

UNDERSTANDING THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL-NETWORKING FACEBOOK ON WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of a rapidly growing social networking site, Facebook has started to give a massive impact on the users. The aim of this study is to examine the influence of Facebook for users, especially to the women.

This study will apply qualitative methods, through literature review and document analysis of past studies. The results showed that Facebook gives more negative impact, and if it is not properly controlled, it will be exploited for other dreadful purposes. At the end of this paper, some suggestions are included for a better use the social-networking site.

Keywords: Social-networking, facebook, consumers, women.

INTRODUCTION

Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Friendster, Hi5 and LinkedIn are all examples of the virtual social-networking sites which is the current trend. It has a function as a communication tool that is equipped with various applications such as personal websites, discussion forums, email, chat rooms, space to upload pictures and video as well as game software (Boyd & Ellison 2008). Therefore, the virtual social-networking site can be defined as a social site with a range of interesting applications and thus helping the users to communicate or to interact with each other.

In Malaysia, the social-networking Facebook has become the most popular virtual community of choice compared to other social sites (Siti Azaleila & Azizah 2010). This page was rapidly built into the community with users ranging from all ages, starting from childhood until the age of senior citizens (DeCosta 2010).

In fact, politicians and celebrities are not left from having a virtual social-networking site along with the progress of current technology (Rosmalina 2010).

There are study showed that females spent more time on Facebook, had more Facebook friends, and were more likely to use profile pictures for impression management (McAndrew & Jeong 2012). Study by Norizan et al. (2010) shows that the use of social sites like Facebook and MySpace in Malaysia has become in trend and is increased from time to time, whether in urban or rural areas. Refer to statistics taken from Socialbakers.com website; the amount of visitors to social-networking Facebook in Malaysia is as high as over 12 million. In fact, this number increased from time to time. Among the highest number of users in Facebook are users within the age of 18 to 24 years old

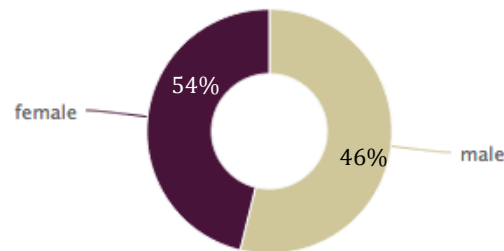


Figure: 1
Statistical male/female user ratio in Malaysia
Source: Socialbakers.com

WORLD WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

The advancement of technology in the 21st century has produced a world without boundaries. All information either in or outside the country can be accessed with only few clicks of a computer mouse. Even in behind the computer screen, users are still able to explore the entire world and getting the updates of news in a faster way. This state will change the world towards an open policy thus creating a phenomenon of a broad discussion with no borders.

Discussions can be done by using a variety of applications that have been fitted in the social-networking Facebook. Users are able to exchange ideas and comment on the status of contacts whose are in the same network. Furthermore, the presence of a third application such as online quizzes and games in the network allows users to create a variety of desired applications. These applications can then be shared with other users around the world and at the same time helping them to add new friends on Facebook.

Before this, users can only access the social-networking site through computer or laptop, but nowadays the telecommunications network in Malaysia such as Maxis and Celcom also have offers services to receive and to update Facebook's status.

Users will have access to make updates directly only through SMS (Short Messaging System), which is not offered by other social-networking sites. This provides advantage and is appealing to many users to choose this social-networking site.

THE IMPACT OF FACEBOOK ONTO IT'S USERS

There are many researches been carried out in overseas pertaining on the social-networking, especially on Facebook. Many issues that can be bring forward and are interesting to be discussed to see how far the social-networking can give an impact to the users. There are few issues discussed and among them are issue on the addictions of social network (Barbera et al., 2009), the issue on over exposure of self-details (Koroleva et al. 2010), Issue on privacy (Herig, 2006; Dwyeret al., 2007) and the users behaviour (Morgan, 2010).

This article will focus only on the Facebook and does not intend to involve other social-networking. There are also several issues that led to the ban on the use of the Facebook by the Indonesian Ulama Council. Surprisingly, some fatwa was issued by a scholar in

Egypt to ban the use of Facebook among the users. These issues and problems will be reviewed in detail in order to answer the question of this part of the drastic action.

NEGATIVE IMPACT TO WOMEN

Addiction

The nature of addiction can be identified when there is a conditioning process in which a person cannot be separated with a habit that exists due to the influence. This applies to the users of Facebook, who are willing to spend time in front of a computer screen for hours. The time wasted should be spent wisely for more useful activities. Research shows that the women are constantly exposed to this phenomenon, especially among adolescents (Barbera et al., 2009; Eszter Hargittai & Steven Shafer, 2006). According to Assoc. Mohamed Fadzil Che Din, the individual who got addicted to Facebook is not aware of his or her plight (Rosmalina, 2010). Therefore, it has become the responsibility of the parents, siblings or individuals to take immediate action to reprimand individuals who commit these bad habits. This is important to prevent the individuals from wasting more time.

Murder Cases

Social networking site Facebook has also contributed to variety of ills such as murder cases. According to the Cosmo magazine, a woman killed by her lover after changing the status of marriage to unmarried in the United States. While in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), one teacher who taught at international schools got stressed and died after she drank a poison because her former boyfriend had uploaded her naked photos on Facebook (Main article, Kosmo. April .15th, 2010). There is another case in Saudi Arabia, involving a father who shot his daughter for online chatting with a man who she had known through the Facebook (Frag 2010). Following of these incidents, a well-known Islamic speaker Sheikh Ali al-Maliki said that the West had brought the ideology to corrupt the youth, especially among Muslims through the use of the social-networking site.

Career

Research shows that there are employers of a company who use Facebook as a medium to find candidates with detailed background before choosing to work with them (Smith & Kidder 2010). This was done to obtain all relevant details of the candidates before selecting them to be one of the employees who can perform or not. Apart from that, there is a company in London that has fired a female employee after the women complaint on Facebook about atmosphere in the workplace, and revealed that she hated her job (main article, Kosmo. April. 15th, 2010). This has given a bad reputation to the company, and thus they took action to remove the woman from continue working with them.

Divorce cases

A study was conducted by the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML) shows that 81% of the 1600 members of the Association has acknowledged in the past five years, the divorce cases had increased drastically due to the social-networking site such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter (<http://www.aaml.org>). They often take over divorce cases due to the existence of third party in their relationship. This came out when the husband or wife has looked to their partner's messages whos discussed about sensitive matters, domestic issues and even sex.

It makes the husband or wife feeling jealous and thus choosing the divorce as a way out. The implications of this issue have caused a religious scholar, Sheikh Egypt Abdel Hamid al-atrás to issue a fatwa prohibiting the use of Facebook. He said that a Muslim cannot use the social-networking site and can be considered "guilty" or "sinful" if they continue to use it.

“This is one of the factors that destroyed the family institution as it provokes the married couple to have a relationship with another person that contravenes the Islamic Sharia law...”

Egypt Abdel Hamid al-atrás was also a former head of the fatwa council member in Al-Azhar University, Cairo, said that Facebook is like a TV satellite or the “double-edged sword” which means the social-networking Facebook will allow the users to use for either good or bad purposes. This has made the social-networking Facebook to spread missionary activities but at the same time the users also did not prevent the occurrences that are forbidden in Islam. For that reason, he considers that any Muslim who uses the social-networking Facebook as “guilty.”

Decline in Student Performance

Study by Chowdhry (2009); Hamilton (2009); Kirschner & Karpinski (2010) and Leake & Warren (2009) have proven that there has been a decrease in achievement of students who use Facebook in their learning performance. According to Aryn (2009), of the total 214 students who sat for the examinations, 148 students obtained lower grades, and they have Facebook's account compared with the remaining students who do not have a Facebook account. Students who do not have a Facebook account told that they can review the lesson up until 11-15 hours a week compared to students who have Facebook's account and studied for only 1-5 hours per week. Similarly, a study conducted by Kirschner & Karpinski (2010), showed that the Facebook has given a negative impact on the students and causes them to get a low CGPA. Findings indicate that students spend only few hours to study compared to students who do not have a Facebook account.

Uploading Photos and Videos

One of the attractions of social Facebook to the users is providing a platform for upload multimedia like photos and videos. The eminence level of interactivity in social sites Facebook makes many users upload multimedia material for the sharing purpose with their friends. However, there are cases where women upload personal sexy photos and it's been spread wide by thirty party (ins Serbia.info).

Besides that, there are also some cases where there some of couples who took intimate photos with their partners. However, this picture uploaded and spread when they were separated. Besides that, there are some cases reported where those intimate photos with ex-partner had been spread after crash.

In perspective of Islam, the actions of uploading personal photos or videos among women are not recommended. This is the purpose of avoiding abuses by irresponsible parties. In addition, all pictures and video must be filtered before uploading to ensure all media materials are covered the intimate path/compliance with the dress for avoiding the unnecessary problems come in the future.

Sexting

Sexting is sending or posting a sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude photo or video of oneself. Delevi & Weisskirch (2013) investigated about personality factors as predictors of sexting, and the result indicated that, those in romantic relationships are more likely to sext, particularly through text messaging. Those in relationships and women indicate required greater commitment in a relationship in order to engage in sexting.

According to Phippen (2009), when 535 students from 18 schools in South West UK responded to a survey, about 4 out of 10 expressed at least one of their friends has shared intimate pictures or videos with a boyfriend or girlfriend

This is the result of most of the women like to disclose and expose their identity on the Facebook such as uploading personal pictures and videos. This situation increased the possibility of women exposed to the dangerous situation or victim of online predators. There are many cases reported and increased continuously, especially among young adult (Drouin et al. 2013).

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, based on a number of issues that have been explored above, Facebook has the more negative impact on consumers rather than the positive impact. This indicated that the use of the social-networking site can be potentially harmful if the user misused it and is not wise in spending the time on Facebook. At the same time, we cannot deny the existence of positive effects resulting from technological advances in the cyber field.

People need to be aware that the information contained in the social-networking site is not fully accurate and should be investigated first. Parents and teachers as mentors for the students must control the behavior of students when they use the social sites so that they do not go astray from the teachings of Islam.

Apart from that, researchers also suggested the authorities to create a software that can control and monitor students' activities while they use computers and the internet. The proposal to establish guidelines for teenagers to use the social site can also be made. In addition, parents can also restrict the use of the social-networking site to avoid their children from wasting time with useless activities.

The usage of the internet can also be beneficial if it is used properly. This issue is also important in order to educate students to not misuse the ICT and avoiding them to use it is unethical. The application of Islamic values within the Muslim person needs to be practised from school-going age. Through this early step, sustained guidance and education will holistically give birth to the kind of Muslim who lives up to Islamic requirements.

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