Experience with users about the various GDPR provisions available through the Services

Bachelor Degree Project in Informatics
First Cycle 30 credits
Spring term 2023
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Acknowledgement
I would like to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to Ali Padyab, the examiner in charge of revising my thesis. I am grateful for your time reviewing and formatting my work. Your valuable feedback, suggestions and great experience have played an important role in building and developing my thesis, in addition to inspiring me with the idea of the thesis. I would also like to thank Dennis Modig, my supervisor, for his support, guidance and suggestion. Moreover, I am grateful to my colleagues for their contributions through their insightful notes, which helped to revise my work in a clearer manner. Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my family, whose support and belief in my abilities have always motivated me tremendously.
This thesis discusses the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and its impact on individuals since the GDPR became effective in May 2018. The regulation has had significant implications for companies and organizations that handle user data as it provides fines if they are non-compliance. However, the GDPR was created to protect individuals' privacy and personal data in the European Union (EU), which has added many complexities to companies and individuals. This study aims to provide an experiment with individuals in Sweden to document their knowledge of the regulations and their ability to exercise the rights granted and to know their opinions through interviews with 19 samples of individuals. The research deals with the third chapter more than other chapters of the GDPR. The results revealed a lack of awareness among the participants, with only a small percentage having prior knowledge of the GDPR and lacking a clear understanding of the implications and practical implementation of these rights, despite the participants’ enthusiasm when explaining the rights to them. Participants acknowledged the importance of their data and assessed the provisions of the GDPR. They emphasized rights such as access, rectification, and erasure as necessary to protect privacy. After obtaining nearly complete knowledge, the participants could exercise and find the GDPR rights entirely on Swedish sites, except those who were able to find the rights with only a little knowledge. The study highlights the need to enhance individuals’ awareness of the GDPR and improve transparency and accessibility of privacy policies.

Keywords: General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), controllers, knowledge, privacy, awareness, privacy policies, user rights.
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1 Introduction

Over the past few decades, the Internet has become an essential part of the lives of many individuals worldwide. Many organizations, businesses, and government agencies use the Internet for various purposes. Where the Internet has become an integral part of people’s daily lives and a means of multiple events, some events are good, and others threaten users. In most cases, what can be terrifying is that Internet users are not sure if their private data is safe and not vulnerable to phishing or manipulation by different people or organizations. Therefore, it is always important to recognize that the Internet needs a regulation that helps users protect their data and regulates its use within legal limits and standards.

In past years, data protection on the Internet has created significant discussion. While other nations suffer from data problems or mishandling, the European Union maintains a law that guides its user’s data on the Internet, EU Directive 95/46/EC (Mangini et al., 2020). Recently, the EU replaced the previous law with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The nature of the GDPR raised new regulations that needed to be added to earlier law versions. GDPR became active on May 25, 2018. The main objective is to protect sensitive user information ranging from personally identifiable data to protecting the rights and freedoms of people visiting websites across the EU (Mangini et al., 2020). The General Data Protection Regulation states that data must be securely protected regardless of the user’s location. Whether in the European Union or abroad, this law protects users’ data elsewhere, not just in the European Union. Thus, making this regulation mandatory will be essential in influencing users’ experiences, especially with how they conduct their activities on the Internet, with rights and freedom reserved (Amanzholova et al., 2021). Since the entry into force of the GDPR in May 2018, companies have focused on reforming the way they handle data, including working on auditing and changing privacy policies (Rhahla et al., 2021) because non-compliance with the GDPR could be fined up to 20,000,000€ million or 4% of the company’s total annual income, whichever is higher (Chapter 8, Article 83).

Furthermore, through the Internet, people purchase things online, make payments for various services, and others are also employed through the Internet (Sanchez-Rola et al., 2019). Various activities on the Internet develop data traces. Data trace refers to digital footprints of data left on the Internet when users access the Internet through various devices like computers, tablets, or phones (Kretschmer et al., 2021). GDPR gives users the power to control their data on the Internet while carrying out various activities (Tikkinen-Piri et al., 2018). Simultaneously, this regulation stipulates laws that guide how companies operate over the Internet, including doing business and other activities (Bartolini et al., 2019). The introduction of the GDPR means that most organizations have to re-evaluate and manage how they handle data related to their customers. This adjustment is due to a need for more effectiveness in the earlier version of data protection that needs companies to engage in protecting their user’s data (Tikkinen-Piri et al., 2018). Therefore, the implementation of this regulation presents a considerable challenge and necessitates substantial changes to companies’ policies, procedures, standards, and budget allocation to comply with its requirements (Mangini et al., 2020). The interview questions were formulated based on an extensive review of relevant studies and were approved by expert supervisors. The interview primarily focused on open questions and relied on users’ experiences with Swedish websites, which are inherently subject to the GDPR.

1.1 Problem Definition

One of the most critical requirements of the GDPR that makes companies clarify to users how personal data is processed and the rights of individuals, for example, disclosure of the personal data they collect and how it is collected, stored, processed, and shared. The natural way to inform users of these practices is by using privacy policies (Rhahla et al., 2021). Nevertheless, these privacy policies need better readability and some complications that make them unusable for the intended purpose. It should be clarified that privacy-concerned people join the network and expand by mentioning their personal information because they trust the sites and their ability to protect them. Individuals need help understanding privacy policies, and only rarely can people read those (Tesfay et al., 2018). Therefore, this thesis aims to provide an experiment with users on the extent to which users can exercise the rights granted as set out in the GDPR Rights of the data subject. A sample of individuals in Sweden was interviewed to document their knowledge of the regulations and their ability to practice such provisions.
2 Background

In this section, this thesis will focus on understanding more about the GDPR and how this legislation affects the people in the European Region. GDPR was formerly formed on April 27, 2016, to replace the 1995’s Data Protection Directive, which was compromised in 2011 after Google's lawsuit for scanning its user's e-mails (Anderson, 2020). GDPR was formulated to control citizens' data privacy (Amanzholova et al., 2021). Since then, more adjustments have occurred regarding the people and their privacy, the rights that users are entitled and the meaning of each right to the data controllers.

2.1 User Privacy Policy

The GDPR is quite new in the face of many in the European Union, and the regulation’s use is not yet understood very well. Conversely, it is not common among users since its implementation in 2018 (Kwak et al., 2022; Tesfay et al., 2018). However, some users who know the regulation indicate more interest in the clauses that protect the users' data and what each right can mean to them. Since privacy is traditionally expressed in terms of space, the GDPR and its compliance with the users mean a lot for the optimal operation and provision of room to operate without any control. According to Kwak et al. (2022), the GDPR has different rights that protect users' privacy, and users express different opinions regarding the implication of the GDPR to them. Kwak et al. (2022) indicate that despite users' excitement over control over their privacy, the information diffusion and further processing after giving consent for their data remains a concern for most users.

Jensen et al. (2005) discuss the importance of privacy to individuals and their online decision-making processes. They present a study that delves into user concern analysis and compares what users say to what they do in an experimental scenario. Jensen et al. (2005) also report that users rarely refer to a policy even when available. Additionally, their research revealed that many users have inaccurate perceptions of their knowledge regarding privacy technology and vulnerabilities. Considering the evidence that users frequently neglect privacy policies (Jensen et al. 2005)

According to Floridi (2013), information privacy can be understood as freedom from unwanted intrusion or restrictions on knowledge about an individual that is either unknown or unknown. In other words, it refers to the control of individuals over their personal information and the ability to determine who can access it. By setting data protection and privacy standards, the GDPR creates a framework that governs how organizations handle personal information. It aims to ensure transparency and accountability in how data is processed, protect the rights of individuals and give them the freedom to control their information. GDPR regulations act as airtight, protecting individuals from unwanted intrusion and giving them the ability to control their data without interference.

Similarly, there is a lack of trust on the user's side on some rights, and some express their perspectives on different rights. Sobolewskiet et al. (2017) stated that the right to rectification, the right to object, and the right to be informed, among other rights, are crucial tools for users to control the dissemination of their data. However, most users are unsure whether some data controllers can comply with different sections of the GDPR. Therefore, the users' knowledge and opinion on the GDPR have been in the light for some time on the issues affecting the users and their experience with this new regulation. As a regulation, the legislation has many implications for the people and what their data privacy also means to the data controllers. Sobolewskiet et al. (2017) argue that user sees the new regulation as a way to escape the control and capture of privacy that has been for years. Therefore, the authors argue that the rights contained under different cases of GDPR are crucial according to the users' opinions.

2.2 Scope Of GDPR

The GDPR has been in the spotlight since 2018, and users worldwide have been experiencing new features with this regulation, which created general legitimacy and transparency in handling user data. In addition, GDPR protects their daily activities (such as transactions and interactions on social media) by regulating the rights they enjoy while interacting with data controllers. (Gil González & de Hert, 2019).

GDPR applies to parties that collect and process data on the Internet and the users whose data are utilized (Amanzholova et al., 2021). The author argues that when companies collect data
from the Internet, they are responsible for any data they collect. Nevertheless, they can also interfere with the data, exposing the person who processed it to many potential threats. Bartolini et al. (2019) say that for proper data protection through Internet services, the GDPR aims to create individual laws allowing users to use the website safely. For example, they should be able to exercise their rights on the Internet while acknowledging that policies protect that given website. A typical example of GDPR on websites is using cookies, where users ask for consent before using the website (Gil González & de Hert, 2019). By accepting cookies, the website can collect the user’s data. However, if the user finds discomfort while using the website, there is also an option of rejecting all cookies, hence denying the website access to the user’s data (Kretschmer et al., 2021).

The option of rejecting cookies in the regulation has reduced the rate of unconsented access to users’ data while using various online platforms. Kretschmer et al. (2021) argue that laws stipulated in the articles of GDPR protect the use of regulation. Articles in the GDPR guide how users interact with the law, people, and organizations online while ensuring their data is used correctly. Data the law aims to protect contains some components, including names, the user’s national ID, and the user’s address (Gruschka et al., 2018). Therefore, the GDPR protects the users through the rights mentioned under "Rights of the data subject" in Chapter 3 of the GDPR.

2.3 Rights Of The Data Subject

It is essential for the users to clearly understand each of their rights (Anderson & Seck, 2020)). Chapter 3 of the GDPR (GDPR, n.d) contains major regulations that protect users. These data regulations ensure that the data subject clarifies the type of data the website collects, what the data will be used for, if the data is correct or not, and whether the data needs to change or be deleted (Tikkinen et al., 2018). The regulations behind data protection are to create transparency between the parts that are involved. Alike, some of the regulations that ensure GDPR protects data subjects are the need for fairness and minimization. Minimization directs data collection to a specific use. Therefore, only data that is relevant will be filtered for use. While handling user data, the GDPR posits that only necessary and valuable data of the users should be gathered (Anderson & Seck, 2020). While using the Internet for various uses, users must provide personal information, although some information is irrelevant. While filling out the registration form for various websites, some information is marked in an asterisk (Gruschka et al., 2018), meaning that they are compulsory while others are optional. GDPR has different regulations guiding the information users should give the data controllers. Data controllers are individuals, agencies, or companies over the Internet that determines the purpose of processing personal data (Tikkinen et al., 2018). The regulations that guide users’ data depend on accuracy, storage limitation, integrity, and confidentially (Anderson & Seck, 2020). Therefore, this section will focus on eight individual rights that impact users’ experience while using the GDPR. These rights are enlisted in Chapter 3 of the GDPR (GDPR, n.d). It is crucial to understand that the recitals of rights in GDPR are appropriately revised by the appropriate bodies hence granting the users full responsibilities for utilizing the rights.

They include the following:

2.3.1 Right To Be Informed

That right ensures the data controller acknowledges the purpose of data usage to the user. This right requires organizations or businesses on the Internet to tell the users that the data they collect and the process will be used for specific purposes (Sideri & Gritzalis, 2020). Conversely, it provides the users with clear, transparent, and concise information about how their data will be used online (Sideri & Gritzalis, 2020). Additionally, the right to be informed in the GDPR requires the data collectors and controllers to provide individuals with details that would help them overcome scepticism while using the Internet or when asked for their data over the Internet (Sideri & Gritzalis, 2020). Users have the right to be informed of the identity and contact details of the controller or person who collects their data, the purpose of their data usage, and the reasons for the data process. At the same time, users must be informed of the legal basis that the controller follows to ensure that their data is obtained lawfully (GDPR, n.d). Additionally, the right stipulates that the data controller should tell the users the category of the data they use/obtain (Sideri & Gritzalis, 2020). The data controllers must assure the users that their data will be fully protected. This information ensures user’s critical information is in the right place. (GDPR, n.d). This right even allows users to inquire how long the controllers will utilize their data (GDPR, n.d). Furthermore, it posits that the controller should extend the use of the data while observing other rights related to data protection, like the right to access,
rectification, and objection. According to Sideri & Gritzalis (2020), the right to be informed is crucial since it helps individuals make informed decisions while using the Internet or giving their data to the data controllers. That right is vital because it lets users see where the data does not directly form. Therefore, this right allows the user to exercise the GDPR fully and effectively. GDPR protects the users and ensures that Internet users and their data are safe and that they know how the Internet works.

### 2.3.2 Right Of Access

This right provides the users with knowledge of their data on the Internet and how the controller uses it. (GDPR, n.d.). Article 15 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) provides for the right to access data, expressing that induced gives individuals the right to obtain a copy of their data and other supplementary information. It helps individuals understand why their data is being used and check whether the process is legal (GDPR, n.d). Regarding those controllers use or process individuals’ data, GDPR gives them access to questions about this and what categories of data the data controller obtained (Bufalieri et al., 2020). Hence, any recipient of this data should be disclosed, whether from the international level or within the nation. In order to exercise the right of access, the GDPR often advise the user who feels that the data controller is using their data to submit a written request where practical as a way of evading disputes between Internet users and data controllers (Gil González & de Hert, 2019). Similarly, for the information to be valid, the users may be prompted to provide evidence proving that the data they want to access is theirs (Gil González & de Hert, 2019). Sometimes, proof of identity, like identity cards and other verification documents, might be needed to prove the identity. In Article 12 (5) of the GDPR, the data controllers can charge some amount for some requests (GDPR, n.d). However, the regulation shuns the controllers who charge higher fees supposedly while the users try to access their data. Therefore, users pay an administrative cost while trying to access data from the controller (Bufalieri et al., 2020). Article 14(4) of the GDPR assumes that the right of users to access data must not entirely affect the right and freedom of users. According to the article, users have the right to access data whenever they want, but taking into account the right of third parties, intellectual property rights, and trade secrets to avoid conflicts that can arise (GDPR, n.d.). Individuals can access and see what kind of data the data controller utilizes. The article also adds that data controllers can resist and protect users’ data by denying access to the data by anyone without proof of identity (GDPR, n.d.).

### 2.3.3 The Right To Rectification

The right to rectify the data in case of inaccuracy (Wolters, 2018). If the user's data is incomplete, they have the right to complete it with the data controller, even if the user will have to produce supplementary information (Wolters, 2018). Article 19 insists that the data controller must communicate to the user if the data rectification is complete. Simultaneously, communication should also be done if the data controller suspects or is sure the user's data has been exposed. Wolters (2018) adds that the communications allow the users to know the extent of their data usage. At the same time, the rectification allows the user's data to be correctly presented. In Article 12 of the GDPR, the right of rectification also accompanies the right to completion. This implies that, naturally, if the data is inaccurate and incomplete, the only way to rectify the data would be by completing it (GDPR, n.d.). The right to rectification also relates to Article 6, ensuring the rectified data is accurate. Accuracy is essential as it ensures that the user's data is in the correct format.

### 2.3.4 The Right To Erasure

The GDPR gives data individuals the right to ask the controller to erase their data (Anderson & Seck, 2020). This right is also known as the right to be forgotten, as the data controller shall erase the data of the individuals without undue delay. With due effect provided, the users hold a valid and legitimate reason. For example, when the users can see no reason why the data controller should keep their data, such as finished business, or no proper reason to keep the personal data (Article 17)(GDPR, n.d). The use of this right could be understood in different ways: (i) if the data subject withdraws the consent for their data to be used again by the data controller, GDPR in article 17 paragraph 1 under (b), (ii) if the data controller directly objects the purpose that they were collected to serve. Suppose the data controller continues using the subject’s data even after getting their notice to erase it; they are subject to the law since it is inappropriate to use that data (Wolters, 2018). By contrast, this right does not allow the data controller to erase personal data collected to provide benign services to the community (Wolter, 2018).
2.3.5 The Right To Restrict Processing
This right gives the data subject the power to obtain the restriction of the data processing by the data controller (GDPR, n.d.). That means the controller can only process the data if they have explicit consent from the users. Through this right, the user can launch a defence or a legal claim if the controller inappropriately handles their data (Wolters, 2018). The right to restrict data processing exists in Article 18 of the GDPR. Concerning data processing right, the law also obligates the data controller to inform the user of all the data types they will process (Wolters, 2018). Data processing restrictions exist under conditions both the data controller and users should know. GDPR specifies that if there is a conflict about data accuracy where the data controller fails to align with the right to data rectification, the right to data restriction is a temporary solution (Wolters, 2018). This right can be exercised as an alternative to erasure, where the user needs to restrict the data under the claim of unlawful data use Article 18 GDPR, Section C.

2.3.6 The Right To Data Portability
Grants the data subject the right to transmit their data from one data controller to another Article 20 (GDPR, n.d.). The right also gives the user to direct the controller to directly transfer the data to another controller under the watch of legal obligation and for the effectiveness of public interest (Wolters, 2018). Although, this right is only exercisable if the data process occurs in an automated way. An example of this right is instructing Twitter to transfer users’ profile information directly to Facebook than crafting a new Facebook profile. Article 20 also provides the right to the data subject to ask for the correct format, structure, and accessibility that the other controller uses, usually known as machine-readable format (Wolters, 2018). This right allows the data users to control their data, allowing them to move it whenever they want to ensure their safety (GDPR, n.d.).

2.3.7 Right To Object
To allow individuals to ask questions about the uses of their data by the data controller for the direct marketing processes, Article 21 of the GDPR. The data subject can always stop controllers from using their data to enrich their businesses (GDPR, n.d.). This right also grants the user to object to the usage of their data for other purposes that are not also related to marketing. Information regarding this right must often serve the public’s interest. Thus, this right is essential in assisting the data subject in being aware of the type of data that data controllers use. Using the right to object depends on the data subject’s interest. These interests are subject to freedom and must consider against the official authority’s performance as in Article 6 of the GDPR. Still, data users may lack the right to exercise the right to object because data processing is for the benefit of the legal obligation (GDPR, n.d.). For instance, when data processing data is used to confirm the user's location in other instances like in courts.

2.3.8 Rights In Relation To Automated Decision-Making And Profiling
Rights in relation to automated decision-making and profiling in the GDPR ensure the user is not subject to a resolution made solely from the automated data processing (GDPR, n.d). These decisions included profiling, which can produce a legal impact concerning the user, or any other legal move that can affect the user (GDPR, n.d). This right exists in Article 22 of the GDPR. Although this right is necessary for the protection of the user, some instances stipulated in Article 22 of the GDPR say this right will not be applied if the decision is essential for entering into a contract or performance between the data user and controller (GDPR, n.d) also, if the data subject provides explicit consent for the controller to use their data. Furthermore, if the decision of automation or data profiling is authorized by the Union or State law, then the user will not be able to exercise that right.

2.4 GDPR Compliance
The GDPR law applies to all organizations that collect, process, and utilize or store personal data of members of the European Union regardless of the part of the world they live in (Basin et al., 2018). All organizations, often known as data collectors, are expected to comply with the rules that the GDPR stipulates (Gil González & de Hert, 2019). Therefore, these organizations must often ensure that their operations align with the needs of the GDPR. According to Radley-Gardner et al. (2016), the organization should assign a data protection officer (DPO) who is competent and responsible enough to ensure that data compliance is mandatory. At the same
time, the organization should often focus on conducting data protection assessments to identify
data vulnerabilities to comply with numerous protection rights that GDPR accords to users' data
owners (Basin et al., 2018). To reduce the conflicts between the data subjects and data
controllers, the data controller should often ask for consent from the data subjects to ensure
that they do not interfere with the right to be informed (Mohan et al., 2019). Furthermore,
personal data should always be processed for legitimate purposes to prevent the abuse of the
right to data access, automated processing, and issues related to profiling. Otherwise, legal
action against the data controller is applicable (Radley-Gardner et al., 2016).

2.5 GDPR Enforcement
After the enactment of the General Data Protection Regulation in 2018, some authorities gained
control over the use of this regulation, and fines are imposed if anyone violates the policies
of this authority (Ruohonen & Hjerppe, 2022). Data Protection Authorities (DPA) are bodies that
help in the enactment of the GDPR and ensure that the rights contained in the legislation are
appropriately followed. GDPR grants the DPAs considerable powers, including investigating
violations, conducting on-site inspections, extracting information from processing data by the
controllers and interviewing data users on the potential threats of violations (Urban et al.,
2020). Also, these bodies act in place of GDPR by warning data controllers in case of breaches
and violations. Through the warning, the DPAs ensure that the data processors and controllers
comply with the GDPR. DPAs must order data controllers to cease unauthorized data, which
goes against the GDPR (Radley-Gardner et al., 2016).

2.6 GDPR Impact
Since its establishment, this regulation has impacted many online activities. The main aim of
the GDPR is to ensure that the users’ data is well protected, creating rights and freedoms that
help the users enjoy online spaces. Most of the impact of GDPR aims primarily at Internet
harmonization and rules that ensure fairness across the Internet (Anderson & Seck, 2020).
There are many ways that GDPR impacts user experience on the Internet.

Privacy: GDPR allows users to interact on the Internet safely without fearing the exposure of
their data. This privacy exists because the GDPR provides users with rights at each level,
protecting them from phishing and companies that misuse their data (Anderson & Seck, 2020).
The core value of GDPR is to reduce many concerns arising from privacy.

Browser Cookies: Browser cookies conventionally refer to persons' data generated by various
websites and stored in the computer's browser (Anderson & Seck, 2020). Through the GDPR,
users can now accept websites to collect their data or reject collecting personal information.
Over the past few years, the regulation also improved and limited the use of persistent cookies
in the EU, contributing to more users' security. However, some websites are not accessible in
case of cookie rejection but accept the cookies to access those websites (Kretschmer et al., 2021).

Consent Acquisition: The introduction of this regulation limits data controllers from using
personal data without consent. Therefore, this impacts the Internet by creating trust and
confidence among users regarding the importance of privacy and access (Rhabla et al., 2021).
However, this can also impact the user’s experience negatively, as this often leads to the pop-
ups of consent forms that delay data processing on the Internet (Anderson & Seck, 2020).
3 Problem Statement

GDPR enforcement has been stricter on businesses than on users. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was created with a range of functions to help EU Citizens control their data, but the primary function was to protect individuals. Furthermore, the GDPR contains several provisions that control how companies process users' data, including the right to object, right to rectification, right to access, and right to erasure, among other rights targeting users. Despite these rules, the extent to which individuals enjoy this regulation remains to be determined. The GDPR has been in place since 2018, and more knowledge of user experience with this law and the various practices surrounding the regulations is still needed.

Overall, knowledge of GDPR is more rampant among online organizations compared to how users are aware and exercise their rights. In response, most online studies often address this regulation from the point of the data controller rather than the user (van Ooijen & Vrabec, 2019). Mirko & Attila (2020) argue that although users are worried about their privacy over the Internet, only some users know the exact direction of the GDPR, and some still need to learn that such regulation exists. Users needed to know more about this regulation's use, rights, and freedoms. While many users interact with prompts asking them to consent to various activities while surfing the Internet, the real-time application of protecting privacy rights and freedoms remains the question many ask (Crutzen et al., 2019). Therefore, the study on the rights will aim at equipping users with proper knowledge of their rights and provide them with an overview of what the regulation entails, enabling them to identify and exercise them whenever they interact with them across the Internet. The current study will also focus on how users interact with different organizations when their data is processed. This thesis seeks to highlight users' understanding of the GDPR by investigating their knowledge of their rights. In case users are not aware of their rights, the researcher will enhance their knowledge about GDPR. Although it is still a challenge for users to understand the use of the GDPR, only some users know about the opportunities and challenges of implementing the GDPR (Crutzen et al., 2019). Therefore, this thesis aims at how extent the user knows about such provisions and what they mean to the users, in addition to experimenting to ensure that the user can practice mechanisms on the websites inside Sweden, only with the Swedish sites.

3.1 Motivation

The GDPR significantly affects both the user and the data controller. However, the knowledge of the GDPR users is important. According to Curtzen et al. (2019), this law was mainly created to help protect users by knowing how various organizations process their data and arming them appropriately with tools to help in privacy protection and control. Knowledge about the regulation will benefit the user in knowing how their data is handled and reflect on various frameworks that the users can rely on while interacting online.

Therefore, there is a need for users to know much about GDPR. Despite organizations’ efforts to comply with the GDPR, users still lack knowledge and understanding of the regulation in practice (Machuletz & Böhme, 2020). The lack of understanding of the regulation is a great concern that must be addressed to ensure that the users have experience with the regulations, which is this paper’s major focus. With a focus on the GDPR users, exploring the users' experience in this study will provide valuable insights into how various organizations can improve their users' experience through the regulation's compliance to ensure that users' rights are upheld while processing their data.

This study will address the concern of the user's willingness to exercise their rights and freedoms stipulated in the GDPR. By knowing the rights and freedoms, the users will know different companies handle their data. Machuletz & Bohme (2020) contend that knowing the rights and freedoms of the users will allow them to have control over their information on the Internet, ranging from giving informed consent to organizations that are more qualified to have their data. Additionally, through the knowledge of all rights, like the right to object, the user will have the confidence to approach any organization they suspect is misusing their data and object on various usage. Anderson & Seck (2020) conducted a study on the impact of GDPR on the web and established numerous shortages in the users’ knowledge about the regulations. He discovered that most organizations have diverse knowledge about the GDPR. However, these organizations sometimes need to regard the right of the users. This study will ensure organizations and users have mutual knowledge about the contents of the GDPR that protect the user's rights and how they can achieve the rights of the users.
3.2 Research Objectives

I. Checking the awareness of people in Sweden regarding the GDPR.
II. Explore individual experiences and perspectives regarding the GDPR and its impact on their privacy.
III. Conducting an experiment to ensure that individuals are able to find and exercise their rights on Swedish websites
4 Method

In order to determine the knowledge about the GDPR provisions among the individuals, a qualitative approach was used to collect and analyze data due to the suitability of the research topic with qualitative approach. The nature of the personal interviews with the participants about the provisions of the GDPR was semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are often the standard source of data collection in a qualitative study that can take place with an individual or a group. The interview differs from other tools, as interviews provide an opportunity for direct interaction between the researcher and the participant. The possibility of considering a survey may fulfil a part of the research aim, which is to check participants' knowledge about the GDPR provisions. As for the experiment and participant opinion's part, the study needs to teach the participants about the GDPR and verify the extent to which they can exercise them, where it may often need to expand the explanation or give an example. Semi-structured interviews allow the researchers to go deeper into social matters and obtain broader knowledge (Ranney et al., 2015). Also, the participants have the ability to ask questions and give their opinions outside the proposed topic, which may contribute to giving the researcher more profound knowledge.

The questions are developed into two stages, focusing on the participant's knowledge of the GDPR concept. Whether they know it or not. After defining each stage, the participants were asked their opinion on each right and what it means to them. In addition to conducting an experiment with the participants to see their ability to exercise these rights provided by the service. With the emphasis that the researcher does not look or help during the experiment, only to monitor and observe the outcome.

The first stage (for those who know or heard about the concept of GDPR)
The first stage of the interview involved asking the participant about the GDPR, followed by an assessment of the participant's understanding of the matter to confirm their comprehension. Subsequently, they were asked to elaborate on the meaning of the right regarding their own experiences. Subsequently, the participants were invited to participate in an experiment to assess their knowledge and experience with a Swedish site they visit frequently. The goal was to observe their level of interaction with the target site that they were familiar with. At the same time, ensuring a non-intrusive and uninterrupted environment. During this process, the interviewer refrains from giving direction or advice to the participants, allowing them the freedom to explore and navigate the site.

The second stage (for those who do not know about the concept of GDPR)
In the second stage, after asking the participants about the GDPR, an experiment was conducted after introducing the concept of the GDPR to the participants superficially without going into details. Furthermore, the GDPR provisions were explained briefly and understandably, including the rights mentioned in Chapter Three. They were followed by a question about their opinion and what it meant to them. After ensuring they understand their rights, start experimenting as in the first stage.

A set of non-closed basic questions was organized to provide the most significant amount of data, within two stages, with questions arising from the interview between the researcher and the participants. The questions were presented to the supervising committee to correct and adjust before starting the interviews. It received a good response from them, and they were not modified.

Since the research approach was based on interviews, it was necessary to avoid violating the participants' privacy in the study. Therefore, the participants were given (Participant consent form) to agree to it. Then the interview began, which was fully adhered to in this research, as mentioned in the methodology section. Also, caution was taken to not look at the participants' devices and to give them enough personal space. The results were realistic through direct interaction with the participants, as there was an opportunity for them to give their opinions and discussion. Some interviews were personal live meetings, while others were via Zoom after the e-mail had been given to agree on a date that suited all the participants. All the participants were in Sweden. As for the mechanism for conducting the interview, a (participant's consent form) was presented from the University of Skövde in order for the participant to give consent to participate in the study as part of the course (IT616G NSA).
The form

I ........................................, give consent to my participation in the thesis project to be undertaken as part of the course, 'TF616G NSA exjobb at the University of Skövde' In providing my consent, I make it clear that:

1. The nature and purpose the study have been explained to me and I have had an opportunity to ask questions. I understand that the study examines GDPR provisions
2. I understand that the study involves participation in an [audio-taped,] interview(approx. 30- 45 mins) with the researcher.
3. I understand that my name will be removed from data and any reports of findings, andthat contributions I make will be treated by the researcher as confidential.
4. I understand that only the researcher listed above will have immediate access to theinterview recording and/or transcript and that all research data will be stored on a privet computer.
5. My participation in this project is completely voluntary. I agree to participate in this study and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any penalty or discriminatory treatment.

4.1 Data Collection

It is all individuals who have a relationship with the subject of the study, and the research seeks to generalize the results to them. Thus, the society includes all persons who can use websites in Sweden.

The study samples

The study sample consisted of (19) participants of different genders who used websites, whereas the research sample was simply random. People outside Sweden or visiting it were excluded in order to generalize the results to Swedish residents. Some of the participants did not like the idea of telling their ages and choosing the age group to which they belong. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 55, with different educational levels, as shown in Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Educations</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>Bachelor student</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>Bachelor student</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>Bachelor student</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>Bachelor student</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>Bachelor student</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 10</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 11</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>Master student</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 12</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 14</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 15</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 16</td>
<td>45-55</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 17</td>
<td>45-55</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 18</td>
<td>45-55</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 19</td>
<td>45-55</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the educational level of the participants with age and gender, according to what was provided by the participants.
4.2 Study Procedures
A review of previous studies related to users’ experiences with the various provisions of the GDPR was conducted, in addition, to previous studies of the implementations of the GDPR. The research study was titled as follows “Experience with users about the various GDPR provisions available through the Services”. The study procedures depended on three main steps that led to data collection.

1. Step 1 planning the interview
The researcher's primary objective in conducting the interview was to collect data related to the study questions. The researcher formulated and wrote the interview questions based on chapter 3 of the GDPR, which is expected to enrich the study and clarify answers to the study questions. The researcher obtained approval for the questions from the supervisor and the examiner.

2. Step 2 Carry out the interview.
The researcher agreed with several people to conduct the interview directly, while others gave an e-mail, and it was agreed to set a date that suited their timing and conduct it via Zoom. After presenting the participant's consent forms and asking for their permission in writing, the interviews were recorded through the program (Audio recorder and voice recorder pro) and Zoom audio recorder for the Zoom interview. The user was given enough time to answer all the questions, a live experiment was conducted, and the recording stopped until the participant could access the site. The answers were received carefully and accurately, using the communication skills that are essential characteristics that a researcher should possess in qualitative research. Some of the communication skills are the ability to listen without interruption, the ability to ask questions, the ability to use gestures to communicate an idea and the ability to use easy and understandable terminology.

3. Step 3 Interview analysis
After recording the interviews, they were listened to several times. Then it was converted into text files using happyscribe.com to collect, extract, analyze, and classify information.

4.3 Data Analysis
As recommended in Hammersley's book, the data was formatted according to each participant, as the data collected from the participants was transcribed verbatim into three sections after reviewing and reading the texts several times. Each section contains the answers and interactions of the participants. That is to create a data collection guide to specifically address this study's research questions and objectives and reach the final result (Hammersley, 2012).

- 1: Recognizing and understanding the data: the text of each interview was read several times to develop an initial sense of the topics that emerged and to know its contents better.
- 2: Reviewing the topics presented: developing and reviewing the subject arrangement concerning the texts were re-read to ensure the topics could be divided into sections.
- 3: Determining the main topics - collecting each topic together as a set of data and organizing the interview texts, as each interview text was divided into three sections
- 4: Taking the sections from each file and putting them in a particular file, where the Nineteen files containing the interview text became three files
- 5: Analyze each file separately and create a results section for each discussed topic.
Figure 1 illustrates the approach used in data analysis.

The data were manually checked, searched, and processed for all text interview files, with each text being treated separately. Subsequently, three main themes were identified from the interviews, each containing different contexts. For instance, when checking participants' knowledge of the GDPR and their level of understanding, it constituted a different theme from their views on rights after they were explained to them. The last theme revolved around the experiment with the participants concerning rulings and verifying the possibility of practising them. The results were extracted based on a method of dividing and collecting them into files, as illustrated in Figure 1 and explained previously.

4.4 Validity And Reliability

Noble & Smith (2015) describe validity as the accuracy and relativity of the research methods used in an experiment and the data results. On the other hand, reliability involves the consistency of systematic procedures used in the study. The main issue affecting the research’s reliability is always related to the methods and the standards by which the evaluation should be judged. Additionally, it involves accurately applying the analytical procedures. Therefore, this current study can be divided into reflexivity, results’ applicability, truth value, and consistency.

Truth Value

The truth value in research is related to differences in the participants and their opinions. Long & Johnson (2000) says that while doing research, to ensure the validity of the results, the study should not assume that the commentator/participant’s response is guaranteed. Therefore, they should always consider biases in the results of the methods. The themes of the results in the methodology section were formulated according to the participants’ points of view without bias.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity represents the acknowledgement of the researcher's role in the study. It involves the connection and the experiences that the researcher had with the participants and the issues experienced during the study (Darawsheh, 2014). It also involves personal biases that may have influenced the outcome of the results. In this thesis, the interview questions were stipulated in a more reliable way to maximize the relationship between the participants and the researcher to avoid biases and maximize their ability to understand the rights involved in the GDPR. The
questions in the interview were created with more information that would help the users understand various rights, knowledge about the GDPR, opinions, and meaning of the legislation after introducing the purpose of the study. In addition, there was space for the participants to inquire about anything they did not understand. As Darawsheh (2014) suggests, there should be no assumption during the study before including the participants. While conducting the study, no assumptions were made as the interviews were conducted carefully and precisely on each participant to avoid biases regarding their knowledge about the GDPR. The study also involved two experiments to ensure that there was the least bias in the results obtained.

**Results Applicability**
This study applied a sampling method where 19 participants were selected for the study. According to Noble & Smith (2015), acknowledging biases in research involves the examination of potential bias sources during experimentation. All the 19 participants selected for this study came from different educational, age groups and gender backgrounds. Since every research aims to produce consistent results, all the interviews were recorded and transcribed cautiously. The audio version was also kept for the verification of the results. To increase rigour in the validity of results, the recorded version of the interview underwent meticulous transcription for the sake of sensible and reliable results. Furthermore, the study also ensured that the participant properly understood the objective of conducting the research. Since the study needed a precise and direct answer from each participant, the interviews were conducted on a person-to-person basis to increase accuracy and to bar any irregularities that could arise during the study, which can contribute to biases.

**Consistency**
According to Noble & Smith (2015), consistency refers to the stability and coherence of the results of the study. The research process needs to be clear and understandable, starting from the initial framework and progressing through establishing methods and presenting results. In this study, consistency was maintained through the utilization of standardized interview protocols with all participants, ensuring consistent data collection through the use of the same interview protocol for all interviews. The researcher followed a qualitative approach in conducting the interviews and explained the methods employed for data collection to arrive at the results. Furthermore, the mechanisms of the utilized methods were clarified by including forms that facilitate tracking.
5 Results

The results extracted from the three files will be included here according to what was previously mentioned in the method section. Each section has been read several times and extracted what was mentioned by the participants, which is related to the research objective. To achieve the objectives of the current study in the knowledge and opinions of individuals regarding the GDPR in Sweden and whether they can exercise rights. Three main sections are listed here. The first section concentrates on participants’ awareness and familiarity with the GDPR. Specifically, this section aims to assess and verify participants’ knowledge of the GDPR. The second section deals with participants’ opinions on the provisions of Chapter Three of the GDPR. In this section, the provisions were explained to the participants, and the participants were asked to present their ideas and thoughts on the GDPR provisions. The third section contains the documentation of participants’ experiments with the GDPR on Swedish websites to confirm the participant’s understanding of the GDPR.

17 were not familiar with the GDPR

Ask the participants about their knowledge of the GDPR

2 participants were familiar with the GDPR Participant NO. 1 and 10

Conduct an experiment to see if the participants are able to find the rights without prior knowledge about them

Participant No.9 was able to find the rights, while the rest of the participants could not

Explain to the participants the eight rights each one separately, while asking the participants what they think about it and what it means to them

Doing an experiment after making sure that the participants are fully aware of the rights

Excluding Participant No.9 who was able to find the rights in the previous experiment

Recording the results and checking by asking what they found and how they can exercise their rights according to the sites they browse

Check the knowledge of those who already know about the GDPR

Figure 1  The figure shows the steps the interview took

5.1 GDPR Knowledge

The nature of the interview initially began to be checked to see how familiar the participants were with the GDPR. The way the interview proceeded depended on verifying the extent of the participant’s knowledge of the GDPR because this factor played a fundamental role in determining the interview methodology, as mentioned in the methodology section. Checking
participants' knowledge of the topic is essential in how the questions and experiment will be carried out. This approach ensures that the interview's findings are robust, accurate, and generalizable. As shown in Table 2, only two participants have knowledge about GDPR, while the rest of the participants were not aware of it.

Participants 1 and 10 were familiar with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and it was necessary to check whether their knowledge of the GDPR was deep and detailed or superficial.

Participant number 1 knowledge of the law was limited to the cookies as the participant linked the GDPR to the cookies only without knowing any other provisions included in the GDPR.

"I heard of it when it came out in 2018." I think it was like... Or is that you have to give consent to things online about your privacy? Or digital store your... Is that cookies that come up” Participant No. 1

As for participant No. 10 knew about GDPR when it became a hot topic in 2018 when it was released, but without knowing what it meant and what it included. As for participant number 10 "Yes, I remember fuss about it ." "No, I don't know much about it, that it is meant for Internet things." Participant No. 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>ANSWERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 1</td>
<td>I HEARD OF IT WHEN IT CAME OUT IN 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 2</td>
<td>NO, I DON'T KNOW IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 3</td>
<td>NO CLUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 4</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 5</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 6</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 7</td>
<td>WHAT IS THAT? I DON'T KNOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 8</td>
<td>NO IDEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 9</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 10</td>
<td>YES, I REMEMBER FUSS ABOUT IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 11</td>
<td>SORRY, BUT NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 12</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 13</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 14</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 15</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 16</td>
<td>I HAVE NEVER HEARD OF IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 17</td>
<td>NO IDEA WHATSOEVER WHAT THAT MEANS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 18</td>
<td>SORRY, BUT NO, I DON'T KNOW IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICIPANT 19</td>
<td>NO, NO, WHAT IS THAT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the answers related to the participant's knowledge of the GDPR concept

Although the GDPR has been in effect for five years, it is still unfamiliar to a large number of individuals. This observation is supported by the responses obtained from the participants, as evidenced by one participant admitting to usually accepting the privacy policy without reading its contents. "I only agree without reading, there is nothing to worry about." Participant No. 8. As another expressed, sometimes, and on some sites, the participant browses the policy, "In some sites, when I have a compelling reason, I read the privacy policy." Participant No. 2. The reasons for the participant to read the privacy policy on the sites depended on whether the participant wanted to buy something from the site. "an example of a compelling reason amm it
is only when I want to buy something" Participant No. 2. Participant No. 1 also highlighted the importance of taking caution in dealing with websites, especially when it comes to purchasing and placing a bank card, as the participant stated the importance of sticking to well-known websites only. "I only deal with well-known sites, especially when I want to buy something. Also, I must be careful of any site when it comes to a bank card." Participant No. 1

Perceptions of the importance of knowing how to manage personal information on websites vary, with some asserting that such knowledge is unnecessary. This group believes that websites do not stick to the regulations set out in their privacy policies and that these policies are only put in place to attract users and create a false sense of security. "It really doesn't matter to me because they won't follow the policy they set." Participant No. 11

"Can't believe they would actually commit." Participant No. 3

"It's just to attract more or to make you think your information is safe." Participant No. 7

5.2 Participants' Opinions And Meaning Of The GDPR

The data obtained indicate that participants' knowledge of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) needs to be completed, particularly about its provisions and potential penalties that may be imposed on organizations found to be non-compliant. Therefore, in this section, the participants' opinions will be included after the rights have been explained in detail during the interview to obtain their reactions towards each right. That is to spread equal awareness of the rights among all participants. In addition, obtaining confirmation from each participant before moving forward to have the participant fully understand the rights and asking if the participant wanted an additional explanation.

The research aims to ensure that the participants clearly understand the rights mentioned and avoid misunderstanding. Where achieving this through each right was explained using examples to promote a deeper understanding among the participants and enable them to participate fully in the study.

As the study is qualitative and the participants' opinions are usually widely discussed, there were brief answers to what the rights mean to them. In contrast, the reasons behind this were not explored in this study. The reason for this was to provide sufficient time for the experiment with the participants later.

5.2.1 What Do They Think About The Rights Listed?

The Right To Be Informed
Participates stated that they fully admire the right to be informed as it can give the user a kind of control. While some participants showed only admiration, such as Participant No. 5, "Is that really true? This is really great". Other participants explained their admiration for the right in an expressive way.

Participant No. 8 sincerely appreciated the right to information, and they recognized the value of this provision in enabling individuals to exercise control over their data handling. By providing users with clear information about the collection, processing and sharing of their data, the right to information provides clarity between the parties. "This creates transparency in dealing with those who have my information and increases trust." Participant No. 8

Participant No. 1 also noted that this right gives users significant power over their data, as it dictates that personal information cannot be used or processed without notice. In this way, the right to information serves as an essential mechanism for ensuring that the privacy rights of individuals are respected and that their data is handled responsibly and ethically. "This gives a sense of control and keeping by me to my information with those who control it." Participant No. 1

The Right Of Access
The right of access is one of the core principles set out in GDPR, designed to ensure that individuals can access information held by data controllers. Participants’ answers to the right of access indicate that this right fulfils its intended goal of creating a sense of trust between users and data controllers. "It is necessary to enhance transparency and accountability". Participant number 6

Accessing data authorizes individuals to understand how their information is used and confirm
that it is processed lawfully and ethically. "Yes, I do think it is important to confirm that everyone has similar access to information." Participant No. 11

During the interview, when discussing the right of access, ten participants indicated their previous familiarity with this right. For example, Participant No. 3 expressed knowledge of this right and believed it was common among Swedish sites. "I know this, and I think this is a common thing among Swedish sites, I think" Participant No. 3

Similarly, Participant No. 8 indicated familiarity with this right but wondered if it was a right under the GDPR. "Yes, I know this. Is it really under the provisions of the GDPR?" Participant No. 8

**The Right Of Rectification**

The right of rectification provides individuals with the power to request the rectification of any inaccurate or incomplete personal data held by the data controller. The participants stated that this is necessary to ensure the accuracy and reliability of personal data and to protect individuals from any harm resulting from incorrect or outdated data. "Often, I need to edit my data as I can get a lot of new features." Participant No. 5

"The issue of trust does not depend on the sites, but rather on us as well. This gives us an opportunity to provide correct information." Participant No. 17

In addition to appreciating the right to rectification, participants reported potential risks related to inaccurate personal data. They recognize that errors in personal information may not only affect an individual's access but may also place them under legal liability. This recognition of this potential harm underscores the importance of the right to rectification in ensuring that individuals can correct any errors in their data in a timely manner and thus protect their personal rights and interests.

"The information I provide is my responsibility, and in many cases, I make mistakes and need to correct and amend my information. It is good to be able to do that." Participant No. 4

**Right To Erasure**

This right is a crucial component of the GDPR, enabling users to control their data and protect their privacy. Study participants showed a strong interest in the right to erasure and stated they could further protect their privacy. For example, participant No. 9 expressed his amazement and appreciation for this right, saying, "Wow, I have this as a right. It gives another perspective on things and the way I work on the sites." Participant No. 9 By allowing individuals to delete their data, this right enables them to remove any information that is no longer relevant or necessary to them. In addition, confirming that personal data is not kept longer than necessary and is deleted at the user's request without delay. Participant #17 also said that refraining from deleting personal information on some sites is a result of the participant's belief that the sites will ignore this request.

"This right is very important, as sometimes I do not delete my information because I think the sites may not respond." Participant No. 17

**Right To Restrict Processing**

The right to restrict processing enables individuals to restrict data processing by companies or organizations. This provision authorizes individuals to request that their data not be used for specific purposes or ways. However, some participants expressed conflicting opinions on this. Some participants expressed concerns that data controllers could ignore such requests, while others believed this right was important in preventing errors. Despite these concerns, some participants highlighted the importance of this right, given some limitations. The data controllers are responsible for assessing whether these conditions exist in a particular case to approve the request.

"They can ignore the request under any pretext, or the request may take a lot of time. I think the user should be given more freedom here." Participant number 13

"What if my application comes with a refusal, and I am provided with a refusal decision that is incomprehensible to me?" Participant number 11

"A reasonable request cannot come with a refusal." Participant No. 14
The Right To Data Portability
The right to data portability is a legal provision allowing individuals to request their data from one organization and transfer it to another. Participants expressed opinions about this right, all of which were positive. Some saw it as a valuable tool for managing their data on the sites as they could get the right to switch between service providers more easily. "I can do this. It is a really useful thing. I can transfer my information from one place to another without the bother of deleting and creating again." Participant No. 2. While it gives users more control over their data, there will be no monopoly by a particular party, as this can motivate sites and institutions to develop themselves to keep users with them. "I think it is something that illustrates the spirit of competition, and this also gives me a sense of security that my information cannot be dominated by a particular party." Participant No. 4

Right To Object
This right allows individuals to object to the processing of their data by the data controllers. Users had different opinions about this right. Some saw it as an essential tool to protect their privacy and prevent unwanted uses of their data "I should have the power to prevent the use of my data for any reason that is not in accord to my belief." Participant No. 7. Others expressed their admiration for the ability to object to direct marketing or sharing of their data with third parties. "Limiting my information being shared for any marketing reason or so on. I should be able to object." Participant No. 16

Rights In Relation To Automated Decision-Making And Profiling
As Participant No. 1 stated, rights related to automated decision-making and profiling are particularly important in today's digital age, where automated decision-making and profiling are increasingly used by organizations to process large amounts of personal data. As one participant stated, there should be limits to this. "Automated decision today interferes with many things, and there must be an end to that." Participant No. 1
This provision aims to protect the rights and interests of individuals in the face of such practices while promoting transparency and accountability on the part of data controllers. Participants' responses were consistent with the objective of this right. "I really like it. There must be something preventing this kind of handling." Participant No. 6

5.2.2 What Do Rights Mean To Them?
While introducing GDPR provisions to participants to see what they mean to them, expressions were made by some participants about specific laws using simple answers and non-verbal gestures. While all participants expressed their understanding of rights, some made short comments. Participant No. 1 emphasized the importance of controlling personal information to avoid becoming suspicious, saying, "I must have these rights to avoid being a victim of misunderstanding." Similarly, Participant No. 19 was excited about the new knowledge of their rights, saying, "It's great, now that I know how things are and I know I have the right, so I will claim within my stipulated rights." Other participants, such as Participants 2, 7 and 4, expressed the importance of rights to them in similarly straightforward terms that all of the rights mentioned mean a lot to them "They mean a lot to me".

"I can't think of anything right now, but every right means a lot to me." Participant No. 8
"After all, my entire life is online. These rights mean to me freedom, transparency, power and control." Participant No. 18

Participant No. 9 expressed his happiness with the right to delete, saying, "I am waiting for the opportunity to finish the interview in order to exercise this right." Similarly, Participant No. 19 expressed their intent to take action, saying, "Today, I'm going to empty my schedule and delete my information from several locations, especially some sites that I no longer deal with" These responses highlight the importance of these rights to the participants, their desire to exercise them, and how much their existence means to them.

5.3 The Experiment With The Participants
The experiment with the user took two ways, the first, without knowledge about the provisions of the GDPR, and the second, after briefly explaining the rights.
5.3.1 Without Knowledge
To verify whether the user can exercise the GDPR provisions on the Swedish site before knowing more about it. The participants were asked if they could go to any Swedish site they visit regularly. That is before starting to explain the provisions of the GDPR to the participants. Only Participant #4 could find the provisions for the GDPR. "I went to the bottom of the page to Privacy Policy and there was a Pursuant to the General Data Protection Regulation. It took a while, but the law is there, oh yea, my rights are also listed." As for the rest of the participants, it was difficult, according to the description of Participant #7 "What should I do? This is complicated." Participant No. 9, "I cannot find anything."

5.3.2 With Knowledge
The provisions were briefly explained, and what is involved in Chapter Three of the GDPR, then the second part of the experiment proceeds. The aim was for the participants to be aware of all rights before proceeding with the interview. After that, an experiment was conducted with the users to determine the extent of their ability to practice the provisions provided by the service. After giving the participant sufficient time and personal space. All the participants were able to find it and the way to practice it. They were able to access the sites they visited frequently and know the privacy policy backgrounds for each site targeted by the participants.

Participant No. 12 stated, "I can see everything I want about the individual rights stipulated in the GDPR and how I can exercise them."

Participants No. 3 and 4 did not find it difficult to do so; Participant No. 4, "It is clear and understandable." Participant No. 3, "I did not imagine that it was so clear that I'm reading how do I delete my profile (the right to be forgotten)." Some of the participants found it more difficult than others, participant No. 13 stated, "It was not easy, as it was not clear where I could find the policy on this site. I think it is a bad site, but I found it."

Only Participant No. 11 could not find it directly, and it was difficult for the participant "I do not see anything, oh wait, I have found it it is down it is In small line." Participant No. 11 Participant No. 9 was excluded because the participant found the provisions in the previous experiment.

The experiment indicates that participants were well aware of the processes for exercising their GDPR rights and found the procedures easy to understand and accessible. Participants also demonstrated an informed understanding of the processes and methods required to exercise their rights under the GDPR. Participant No. 10, for example, reported that the way to exercise the rights was easy and straightforward "Everything is listed here in a clear and easy way, and I can find out how I can communicate to exercise any right". While Participant No. 5 demonstrated a clear understanding of how to correct personal data "I am now browsing how I can practice my rights, which we talked about earlier. There is an e-mail here on the Biltema page. I can send them any request I want, but it is written by mail if I want to correct any of my data". Likewise, Participant No. 19 conveyed an awareness of the data collected by the site and the ability to obtain a copy of this information "I opened the skovdebostader.se website. I know now what information is being collected about me and how I can take this copy of the information."

Furthermore, Participant No. 2 expressed satisfaction with the website's comprehensive organization of individual rights under the GDPR, including detailed information on how to exercise each right. "This is amazing. There is a table showing my rights and how I can exercise each right. For example, if I want to delete my personal data, there is a step-by-step guide. Open the main menu, go to personal data, and so on."
6 Discussion

The current study's key finding indicates that most participants needed to learn more about the uses and implications of the GDPR and the rights entailed in the regulation. However, the study indicates that after the users were introduced to the GDPR and got proper knowledge of the GDPR, the enlightenment facilitated the need of the users to acquire knowledge of the regulation and understand they can use the rights provided by the regulation to protect them from the data controllers. Considering the evidence provided by Jensen et al. (2005) that users often neglect privacy policies, this study highlighted the importance of users' knowledge of the GDPR, as all participants were able to find rights and learn how to exercise them effectively from Swedish websites. Overall, the sample of the participants in the study indicates the large population of people who use different websites across Sweden and still need to gain proper knowledge of the GDPR. These results contribute to other earlier studies and give an open ground for future studies on the impact of GDPR and the user's experience of the regulation.

The contents of the GDPR have been in the open for the last five years since 2018. However, the paradox has prevailed as a mass of people still do not know how the existence of the regulation and what it stands for. This claim responds to this study's findings, where many participants did not clearly understand the GDPR but indicated much enthusiasm after being introduced to the GDPR. This observation contributes to the study conducted by Kwak et al. (2022), where they studied why people need privacy and why the implementation of GDPR is still not pronounced. The study found that a cultural lag was one factor that has been impacting people's knowledge of the regulation. Still, there is ignorance by internet users who often skip reading most of the aspects of the Internet related to the GDPR. In a similar scenario, some participants in the current study stated that they often skip reading the privacy notes, terms, and policies. Some participants also showed neglect of their knowledge as they stated that they did not need to read the privacy policies. They assumed that their privacy would still be exposed despite reading and consenting.

The result of the current study contributes to users' information privacy. While the GDPR is focused on personal data protection and privacy as a hopeful outcome of data protection efforts, most research participants framed their responses to the GDPR in terms of protecting privacy through various means. Three dimensions of privacy that support informational privacy, privacy by regulating information flow, privacy from minimizing harms, and privacy as a response to technology, emerged as used experiences in data protection and privacy (Hoofnagle et al., 2019). The participants' comments define privacy in the context of informational privacy as rights, which means that the users need to know more about where their data ends up and who handles it. Other participants described privacy as freedom from interference.

In contrast, others considered their rights in terms of the risk and harms of their violation, ideas that interweave through informational privacy and rights. Floridi (2013, p.3) identifies information privacy as the freedom from "epistemic interference... a restriction on facts about (someone) that are unknown or unknowable." He further describes the information gap within information privacy as a function of the extent of accessibility of personal data. The current study's findings demonstrate how this gap is bridged when information is accessed. The participant's ability to control that access is the focus of regulatory attempts to enforce privacy.

How the participants described the importance and value of their data influenced their understanding of the importance of user privacy. The right of access is one of the core principles set out in GDPR, designed to ensure that individuals can access information held by data controllers. Participants' answers to the right of access indicate that this right fulfils its intended goal of creating a sense of trust between users and data controllers. In their study, Distler et al. (2020) stated the need for users to understand how their data improves their user experience. Furthermore, free consent is critical when building user trust. Therefore, websites must take into account the ease of access to this right by individuals and the way it is used Distler et al. (2020).

The lack of knowledge of the consequences for organizations that found non-compliance with the GDPR could be fined up to twenty million € or 4% of the total annual income, creating fear among users. As Sobolewskiet et al. (2017) stated in their study, most users are concerned about whether some data controllers can comply with various sections of the GDPR. This finding is consistent with what was reported in this study, as Participants No. 11 and 7 believed that the data controllers would not comply with the privacy policy. This knowledge gives the user more
power to claim his rights and gives him a sense of security.

The findings of this study also shed light on the importance and the need for the user to protect their privacy over the Internet. Compared to the companies, knowledge about the GDPR is not common among users (Kwak et al., 2022). Different participants expressed their perspectives regarding the use and application of the GDPR and its meaning to them and the data controllers. Concerning the results, the study revealed what Kwak et al. (2022) describe as user consent with caution on the extent of what their action can contribute while giving access to their data. According to the author, participants/users are always sceptical about their data despite most participants indicating positivity toward the rights contained in the GDPR. During the study, participant No.2 showed keen interest in reading the privacy terms before consent, contributing to the users' need to understand the GDPR and its impact on the user about the available knowledge.

6.1 Limitations
Sample size: The study focused on a sample of individuals whose number may limit the research's ability to generalize the results to Sweden completely.
Geographic limitations: The study focused on interviews with individuals from Sweden, which limits the ability of the research to generalize the results on an international level.
Limited Scope: The research focuses on Chapter 3 of the GDPR, which does not comprehensively explain the GDPR enactment.
One-Party Results: The results were based solely on the responses received from the participants without investigating which websites that have been used by the participants.
Lack of a control group: The study did not have a control group, which may affect the reliability of the results.

6.2 Ethical And Societal Aspects
The study aimed to investigate the level of Swedish individuals' awareness about the GDPR to see if individuals can know and exercise their rights. This enables individuals to have more freedom and security as intended by GDPR. However, individuals need to gain knowledge of these rights to avoid the loss of their rights without their knowledge.

From an ethical point of view, it is very important to respect the privacy of individuals and ensure that they are aware of their rights to protect their personal data. The GDPR is designed to protect the privacy rights of individuals and provide them with greater control over their data. This study contributes to the ethical implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation by assessing the awareness of individuals and enabling them to exercise their rights.

In addition, societal impact is critical to understanding the impact of the GDPR on individuals and organizations. The GDPR was enacted to harmonize data protection laws across the European Union and to strengthen the right of individuals to data privacy. By examining the level of awareness among Swedish individuals, the study provides insight into the societal impact of regulation.

In addition, societal challenges associated with the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation. Education efforts are needed to enable individuals to fully exercise their rights. Increasing awareness of the GDPR can have many positive societal impacts. It enables individuals to make informed choices about their personal data, enhances transparency and accountability among organizations, and increases trust between individuals and data controllers. In addition, having a more privacy-conscious community.
7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis aimed to explore the extent to which users in Sweden are aware of their rights under the GDPR and to experiment with individuals about the provisions provided by the websites and services. The research objectives were achieved through interviews with a sample of individuals. Likewise, important features of the GDPR related to user experience and the effects of the GDPR on users are identified. The research describes and expands participants' awareness of their rights under the GDPR and verifies their ability to exercise them. The study showed that many individuals in Sweden were unaware of the GDPR, with only two out of 19 participants having some knowledge of it, as elicited from the participants during the interview. In addition, some participants believed that the privacy policies of websites are not followed by the websites and that they were developed to attract users only.

There was a need to conduct two experiments to ensure neutralized results, the first of which relied on making the participants search for the GDPR themselves after a simple explanation and giving them a chance to find it themselves. If the participants could not find the rights on the sites, the interview moved to the explanation part of the rights listed in chapter three of the GDPR. Taking their opinions, then moving on to the last experiment, ensuring the participants fully know all their rights. The results indicated that participants could access the privacy policies of the websites they visited and exercise their rights under the GDPR after explaining the rights. In contrast, only one participant could extract the rights with little knowledge or explanation. Participants were satisfied with the clarity and accessibility of the provisions and verified an informed understanding of the processes and methods required to exercise their rights.

In addition, the study describes and raises users' awareness of their rights under the GDPR to ensure that they can exercise their rights. Participants' views on the rights granted under the GDPR were positive, and many expressed admiration for the provisions. Some have declared some rights more interactively, such as the right to be informed and access information, as an important mechanism to ensure respect for the privacy rights of individuals and to deal with their data responsibly and ethically. The participants also appreciated the right of rectification, as it enables individuals to correct any errors in their data and thus effectively protect their rights. As some have enthusiastically stated, the right to erasure is a crucial component of the GDPR, authorizing users to control their data, protect their privacy and remove it entirely at any time.

Overall, the data collected from a random sample of individuals in Sweden showed that participants' knowledge of the GDPR should be raised, particularly about its provisions and potential penalties that may be imposed on organizations found to be non-compliant. Furthermore, increasing awareness among individuals of their GDPR provisions is fundamental. At the same time, organizations need to provide more transparent and accessible information about the provisions of the GDPR to facilitate users' ability to exercise their rights.

7.1 Future Work

The aim of the study revolves around Chapter 3 of the General Data Protection Regulation, in which a random sample of individuals in Sweden of different ethnicities, ages, and educational backgrounds was selected. This was to make sure that a representative sample of the community in Sweden was taken and to achieve the aim of the study. The study adopted the geographic limitations of Sweden, and no places or regions outside Sweden were included or considered in the study analysis or its results. Therefore, this study provides a starting point for future research to explore the experiences of individuals in other countries and to identify solutions to meet the challenges facing the implementation of the GDPR. In addition, there is a need for ongoing education and awareness efforts about individuals' rights to ensure that individuals can fully exercise their rights under the GDPR. The results also showed that many participants could not give a clear view of what these rights mean to them, and this study was unable to know the reason behind it.
References


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Appendices A

(The interview questions)

1. Can you tell me which age group you belong to? 18 to 25, 25 to 35, 35 to 45, or 45 and over.
2. If you can tell me your level of education, it will be very helpful to me.

The first stage (for those who know or heard about the concept of GDPR)

1. In 2018, a new law called GDPR was enacted, short for General Data Protection Regulation. Would you happen to know it?

Checking their knowledge

2. Can you tell me about some of the rights you know?
3. What does it mean to you?
4. Was it clear to you on the Swedish websites?

5. Is it possible for you to open a Swedish site that you visit frequently and check these mechanisms (rights) in front of me?

6. I’m going to mention some of the rights covered by the GDPR. If you could briefly give me your opinion on each one and what it means to you, and whether you know anything about these rights, that would be great.
   - The right to be informed!
   - The right of access!
   - The right to rectification!
   - The right to erasure!
   - The right to restrict processing!
   - The right to data portability!
   - The right to object!
   - Rights in relation to automated decision-making and profiling!

7. Now that you have some knowledge about the GDPR, can you open a Swedish website that you visit frequently and check these mechanisms (rights)?

The second stage (for those who do not know about the concept of GDPR)

1. In 2018, a new law called GDPR was enacted, short for General Data Protection Regulation. Would you happen to know it?

2. Is it possible for you to open a Swedish website that you visit frequently and check these mechanisms (rights) in front of me?

3. I’m going to mention some of the rights covered by the GDPR. If you could briefly give me your opinion on each one and what it means to you, and whether you know anything about these rights, that would be great.
   - The right to be informed!
   - The right of access!
   - The right to rectification!
   - The right to erasure!
   - The right to restrict processing!
   - The right to data portability!
   - The right to object!
   - Rights in relation to automated decision-making and profiling!

4. Now that you have some knowledge about the GDPR, can you open a Swedish website that you visit frequently and check these mechanisms (rights)?