**Reflection Activity 2: 2018 Cambridge Analytica and Facebook for: ‘’ Inappropriate Use of Survey Data’’**

**Introduction**

This is a case of inappropriate use of survey data obtained from over 87million Facebook users by Cambridge Analytica (CA) a British based political consulting firm for monetary gain without explicit consent of the users (Westby,2019).

**Summary of the act and similar incidents**

According to Cadwalladr & Graham-Harrison (2018), CA was in the news in 2018 for an illegal data harvest from Facebook users and users’ friends to deliver online pro-Trump materials to targeted individuals with purpose of increasing voting counts for Trump’s presidential election of 2016.

Aleksandr Kogan science research developed an application called ‘this is your digital life’ which featured personality quiz that aids understanding of individual personality beliefs, lifestyles, likes and dislikes etc and an algorithm was used to psychologically profile the individuals based on their Facebook activities.

Kogan partnered with CA to pay Facebook users to participate in this personality quiz and the users were informed that the data obtained are for academic research purpose only. However, these same data obtained were used to profile the individual voter’s political traits. Personalized adverts and messages were also sent to them to positively influence the ability to vote for Donald Trump in the 2016 US Presidential election.

Similar case of misuse of data obtained from users for different purposes is that of Twitter and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) on violation of user’s data privacy policy. This is where Twitter collected personal information (phone numbers, emails & home addresses) from users with an informed purpose that it is for accounts security such as multi-factor authentication mechanism. But this data was used for personalized adverts to the users for financial benefit to Twitter (Henderson,2022).

**Ethical, Social, Legal and Professional Impacts**

The ethical concerns on the CA and Facebook case include the sharing of the user’s data with CA for purposes other than what was consented and is a violation of data protection Act policy and Ethical code of conduct of transparency and trust (ACM). The survey participant should have voluntarily given consent to use the data, and the researchers are required to be transparent with the purpose of data collected. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), states that a survey data participant has the right to anonymity. Based on this policy, CA did not oblige the Facebook users this right thus, the accurate user data were available for the targeted adverts.

These personalized adverts could have psychological effects on the participants, imagine a participant on drug-free therapy and receives text “Hilary Clinton wants you to continue taking the drug’’, such messages can push the participant into depression and violence which has social implication to the society.

The ethical concern with the Twitter case is the deceitful use of data for targeted advertising and monetary gain without disclosure to account user. This is a violation of Ethical professional code of conduct breach of data privacy policy and confidentiality.

**Conclusion**

The above case study has shown the essence of complying with ethical and professional code of conduct in research data survey gathering. The participant consent must be obtained, and purpose of the survey clearly stated.

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