**Peer Review Report**

**Summary**

The research plan is well-written, and necessary in giving a valuable summary of the impact of the data breach on organizations. However, the authors need to be more analytical and bolder. It is a research plan, yet little planning is seen. A certain research perspective is implied by the way the paper is organized and the references selected, although they can be clearer. The plan would be useful and more compelling to most readers if the authors went beyond giving a simplified summary of the landscape of the topic. They would have examined the reasons behind the controversy in some topics before using the proof they have gathered to propose a path forward. The authors also need to be more direct in stating what data breach means to them and the extent to which they are informed of the topic. Are there other definitions of data breaks apart from the one stated by Chatterjee et al, 2019 or they were content with that one? Do they agree to take the categorization of the data breach by Zhang et al, 2019? What is the scope of the research to be conducted?

**General limitations and strengths of the proposed research.**

The authors consider a rather narrow perspective of the data breach and the impact it has on all organizations regardless of their size. This I think will hinder critical analyses. They consider the effect of the data breach on the market of the organization. While it is true that data breach in an organization affects their customer turnover and trust, there are also other effects of the same. Being a complex topic, data breach and the impact it has on organizations has been researched on indirectly by different authors. With many organizations being victims of data breaks, much research has been done both generally and specific to the organization. The research has uncovered the challenges, causes, prevention and recommendations to this problem. I think a deeper study of the other impacts of the data breach to organizations such as the impact on their revenue and finances, reputation, and stock prices, loss of data, operational downtime and legal action should be accommodated on the research.

The authors need to consider all the effects of data breaks on the performance of an organization. Some of the questions they might consider are: Why has there been an upward trend in the number of data breaches in organizations? What are the best ways of securing information? What strategies can the organizations in question execute to improve their data security? To who should company information be disclosed to? Are the current technological models involving data security sustaining or just temporary solutions? I think the authors oversimplified the plan which will inhibit deeper evaluation of other effects. I would like to understand the validation requirement of the research beyond the review of pre-existing articles and get a deeper inspection of motivations and recognition beyond citation. I thought the rationale section of the plan was very appropriate but somehow light. The aim of the research does not indicate what the authors hope to achieve on completion of the research. The objectives also are not specific and are not defining measurable outcomes. The steps that will be taken to achieve the desired outcomes are not indicated. I think the authors use weak verbs when stating the objectives.

The context of the research is very relevant since it explains the impact of the data breach on the performance of the organization. I think this is relevant in saving institutions from cyberattacks like in the instance of Marriott Starwood hotel. The research will uncover the weaknesses in the organizations and what could be done to improve the situation which is increasing over the years. The authors also include the contribution of other regulatory bodies, such as the government and human rights associations, regarding data security. The outcomes of the research are very appropriate since this information can be used by the stakeholders to identify the potential risks and help to minimize them. On the background of the research, the authors give several instances where data was breached without getting to details how it was done. The authors agree with the evaluation of Goode et al, 2017 on the loss of customers when they realize that a piece of certain organization information was breached. The research is also original since the impact of a data breach in the case of Marriott Starwood hotel has not been studied before. Also, since it's a case study of the Marriott Starwood hotel, I think more information on this case study should be indicated. Instead, the authors do not give a background of this case study explaining how their data was breached and who were the involved parties. I think this does not help the reader understand clearly what the research is really about.

**Strengths and limitations of the proposed methodology**

The research methods selected by the authors are appropriate. However, the authors do not explain how the data will be deducted when the research has been done. I think it's a very brilliant idea to collect both primary and secondary data before making the analyses. On the collection of primary data however, I think the interviews should not be limited to managers alone but rather a representative of all departments in the hotel. Also, telephonic interviews might not give the desired results especially since there is no way the authors can verify the truth of what the interviewees are saying. The collected data is most likely to be accurate if the identification of the involved people is anonymous. Achieving this over the telephone might be difficult. Rather, I suggest that the authors give questionnaires for individuals to fill anonymously. The link to the questionnaire can be shared amongst employees and their identity protected. The data sample of 5 is also very shallow and might not be accurate in giving valuable information. I think the authors should increase their sample size when collecting primary data. The choice of sources of secondary data is very relevant to the topic and is not biased.

**Overall quality**

The whole plan research plan needs a quick edit. There are a few missing words and typos which make it difficult to understand some concepts. For example, when stating the research objectives, the second and third statements have missing words.

The authors use some complex terms that might be difficult for some readers to comprehend what is being communicated. Instead, I think the authors can replace the complex words with simpler terms; from the introduction paragraph 1, "Though, inadvertent breaks…" can be replaced by simpler terms such as though, unplanned/ involuntary/ unintended breaks.

I think the abstract of the plan does not capture the reader's attention with details making them want to read it to completion. The authors ambiguously state the aim of the research. Instead, I think they should summarize their plan here while communicating the main ideas of the research intended to be carried out. Instead of giving examples, I think the authors should indicate the elementary design of their research.

On the introduction part paragraph 2, figure 1 is not labelled after it has been drawn. This needs to be done since the report might have more than one figures. I also think that the figure should not be far apart from the position it has been mentioned to encourage clear visualization of what the authors are communicating.

While stating the objectives, I think the authors can replace the weak verbs "find" and "identify" with stronger verbs such as discover, develop, measure, or construct. The statements should define the steps taken by the authors to achieve the goal of the study. For example, the second statement could be "To measure the impact of the data breach on the organization by establishing the correlation between each the cause and effect"

The research questions should be paraphrased from the objectives and not directly transformed into questions for a better understanding. Since the research mainly focusses on a particular company, the Marriott Starwood hotel, the questions should be specific to that field.

In general, the research is timely and necessary. The plan is well organized with each section indicated and with great flow. With changes addressing the comments above as well as better recognition of the complexity of the impact of a data breach, this research will be worthwhile. The research will be very influential when the authors modify and dig deeper into the topic, explaining the controversies in the implications of the data breach to organizations. The research should also include the recommendations as well as the limitations of the study to encourage future research.