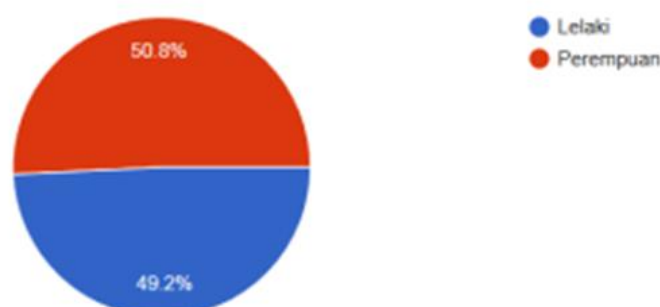


Fig. 1 Respondent gender data

Based on the responses from the respondents, as shown in figure. 1, the response obtained from females was 50.8 percent while males were 49.2 percent. This difference shows that this study involved almost equal balance between male and female respondents, making it more representative in terms of gender on this issue.

Umur

65 responses

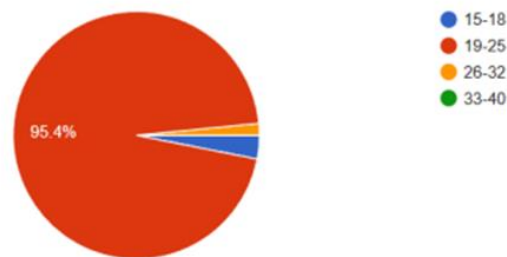


Fig. 2 Respondent's age data

Figure 2 shows the respondents in this study showed a significant dominance in the age group of 19-25 years, which was 95.4 percent. Other age groups involved but received a small percentage were 15-18, 26-32, 33-40 years. The dominance of respondents from the age group of 19-25 years reflects the main focus of the study on young adults or youth.

Pengajian

65 responses

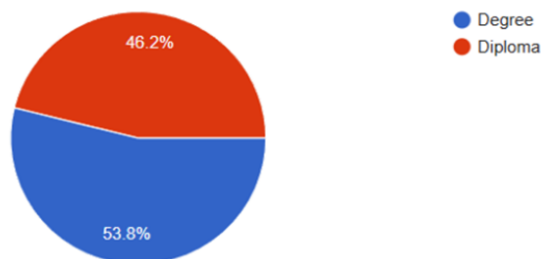


Fig. 3 Respondent's education level data

In terms of the type of study involved, only diplomas and bachelor's degrees were involved, as shown in figure 3. The highest percentage of respondents involved was from degree studies, which was 53.8 percent, while diplomas were only 46.2 percent. This shows that the majority of respondents were from students who were currently pursuing a bachelor's degree program. However, there was a good balance between these two groups, which made this study relevant to both levels of education.

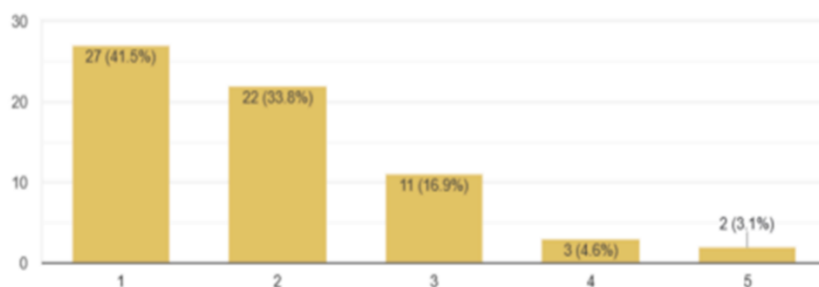


Fig. 4 Student awareness of privacy on social media

Based on the figure 4 above, the data results show that students are aware of privacy when using social media applications. As an analogy, 41.5 percent of mechanical engineering students are familiar with the concept of privacy when using social media. This clearly shows that almost all students understand the importance of maintaining and protecting personal information when using social media platforms. Furthermore, one-third of respondents have a basic understanding of this issue, which leads to the conclusion that 33.8 percent of these students still need to improve their knowledge in several aspects.

The results of the study, obtained from the "Google Form" method, showed that the majority of respondents understood the importance of protecting their personal information by expressing concern over the risk of data leakage on this social media platform.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study found that students are aware of the effects of disclosing personal information on social media. Only a few are still unaware of the issue.

The disclosure of personal information on social media among teenagers is a multifaceted issue that requires a balance between empowering teens to express themselves and protecting their privacy. Education, open dialogue, and stronger digital literacy initiatives are crucial in helping teenagers navigate the digital world responsibly. Furthermore, greater efforts from social media companies to improve privacy settings and protect user data will play a significant role in safeguarding vulnerable teen users. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach involving parents, educators, and policymakers to ensure the safety and well-being of teenagers in the online environment. This has been addressed accordingly.

Therefore, it is suggested to the government that several proactive steps can be taken to address the issue of personal information disclosure on social media, especially among students. The government is advised to expand this awareness campaign on digital security through various mediums such as broadcasting on television, social media and organizing educational programs in schools and universities. This campaign should emphasize the implications or effects of personal information disclosure, such as identity theft and online fraud, as well as provide practical guidance on security measures that can be taken by users among students.

In addition, the government needs to strengthen the enforcement of laws related to cybersecurity and data protection. For example, the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) can be further enhanced by imposing heavier penalties on parties who misuse user data or violate their privacy. According to Adam H. (February, 2024), the Personal Data Protection Act 2010 (PDPA) or the Personal Data Protection Act 2010 is a law enacted to regulate the processing of personal data in commercial transactions and to protect the interests of individuals whose personal data is being processed. At the same time, the government can introduce stricter policies or standards for technology companies and social media platforms to protect users' personal information more effectively. The government can also establish a special monitoring body that acts as a complaint and referral center for victims involved in cases of personal data abuse. This body is not only responsible for providing assistance to victims but also conducting periodic studies on the level of cybersecurity in the country. With more decisive and integrated actions, the government can help create a safer digital environment and protect citizens from online security threats.

Society plays an important role in ensuring the security of personal information, especially in the use of social media among students. As users, individuals need to increase awareness of the importance of maintaining privacy and understand the risks associated with the disclosure of personal information. Basic measures such as controlling privacy settings on social media accounts, using strong passwords, and avoiding sharing sensitive information such as home addresses, personal information such as identity card numbers on social media platforms need to be practiced. In addition, society needs to foster a culture of responsible use of social media. This includes assessing the validity of information before sharing and practicing respect for the privacy of others. Parents and educators can also play a role in educating young people, especially students who are

more exposed to the use of social media, about digital ethics and reminding them of the effects or implications of social media misuse. Highlight the critical role of parents and educators in guiding teenagers toward safe and responsible social media use. Include examples of tools such as parental monitoring apps or school programs that teach digital citizenship and online safety.

In addition, local communities can take the initiative to carry out awareness programs such as cybersecurity workshops or talks on the dangers of disclosing personal information. Activities like this not only benefit individuals but can also form a society that is more sensitive and responsible for digital security. With this awareness and comprehensive action, society can play a significant role in reducing the risk of misuse of personal information and creating a safer digital environment for all.

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