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Exploring Intellectual Capital

Malaysian Users' Perception towards Facebook as a Social Networking Site

Ahasanul Haque

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences, International Islamic University, Malaysia

Abdullah Sarwar

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences, International Islamic University, Malaysia

Farzana Yasmin

Faculty of Business and Professional Studies, Management Science University, Malaysia

Abstract

Social network sites constitute a rapidly growing phenomenon. Thus, understanding users perception toward social network sites become essential. Realizing this present needs, this study strives to determine the user's perception towards Facebook in Malaysia. This paper commences by examining the relevance of the privacy, features, sharing social information, and accessibility provided by the social network sites. A self-administered questionnaire survey was conducted. A convenience sampling method was employed to collect data. A total of 206 questionnaires were found valid out of total 250 distributed questionnaires. Results indicate that there is a positive perception of Facebook in Malaysia exists because of easy accessibility and variety of features. However, Facebook still needs to improve the privacy system to protect the sharing social information by the users to make the Facebook more acceptable for the users in Malaysia.

Keywords: User perception, social networking site, Facebook, easy accessibility, sharing social information, privacy, features.

1. Introduction

Social networking sites are gaining popularity as many users interact with others through it. Thus, understanding users' perception towards social network sites become very essential (Lampe et al., 2008). Many people use Facebook as a part of sharing social information and connect with their friends. However, Facebook has been used to break the privacy system and use the personal information to do crime. Realizing the current needs, this study strives to determine the user perception on SNS especially on Facebook in Malaysia. Therefore, the overall purpose of this study is to understand the user perception towards the use of Facebook in Malaysia. This study will help to determine the involvement of users in SNS in Malaysia as whether the SNS should work more on current features or add extra features according to the

users demand in Malaysia. On the other hand, this study will help the Facebook to identify the affecting factors which has great impact on the user perception in Malaysia.

2. Literature Review

Social networking study is not a new area of research. Many researchers have studied the influential factors in social networking which build the user perception as a whole. User perception means how the user sees and observes about the product what he or she uses. The user perception may not be the same as it varies according to the user's expectation and experience regarding the product. User's perception of a web-based community practice (WCoP) may be influenced by several factors. These are discussed below.

2.1 Privacy

One of the most important concerns for users in Social networking sites are of privacy. Social networking sites stored personal information about their users. Thus, the issue of privacy in online communication has gained tremendous interests among the academicians in recent years (Boyd, 2003). Boyd and Heer (2006) suggest five factors which influence the users' privacy which are, "awareness of the information being collected; how the information will be used; the information's sensitivity; how familiar the consumer is with the entity collecting the information; and what the consumer is receiving in exchange for their personal information". All of these factors affect the user's decision to disclose personal information on the net.

Social Network Sites (SNS) are the kind of modern innovation that deals with lots of users' privacy. Facebook is very popular with young people. A recent study by Buchanan et al. (2012) found that, respondents normally prefer to disclose information to their friends. Moreover, Acquisti and Gross (2006) found that, most of the users provide their real identity in their profiles. This indicates that, users have a trust on the privacy issues and policies of Facebook that made Facebook to reach out at the pinnacle in the field of social networking sites.

However, besides the positive effects on the online users, negative consequences also occur during the sharing information online. These involves a lots of cyber crimes such as hacking, uploading fake information, inappropriate mailings, etc. (Awad & Krishnan, 2006). From the above discussed literature, the following hypothesis is drawn;

H1:   User has a positive perception in privacy towards Facebook.

2.2 Features

Offering various features such as photo sharing, comments, user's updates, file sharing; comments on the friends' wall, etc have increased the popularities of Facebook in recent years. This has made Facebook the number one social networking site in the internet over MySpace recently (Beer, 2008). It gives them the freedom to exchange a variety of files through internet with a fraction of minutes. Facebook has distinguished itself from its rivals by designing in such

a way that users can change the appearance of their profile pages (Facebook, 2008). Facebook marks a huge cultural change in the way in which people communicate due to its platform features (Mital et al., 2010). Facebook provide huge range of features such as chat where members are able to chat with their Facebook friends. Others features members can enjoy are Easter eggs, Facebook live, news feed in which highlights information that includes profile changes, upcoming events, and birthdays, among other updates.

Facebook offers a new platform for exchanging information among the millions of users around the globe (Eric et al., 2007). This has attracted users over 20 million users at present. Thus, Facebook is definitely a great social networking site. From the above discussed literature, the following hypothesis is drawn;

H2:   Facebook has variety of features.

2.3 Sharing Social Information

Social networks have gained its popularity due to its online communication infrastructures through which millions of users share their information with their friends (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). These provide platforms for arranging and managing events, communication, and lot more. However, sharing information through net got some critical issues related to trust and reliability. Thus, improving trust and reliability in the system are of vital issues now a day. In the case of Facebook, a lot of activities can be performed through it. According to Tancer (2008), the information delivered was not just limited to information on the web, but also available from personal experience and referral to print sources.

According to Murray and Waller (2007), social media allow people to connect and interact with each other. The assumption here is that young people in our "classrooms" would use connecting and interacting as a means for learning, a familiar and fun way of generating and sharing knowledge. Hence, social media use web-based technologies to broadcast these media monologues. Informal learning based on social media is learner-centered, with the learner having agency over what is being taught (Russo et al., 2009). Social media provide the environment and infrastructure for collaboration and also provide knowledge that is a lot more current than what is provided in traditional textbooks (Minocha, 2009). From the above discussed literature, the following hypothesis is drawn;

H3:   Users prefer to share social information through Facebook.

2.4 Accessibility

"Accessibility is often used to focus on people with special needs and their right of access to entities, often through use of assistive technology" (Cassidy, 2006). To join a social networking site, users need to create his/her profile, then they can communicate through connecting with their friends as well as other people whom they are interested in by inviting or sending a friend request (Ellison et al., 2007). A profile normally includes the user's name, photographs,

demographic information, and personal interest (Johnson, 2009). Once, the users of facebook have their friends' list, they can access to their profiles of friends and vice versa. This all happens when a user is able to access any such social networking sites easily and rapidly.

Facebook provides the user with a choice of who can view their profile. This prevents unauthorized user from accessing their information (Yadav, 2006). However, social networking is important as this offer new opportunities for making friends and knowing others culture, social needs. From the above discussed literature, the following hypotheses are drawn;

H4:   Facebook accessibility is easier than other social networking sites.

3.   Research Methodology

Survey method was adopted for data collection regarding the users' perception towards Facebook in Malaysia. For collecting the data, a survey questionnaire was distributed both physically and through online. After receiving the distributed questionnaires, data analysis was performed by using SPSS 16.0.

A two page questionnaire were developed basing on the literature review findings. The questionnaire consisted of demographic information such as title of the respondent, academic background, marital status etc., and questions regarding the four independent variables. A 5-point Likert scale was used ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'.

Finally, a convenient sampling method was adopted for questionnaires distribution. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed out of which 206 were found valid for further analysis.

4.   Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Frequency tests were performed for descriptive analysis. The categorical variables are gender, age, marital status, academic status, race and time spending on Facebook. From the table below (Table 1), we can see that our total respondents were 206 from which male are 165 whereas female are 41. The percentage of the gender is male 80.1% and female is 19.9%. From the total of 206 respondents, 36.9% fall in 18-24 years group, 47.1% fall in 25-35 years group, 16% fall in 36-55 years group and 0% fall in 55 years above group above. Moreover, this study has found that, 84.9% of the total respondents are single and 15.1% are married. As majority of the data collection took place in the universities, thus, most of the respondents are student where 65 of the total 206 respondents were holding Diploma, 91 were Graduate, 45 were Doing Masters and rest of the 5 respondents were doing Ph.D. The last categorical variable was about the race. From the total respondent, 83 of them were Malay, 58 of them were Chinese, 39 of them were Indians, rest of the 29 respondents were from others.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	165	80.1
Female	41	19.9
Age		
18-24	76	36.9
25-35	97	47.1
36-55	33	16.0
55 –Above	0	0
Marital Status		
Single	175	84.9
Married	31	15.1
Academic Status		
Diploma	65	31.6
Graduate	91	44.2
Masters	45	21.9
Ph.D	5	2.3
Race		
Malay	83	40.3
Chinese	58	28.2
Indian	39	18.9
Others	26	12.6

4.2 Reliability Coefficient

From the reliability statistics table below, we have got the Cronbach's Alpha (α) which is 0.891. This indicates that, our items for measuring the variables are very consistent (Cronbach, 1951).

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.891	.891	26

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was carried out to explore the underlying factors associated with 26 items. We found the KMO of 0.701 which seems to be sufficient as it exceeds 0.5. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is 0.000, meaning that factors that form the variable is adequate (Table 3).

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.701
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1.127E3
	df	465
	Sig.	.000

4.3 Factor Analysis

A cut-off point of 0.60 was set to exclude the items from the factor analysis. Total four factors were extracted and the findings of this study indicate that, each of the four dimensions (privacy, features, share social information, and accessibility) was homogeneously loaded to the different factors (Table 4).

Table 4: Factor Loading Matrices

Descriptions	F1	F2	F3	F4
Privacy				
I feel secure while sharing information in Facebook	.890			
I consider Facebook is a quite responsible about the information what users share	.840			
I believe that Facebook has strong privacy system	.870			
Facebook provides confidentiality regarding my personal information to others	.880			
I feel comfortable to provide my personal information in Facebook	.820			
Features				
Facebook has varieties of features (e.g.: games, upload picture)		.710		
We can easily upload video on Facebook than other social sites		.760		
We can tag people in our picture, songs, video		.860		
we think Facebook has more attractive features than other social sites		.820		
Sharing Social Information				
I consider sharing information is part of my life			.880	
I just share what I have in my mind			.890	
Sharing information helps me to add more friends to my list			.870	
I share my information only to those who are in my friend list			.900	
Accessibility				
Facebook is easy to access				.870
Facebook takes less time to login				.890
Ensuring fast accessibility is important to me				.860
Facebook is easily accessible on mobile phone				.900

Extraction method: principal component analysis. Based on four factors specification (not on eigenvalue > 1).
Rotation Method: oblique (oblimin – SPSS) with Kaiser Normalization.
All numbers in the table are magnitudes of the factor loadings multiplied by 100. Loadings that are 0.60 or less are not shown.

4.4 Regression Analysis

The table 5 tells us the R, R square, adjusted R square, and standard error of the estimate. In our findings, we have found the value of adjusted R square .742 (Table 5).

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.889a	.763	.742	.559

A Predictors: (Constant), privacy, features, share social information, and accessibility;
b Dependent Variable: I am satisfied with the overall facilities of Facebook.

The ANOVA table (table 6) reflects the analysis of variance that tests whether the model is significantly better at predicting the outcome. In our findings, we have found the F value is 11.53 which is significant where p < 0.000.

Table 6: ANOVA

Model	Sum Squares of	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1 Regression	111.205	5	22.241	11.53	.000
Residual	28.422	89	.313		
Total	140.682	94			

A Predictors: (Constant), privacy, features, share social information, and accessibility;
b Dependent Variable: I am satisfied with the overall facilities of Facebook.

In this research, we found that the largest beta coefficient is .326, which is for Facebook feature. The beta value for sharing information, easy accessibility, privacy are accordingly .130, .307 and .199 indicating that these made less of a contribution (Table 7).

Table 7: Coefficient Matrix

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Colinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1(Constant)	1.151	.500		2.30	0.23		
Privacy	.323	.061	.199	5.256	.131	.588	1.701
Feature	.423	.047	.326	7.820	.001	.728	1.373
Sharing information	.697	.089	.130	8.711	.315	.347	2.880
Accessibility	.307	.073	.307	9.369	.015	.698	2.956

A Predictors: (Constant), privacy, features, share social information, and accessibility;
b Dependent Variable: I am satisfied with the overall facilities of Facebook.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

According to our first hypothesis, **H1:** User has a positive perception in privacy on Facebook is not significant (0.131) as p > 0.05. Hence, we can reject this hypothesis and conclude that, users consider that, the privacy system is not so strong.

For the second hypothesis, **H2:** Facebook has variety of features proves to be significant (0.001) as p < 0.05. Therefore, we accept our hypothesis and conclude that, user perception regarding the feature of Facebook is very good. Facebook has variety of features which attract the users to a great extent.

According to **H3:** Users prefer to share social information through Facebook is not significant (0.315) as p > 0.05. Hence, we can also reject the hypothesis and conclude that, user do not feel comfortable while sharing information through Facebook in Malaysia.

Finally, for the last assumption in our research **H4:** Facebook accessibility is easier than other social networking site, we find that, the assumption is significant (0.015) as p < 0.05. Therefore, we can conclude that, users' perception about the Facebook is that, it is easy to access Facebook than other social networking sites.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study took a critical look at users' perception towards Facebook and how it affects the users of the social networking site especially Facebook in Malaysia. This study is significant as, as of now, there is no conclusive data as to a "universal" perception of Facebook exists. However, this study was limited to the extent as it could not be entirely random due to limitations in contacting people at the region. This study analyzed four major constructs:

accessibility, privacy, sharing social information and features to test the users' perception of Facebook. From the results, it could be said that, the relative advantage of Facebook regarding accessibility, privacy, sharing social information and features were more concerned with the perception of users.

Through our investigation of the user perception on accessibility offered by Facebook, we found that, users are generally satisfied with the accessibility offered by Facebook and they think that Facebook accessibility is easier than other social networking sites. Easy accessibility of Facebook has attracted many users to switch from other social networking sites to Facebook.

After our case study about Facebook in Malaysia, we can conclude that, Facebook has a significant contribution towards the social networking sites in not only Malaysia but also throughout the world. Even though the users in Malaysia have positive perception in the overall performance of Facebook, but still we recommend Facebook to keep on improving in the strong privacy system in order to prevent the user's personal and social information from the hackers. Then it will be much easier for the Facebook to be the market leader in the online social networking sites and to be more popular among the users of SNS in Malaysia.

No study is perfect in this academic era. This study is also not beyond that. The limitation for this study is that, the sample size is not adequate to generalize the study findings. Thus, future studies need to be conducted with a bigger sample size to compare the study findings in a way to generalize. Nonetheless, these finding would help Facebook in analyzing the user perception towards Facebook in Malaysia.

Acknowledgement

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