

Factors Associated with Privacy Disclosure on Social Media by State University Students in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

In the digital era, social media has become an integral part of students' daily lives, offering opportunities for communication, networking, and knowledge sharing. However, the growing tendency to share personal information on these platforms has raised serious concerns about privacy and security risks. The objective of this study is to examine the factors associated with privacy disclosure behavior among state university students in Sri Lanka. Adopting a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 384 undergraduate students across 17 state universities using a structured questionnaire. The analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression techniques. The findings revealed that perceived privacy control was the strongest positive predictor of privacy disclosure behavior, followed by personal data security awareness and perceived benefits, while perceived privacy risk had a negative effect. The results suggest that students' willingness to disclose personal information is shaped by a combination of perceived control, awareness, benefits, and risk perceptions. The study underscores the importance of strengthening digital literacy and privacy education to promote safer online practices. This study contributes to existing knowledge by providing empirical evidence on how privacy-related factors influence disclosure behavior among university students in a developing country context. These insights are valuable for policymakers, educators, and social media platform designers in developing strategies that enhance students' ability to protect their personal data while benefiting from social media engagement.

Keywords: digital literacy, perceived privacy control, perceived privacy risk, personal data security awareness, privacy disclosure behavior