

An Examination of Social Networking Sites Usage Among Muslims Student in Islamic Perspectives

Gehad Mohammed Sharaf, Mahdi Alhaji Musa, Azizah Abdul Rahman

Abstract— *Social networking sites (SNS) have created a new social dimension where individuals can develop increased levels of their social awareness by keeping in touch with old friends, making new friends, dispense new data or product. And also getting information in many more aspects of everyday lives, making one to become more knowledgeable which is very beneficial especially for students. In spite of many preaches by Islamic scholars on the appropriate ways to use these social media, many students tend to use it against the ethics enshrines by Islamic laws. The purpose of this research is to examine student's level of awareness of Islamic regulations while using social networking sites. A survey was conducted among 450 Muslims Undergraduate student of University Teknologi Malaysia. The finding of this research indicates that some students use the social media appropriately by creating ethical Islamic group that will promote the good image of Islam, while other students had become addicted to the social networks so much so that they delayed their prayer time.*

Index Terms—Factor Analysis, Islamic regulations, Malaysia, Social Networking Sites, Students,

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of social networking sites (SNS) is a recent phenomenon. From their inception, social networks have attracts many university students as well as their lectures [1]. These social media may be centered at sharing cultural view, religious belief, and regional among others [2]. The Internet provides a space and medium within which Muslims can shape the relationship between their religious identity and their social and political affiliations [2]. Many

of these popular social media like facebook, do not support Muslims students in sharing only permissible components of data to their fellow Muslims friend and relatives [3]. Whether it is the problems they face living in the West or difficulties at home with family. In this new space and medium, the question of imagining a global Muslim identity demonstrates the interaction involved in the formation of religious and media subjectivity. Developing a critical understanding of multimodal representation and communication is an essential factor in studying Muslim engagement with the internet [3]. [4] Recommends that administrators learn about the social networks before they set policies, educate students or determine the students use. So as the conducted research will be applied in Muslim majority community, the administrators in the Malaysian Universities must understand the Muslim student engagement in SNS before educating them. [5] Has explained that institutions have no control over the information posted in the SNS. And it is the responsibility of the faculty and administrators to educate the students how to use the SNS and internet, from this point of view [3]. As a result, this study is aimed to answer these questions; to what extent Muslim students aware of the actions that they allowed doing in SNSs from Islamic perspective? And To what extent Muslim students aware of the actions that they are not allowed doing in SNSs from Islamic perspective?

II. LITRETURE REVIEW

A. Defining Social Networking Sites

Social Network Sites are “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site” [8]

SNS allow individuals to present themselves to other users using a variety of formats, including text and video [7]. Just like chat services, SNS incorporate a list of other users with whom individuals share a connection. But unlike any other web service, SNS allow individuals to make visible their list of connections to others and to traverse their social networks [8]

According to comScore Inc.’s rankings of top websites, in 2008 Facebook.com was ranked as the 16th most visited website on the Internet in the U.S. [6] with 34 million unique visitors by January 2008,

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and as the 13th most popular website worldwide [6] with 98 million unique visitors by December 2007.

As of March 2008, Facebook reported having 67 million active users (those who have returned to the site in the last 30 days), with more than half of them returning daily and spending an average of 20 minutes per day on the site (Facebook, 2008).

B. Examples of Social Networking Sites

Twitter.com

Twitter began its activities in 2006 and gradually become internationally recognize. Twitter is kind of real life social media that allows users to create an account, post short messages to a group and rapidly get respond immediately. Users can create a network and allow the members of that community to send and receive tweets to one another and to outside the networks.

Twitter makes it easy to opt into or out of networks. Users can also decides to follow and not to follow a specific post [9] Twitter let users write and read messages of up to 140 characters, or the very length of this sentence, including all punctuation and spaces the messages called tweets are normally short, and user decides what tweets to follow.

Friendster.com

Friendster.com is a social networking media that's start its activities in 2002.Its allows users to create contents, maintain the contents and share the contents with other users. Friendster.com is as well use for dating and recovering past event [11]. Users may share photos and videos to other users [12]. Friendster has over 115 million registered users and over 61 million unique visitors a month globally [10]

Myspace.com

This site according to [8] was launched in 2003, in order to provide social forum for users to share pictures to specific group, comment to friends, and suggest friendship to other people. According to [9]. MySpace differ from other media by allowing individuals to create their content using HTML and also adding new features based on customer demand. Moreover, MySpace use to be the most popular social networking sites in US back in 2006, until 2008 when it is taken over internationally by new media called facebook

Facebook.com

Today, facebook turn to be the most popular social networking media among university and collage students [11]. It was developed by sophomore Mark Zuckerberg of Harvard University in 2004. The media was initially meant for the university students just to ease communication among themselves. Most users log to facebook at least 30 minutes a day, and two-third of them usually visited facebook twice or even more a day [12]. In the year 2010 Facebook has more than 500 million active users, attracted 450 visitors and 22,000 photo-views in its first four hours online [14]

According to [10] facebook users have privileges of having choice of creating a group, and share pictures and videos to a group or individuals. Some networks, like a

university or a city area, might include thousands of members. Users of facebook have to create a profile which is a kind of short biography and their likes and dislikes.

This profiles allows other users to decides to send a friend request or not, depending on what they share in common like geographical area, schools and many more [12]. Users can update their status there by allowing other to know what they are doing or where they are currently. Users have the privileges to protect other from seeing what they post, and restricting others to see their walls and profiles [10].

C. The Negative Effect of the Social Networks

Statistics indicates that even those that are yet to join social media will soon join [7]. Visiting social media constitutes more than 10% of total time people spent on the internet [8]. Two-thirds of Internet users in the U.S., Europe, Brazil and Australia visit social networking or blogging sites. In 2008 Internet users total almost 156 million in the U.S. alone [8] Adding over 28 millions in UK and 24 millions in Brazil [9].

While the amount of time users spent on MySpace decreased from April 2008 to April 2009, the use of Facebook increased by 700% and of Twitter by 3,700% during the same period. Cybercriminals love social networking sites, too, just to grow their link and make themselves easily accessible. And therefore those social networking media are open media and everybody is welcome, not minding if somebody is watching at the door [12]

A recent survey conducted in UK revealed that the cost of governance has increased due to uses of social media like Twitter and Facebook by office workers during office hours which are over GBP 1.38 billion per year [13]. Survey also shows that more than half of all office workers use social media for their personal uses while in office [5]

D. Islamic Perspectives on Social Networks

If a social networking site is used to communicate with the opposite sex then this is prohibited [2]. It is not permissible for a man to have any contact with a female that is not his blood relatives (Mahram), or a female to have contact with a non-Mahram male, be it telephonic, via sms, or facebook messaging, unless the communication is strictly business [3]. To do so is totally Haraam and is adultery fornication (Zina) of the fingers. Typing out messages to a non Mahram woman or a non-Mahram man is just as bad as Zina of the tongue to speak to him or her, and Zina of the hands is to touch [2]. Islam teaches that any act that leads to sin or becomes the stepping stone towards sin is also sinful and must be avoided [6]. In fact, most men share crude and rude messages with women over social media but because it is easy to cover their dirty tracks, they lie and say 'we are just communicating for fun'. This is their idea of fun, but shariah condemn that act seriously [6].

For all social networks that contain images and musical, there are guidelines for participating in them according Islamic injunction. If the

songs was encompassing playing machine (music instrument), such singing is prohibited to hear from men and women unanimously[3]. Consensus has been told that it is forbidden hear musical instruments except the duff by group of scholars, including Imam al-qurtubi, Abu Tayyib al-Tabari, Ibn al-salaah, Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Hajar al-haytami [2]

Some photo are permissible (because it does not display the face) but to post it on facebook or any social network will not be permissible because it is propelling the female image into public limelight which itself is contrary to Islamic teaching [2].

Three-dimensional images of animate beings: it is legally prohibited, as narrated by Bukhari and Muslim narrated from Abdullah bin Masood may Allah be pleased with him said: The Messenger of Allah peace be upon him: "The most people will be punished on the Day of Resurrection are the photographers" [2]. As narrated by al-Tirmidhi from Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him said the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him: For example, a woman may be completely covered, but that does not mean she is allowed to go into public places for no valid reason [3].

The Islamic dress for women (hijaab) is a code of dress to be adopted when leaving home for a reason; it is not a license for the woman to go out into the public without a valid reason [6]. The social networks are more of a danger than anything else. You might have a male attracted to this female who has posted her full hijaabi photo, and that will lead to communication and contact, which is prohibited in spite of the hijaab [2]

III.METHODOLOGY

This section is aim at giving the details of methodology employ for this research. Under the section there are 2 items; data collection procedures which comprises of process of selecting respondents and their descriptive statistics, instruments used for collection of data: which describe the questionnaire development and categorizing the indicators according to their application

A. Data Collection Procedures

The data for this study were gathered by means of a survey questionnaire administered to 450 Undergraduate Muslims students during the 2010/2011 session. The survey instructed students to provide feedback about their experiences with the social networking media.

The survey targeted first year, second year and third year students at the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Systems (FSKSM) and 450 responses were achieved, giving a 53% response rate. Respondents were majority female (56.6%) compared to male (43.4%). By age, respondents were grouped into 16 to 19 (64.2%), 20 to 22 (31.6%), 23 to 25 (2.2%). In terms of students' level, first year student level is represented by 26.4%, second year student level is represented by 58.7%, and third year student level is represented by 14.9%. More detailed descriptive statistics about the respondents' characteristics are shown in

Table 1 Analysis was performed based on using the SPSS statistical software.

Table1. Descriptive Statistics of Respondents' Characteristics

Items	Value	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	200	43.4
	Female	250	56.6
Age	16-19	289	64.2
	20-23	142	31.6
	24-26	19	2.2
Student Level	First year	119	26.4
	Second year	264	58.7
	Third year	67	14.9

B. Instruments

A questionnaire was constructed using a 5-point scale and administered to collect the data for this research: 1-Strongly Agree, 2- Agree, 3-Neutral, 4-Disagree, and 5-Strongly Disagree. This survey instrument comprises of two parts, one for each social network indicators category (including Permissible and Unacceptable). Nine indicators were develop to measure the items that are permissible (PMS). These indicators comprise of all the activities that Islam permit students to do in social networking sites (see appendix for details)

The activities includes: using the social networks to strengthen kinship relationship, creating Da'awah group to propagate Islamic religion, publishing cultural notes to increase level of awareness among students. Other aspects of the permissible components are uploading Islamic multimedia and anasheed and sharing other educational pictures and videos to promote good image of Islam.

These indicators were developed based on an intensive interview conducted with the Dean of Faculty of Islamic Civilization on the does and don't in social networks usage. The scholar was able to categorize the activities into Permissible and Unacceptable activities in social networks based on Islamic perspectives. The result of the interview and finding from the literatures were used to develop the questionnaire.

The second categories are the Unacceptable component (UAC). The researchers develop twelve indicators to measure those activities that are not permitted in Islam (see appendix for details). Those items includes: sharing uncovered pictures or videos in social media, chatting with other genders that are not blood related, delaying prayer time while using social media, participating in unethical group, playing unethical games and sharing music videos that are prohibited by Islam.



The means and standard deviation for the two components is presented below.

Table2. Means and deviation for permissible and unacceptable components

Construct	Item	Means	Standard deviation (SD)
Permissible component	PMS1	2.53	1.08
	PMS2	3.32	1.05
	PMS3	2.74	0.99
	PMS4	2.41	0.94
	PMS5	2.61	0.95
	PMS6	2.54	0.88
	PMS7	2.86	0.96
	PMS8	2.97	0.97
	PMS9	2.88	0.89
Unacceptable component	UAC1	2.57	0.88
	UAC2	2.56	0.86
	UAC3	2.46	0.93
	UAC4	2.76	0.95
	UAC5	2.47	0.89
	UAC6	2.48	0.84
	UAC7	2.56	0.95
	UAC8	2.61	0.01
	UAC9	2.70	0.93
	UAC10	2.45	0.92
	UAC11	0.00	0.00
	UAC12	2.61	0.83

IV.RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To analyze each of components, the researcher employs the use of exploratory factor analysis. Permissible (PMS) and unacceptable (UAC) are the two components to examine using this technique. The factor analysis was at the same time used to determine the validity of each component. LISREL version 8.52 was used to develop the polychoric correlation used in generating the factor loadings.

Table3. Factor loading

	PMS	UAC
PMS1	0.88	
PMS2	0.91	
PMS3	0.78	
PMS4	0.77	
PMS5	0.73	
PMS6	0.78	
PMS7	0.68	
PMS8	0.59	
PMS9	0.84	
UAC1		0.78
UAC2		0.88
UAC3		0.73
UAC4		0.59
UAC5		0.76
UAC6		0.79
UAC7		0.58
UAC8		0.77

UAC9		0.92
UAC10		0.85

Table 3 (continued)

UAC11		0.87
UAC12		0.79
UAC11		0.87

From table 3 above the 9 indicators were proposed to measure components that are permissible in Islam(PMS1-PMS9).These indicators include sharing Islamic pictures and videos, uploading anasheed and Qur`anic chapters to social media in order to propagate its teaching. All the constructs have a factor loading value ≥ 0.65 which indicates a good correlation with the indicators.

Creating Da`awah group (PMS2) is having the highest value of factor loading of 0.91 indicates more criticality in the list of components. This is follow by PMS1 which is using the social media to strengthen kinship relationship with a factor loading value of 0.88 which is having a high correlation as well. This indicates that using social media to strengthen kinship relationship is very critical in Islamic perspectives. And therefore Muslims student must learn to use the avenue as a medium for keeping contact with their relatives

The second component which is Unacceptable (UAC) component, twelve indicators was proposed to measure the activities that are not permitted in Islam. Those activities includes: sharing unethical videos and pictures in social media, participating in unethical group.

Among all the indicators UAC9 is having the highest factor loading of 0.92.This indicator stand for delaying prayer time while using the social media. A lot of students according to this research are reluctant to go and pray on the right time, just because they are carried away by the social networking sites like facebook, tweeter and myspace. It is critical in Islam for any Muslims to attend congregatory prayer on time in whatever situation expect that which is beyond his/her control.

Subsequently, UAC2 which stand for sharing uncovered pictures and videos in social media is the second critical indicators with factor loading of 0.88. therefore it is indicating that many students in spite of Islamic prohibition of sharing such content especially with other genders, still insist on doing that.

Based on Table 3 and the result discussed the researcher arrived at the summarized major critical success factors for both the technology and student characteristics factors and tabulated below.

Table4 most critical components



Component	Most critical component	Description	Factor loading
PMS	PMS2	I use SNS for creating Daawah group	0.91
UAC	UAC9	Muslims are not allowed to delayed prayer time while using SNS	0.92

From table 4, the most critical success factor for permissible component is PMS2 which stand for creating da`awah group in order to propagate Islamic teaching. The factor has the highest loading of 0.91 among all the nine indicators for permissible factors.

For the unacceptable component, UAC9 is having the highest factor loading of 0.92. And therefore this indicates that many students are delaying prayer time while using social. Among all the unacceptable indicators this is most critical according to Muslims students. And therefore Muslims students have to be very careful of their time, and make sure to observe their prayers on time even though they are on social networks sites.

Table 5 Instrument reliability

Components	Cronbach Alpha	Variance extracted
Permissible component	0.96	0.82
Unacceptable component	0.97	0.78

The permissible and unacceptable components instrument`s reliability was measured by using Cronbach alpha as shown in table 5 above. The table shows the values of Cronbach alpha and variance extracted for the two critical factors immersed from the factor analysis. As suggested by Anderson & Black, 1998 the accepted value of all Cronbach alpha should be ≥ 0.70 . As shown in table 5, all factors have high degree of consistency of ≥ 0.86 . The reliability is acceptable based on Anderson & Black suggestion. The average variance extracted is within the acceptable limit of ≥ 0.5 , considering that all the variances are above the accepted limit of ≥ 0.5 .

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

The study found that the majority of Faculty of Computer Science undergraduate students were Social networks users. More than half of them were female students, aged between 18-19 years old. The study also found that majority of the students admitted that social networking sites affect their religious performance, like feeling reluctant to go and pray on the right time while connected to social networks. It's therefore critical for Muslims students to be careful with the way and manner they use these social networks, in such a way that they can only use those components that are permissible in Islam. Furthermore, the study indicate that some Muslims students uses the media to create Da`awah group in order to portray the good image of Islam. Those groups includes Islamic Da`awah and I am a Muslim.

The study explores two critical components one for each categories (permissible and Unacceptable). For the permissible categories, creating Da`awah group is most critical while for the unacceptable categories delaying prayer time is most critical.

It is highly encourage for Muslims students to form such educative group in order to propagate the teaching and practices of true Islam, and at the same avoid misusing the media at the expenses of their religions.

This is limited to students perception only, there is need to expand the scope to cover the lectures as well. The indicators also can be expanded to cover all aspect of social networking media so as to give more details framework for obtaining latest information.

APPENDIX

Permissible Indicators (PMS)

- PMS1 I use social networking sites to strengthen kinship relations.
- PMS2 I use social networking sites for creating Da`awah groups.
- PMS3 I use social networking site for introducing Islam to non-Muslim by creating a specific group.
- PMS4 use SNS for educational purpose such as (creating specific group in one branch of Knowledge as medical group, Hadith group and so on).
- PMS5 I use SNS to publish cultural notes to increase the awareness level in the society.
- PMS6 I use it for sharing educational multimedia (video/sound track).
- PMS7 I use SNS to create pages to introduce Prophet Mohammed`s companions character
- PMS8 I use SNS to make Hadith or any Islamic text in the comment to let all of users (Muslims/non-Muslims) to see it.
- PMS9 Upload Quran, Islamic Anasheed and other Islamic multimedia.

Unacceptable Indicators (UAC)

- UAC1 I make friendship relations with other gender.
- UAC2 I share uncovered photos/videos for Muslim female
- UAC3 I share western music clips and movies.
- UAC4 I join mixed gender groups.
- UAC5 I join impolite content groups as (sharing sexual contents groups).
- UAC6 I chat with other gender
- UAC7 I share links to unethical sites.
- UAC8 I spend working/studying time using social Networks sites
- UAC9 I delay the prayer`s time while using social networks tools.
- UAC10 I Play mixed groups players Games.
- UAC11 I play unethical Games.
- UAC12 I look on other people activities, friendship relations and so on.

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