

A First Look into the Profile Lock Feature on Facebook



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Introduction

- Profile Lock is a new privacy feature on Facebook
- Once a profile is locked, people outside friend list are restricted to a maximum of five profile details.
- Available in a few countries only, mostly in the Global South.

Objective

We tried to understand the motivations, opinions, and practices of the users in Bangladesh who lock their Facebook profile.

Methodology

- **Participants**
 - 21 Participants - 13 Female, 8 Male
 - Age ranged from 20 to 33 (Median age 25)
- **Interview Format**
 - Semi-structured
- **Data Collection**
 - Took notes during the interview
 - Audio recorded the conversations with prior permission from the participants.
- **Data Analysis**
 - Used open coding

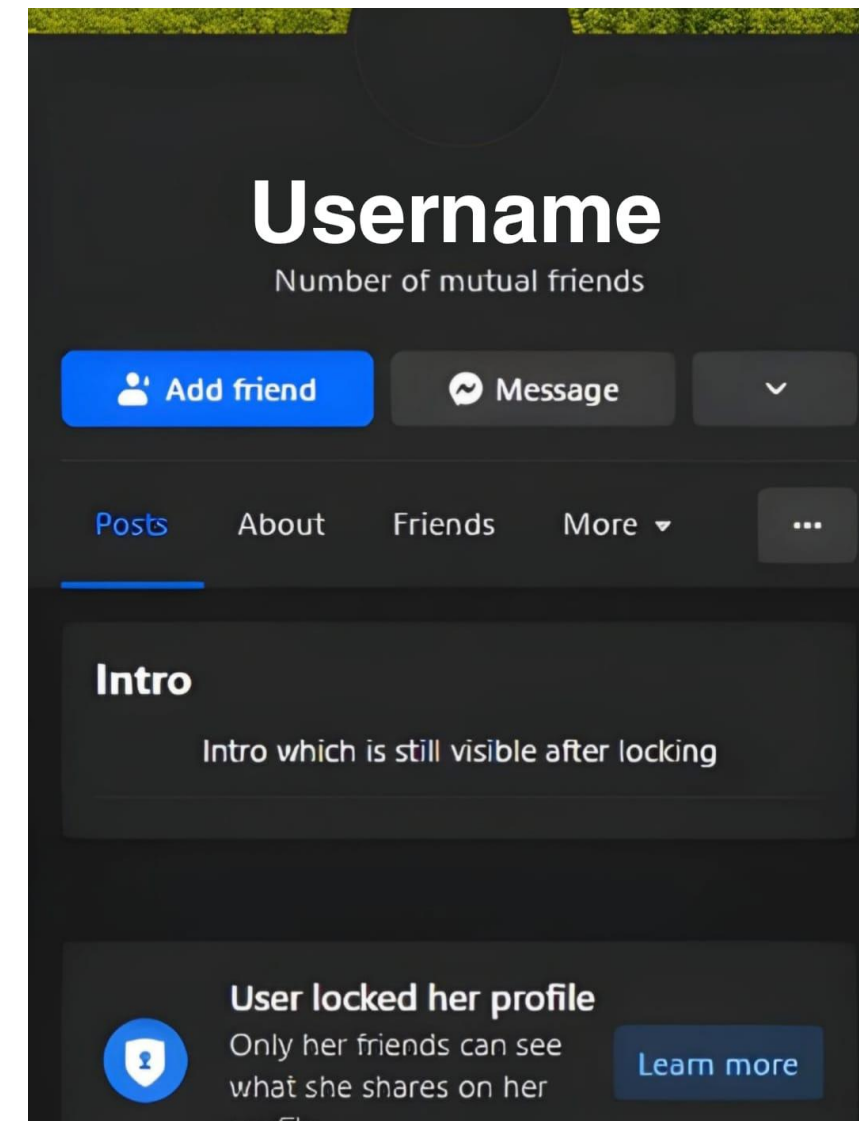


Fig. 1: A locked Facebook profile

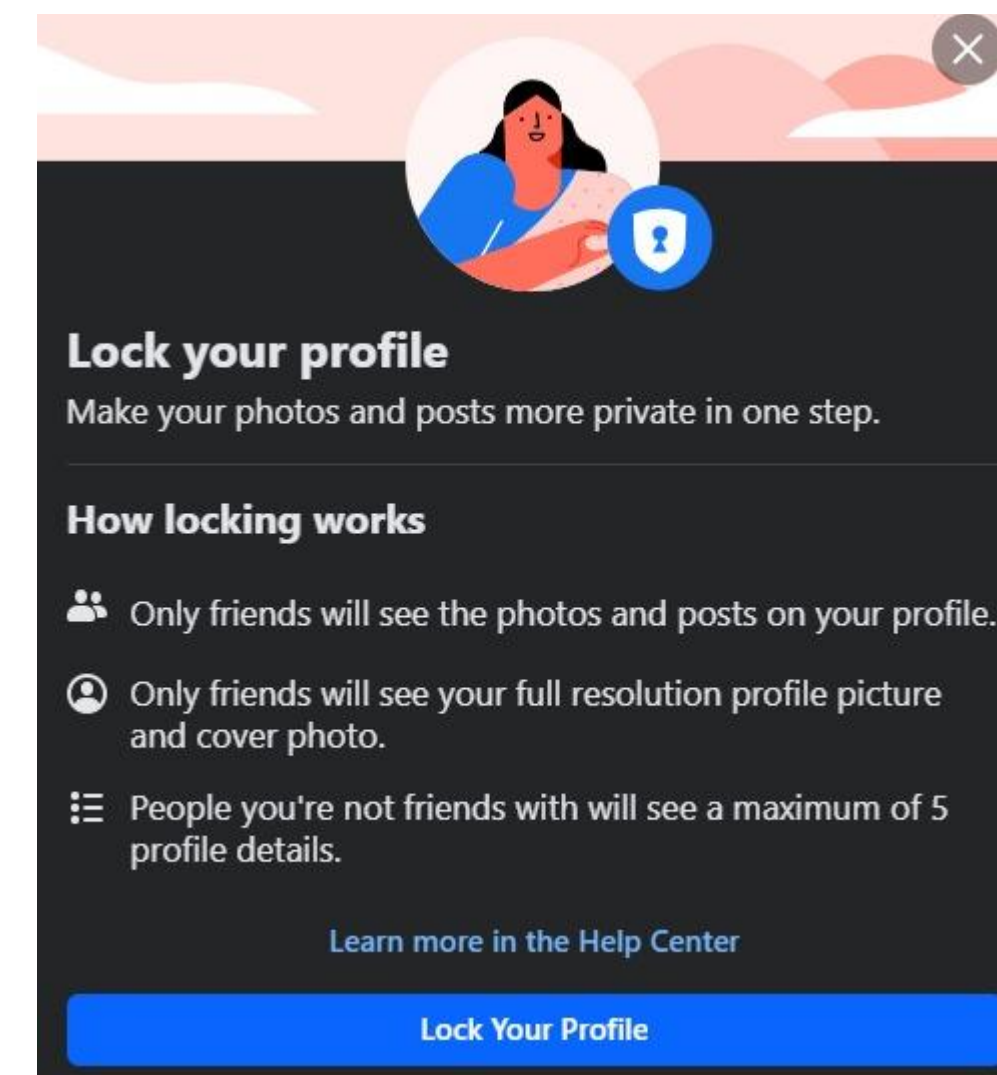


Fig. 2: Instructions before locking the profile

Discussion And Future Work

- Facebook should provide more **comprehensive** and **consistent** instructions regarding Profile Lock.
- Our findings are consistent with prior Global South literature, which reports that Islamic rituals such as **purdah** influences the privacy settings of the social media accounts.
- Users have a **nuanced** strategy to navigate multiple platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- Future Research Directions:
 - (a) Recruit more participants
 - (b) Compare and contrast with the Middle East users

Findings

1. **Negative experiences**

Most of our participants adopted the lock feature as a protection from negative experiences on Facebook.
2. **Local norms**

Female users lock their profile due to religious considerations:
“Those who wear a niqab usually lock their Facebook profile”
3. **Misconceptions**

Inflated sense of security:
“Now that I have locked my Facebook profile, no one can find me through Facebook search anymore”
4. **Strategy for managing multiple platforms**

Locking the Facebook profile but keeping the Instagram account open.