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Understanding Facebook Usage Behaviours Among Public Sector Employees: A Perspective of Communication Privacy Management Theory

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between privacy concerns and Facebook usage behaviors among public sector employees in Penang, using Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory. Specifically, it examines how privacy concerns—such as control, boundary rules, and linkage rules of private information that affect Facebook usage. A correlational research design was employed, with 108 respondents participating in the study. The analysis revealed no significant relationship between privacy concerns and Facebook usage behaviors, resulting in the rejection of all hypotheses. Despite these findings, it highlights the importance of raising awareness among employees about managing private information and their social media behavior. The study suggests that future research should extend the analysis to the private sector in Malaysia with a larger sample size to gain broader insights into how privacy concerns may influence social media usage in different professional contexts.

1. Introduction

In today's era of rapid technological advancement, social networking sites like Facebook have become integral to daily life (Ahmad et al., 2023). Social media has revolutionized communication, enabling the sharing of information, ideas, and career interests across virtual networks (Wong, Ho, Olusegan, Marta & David, 2020). Among government employees, Facebook plays a significant role, potentially impacting both their professional and personal lives (Liu, Gupta & Patel, 2021). Understanding Facebook usage behavior is crucial for managing it effectively in official capacities while ensuring adherence to ethical standards. It has positively affected employees by facilitating communication and strengthening social relationships.

However, Facebook's widespread usage has also raised concerns about privacy violations, leading to issues like electronic harassment (Al Olaimat et al., 2022). Privacy protection remains a pressing issue, as

many users are unaware of how their personal data is accessed and shared (Kosinskia, Stillwella, & Graepe, 2013). Therefore, this study aims to examine Facebook user behavior through the lens of Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory, focusing on public sector employees' privacy concerns and information-sharing behaviors.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follow:

- i. To determine the relationship between control of private information and Facebook usage behaviour
- ii. To determine the relationship between boundary rules of private information and Facebook usage behaviour
- iii. To determine the relationship between linkage rules of private information and Facebook usage behaviour.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Communication Privacy Management Theory (CPM)

Given the growing concern over privacy in the digital age, it is important to understand how individuals manage private information in everyday life. Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory, as articulated by Petronio (2002, 2013), explores how people actively manage their privacy through communication platforms. The theory posits that individuals establish privacy boundaries and control access to their private information. Recent studies, such as by Chang et al. (2019), emphasize that CPM offers valuable insights into how social media users manage privacy, particularly on platforms like Facebook, where personal information is frequently shared. According to Liang and Shen (2021), CPM remains relevant in analyzing how privacy concerns influence users' online behavior.

2.2 Control of Private Information on Facebook

Control over private information is defined as the belief that individuals can regulate access to their personal data (Petronio, 2013). Facebook users often face risks related to privacy breaches, as their shared content can be misused (Hussain et al., 2021). Employees, in particular, must be cautious about disclosing sensitive information on social media, as many employers now examine job candidates' profiles when making hiring decisions (Zhao & Binns, 2020). Despite these concerns, users can take proactive measures, such as adjusting privacy settings, to manage their private information on Facebook (Alalwan, 2018).

2.3 Boundary Rules of Private Information

In CPM theory, boundary regulation refers to the evaluation of risks and benefits when deciding whether to disclose private information. Users set privacy boundaries based on specific conditions, regulating who can access their information (Cao & Wang, 2022). Recent research by Palomino et al. (2023) shows that users with high privacy concerns are less likely to disclose personal information. However, even privacy-conscious users may share information in exchange for access to valuable services (Barth & Jong, 2017). The concept of boundary rules is critical to understanding how users navigate the challenges of online privacy.

2.4 Linkage Rules of Private Information

Linkage rules in CPM theory govern with whom private information is shared. These rules determine the extent to which personal data can be accessed within or outside a collective boundary (Petronio, 2013). Linkages require boundary coordination, where individuals negotiate the management of shared information. According to recent studies by Ashktorab and Vitak (2022), users are more likely to seek

information about potential recipients before sharing private information, particularly when trust in the recipient is uncertain. This process underscores the importance of carefully managing linkages in social media interactions.

2.5 Facebook Usage Behavior

Since the early 2000s, social media platforms like Facebook have transformed how individuals and organizations communicate. In 2023, Facebook remains a dominant platform with over 2.9 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2023). According to Chen and Kim (2020), privacy concerns significantly affect Facebook usage behavior. CPM theory offers a framework for understanding how users manage their personal information by establishing privacy boundaries and rules (Petronio, 2013). Debatin et al. (2009) found that users frequently adjust their privacy settings following breaches or after learning about others' negative experiences. Kennedy-Lightsey et al. (2021) further note that many users believe they have control over their private information on Facebook, although this perception may not always align with reality.

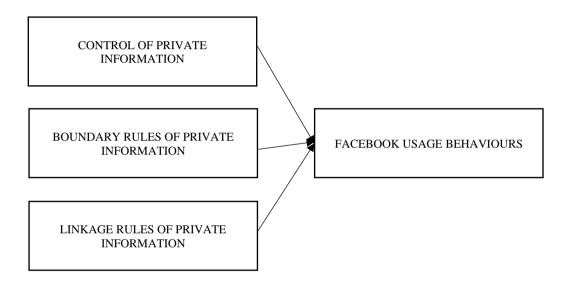


Figure 1: Framework (Adapted from Yang, Pulido & Kang, 2016)

3. Methodology

The sampling frame for this study consist of the list of a public sector employees in Penang, Malaysia. Self-administrated questionnaire has been distributed among 150 public sector employees in Penang from five divisions and 108 returned questionnaires. 108 set of questionnaires are sufficient for this study as Salkind (2012) stated that the appropriate number of sample size should be more than 50 or less than 500. The sampling technique for this study is simple random sampling. The survey or questionnaire was given to the selected participants by online survey through google form, email and hard copy questionnaire. The questionnaire was design based on the research objective and research question in this study. This questionnaire consists of three (3) major sections namely, Section A, Section B, and Section C. Section A includes the demographic questions of the respondents such as gender, age, race, profession, education level, device use and how long respondent owned a Facebook account. Section B discussed about the privacy concerns on Facebook usage. Section C discussed on Facebook usage behaviours in a day and a week. The questionnaire consisted of 25 items, measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree. The questionnaire for control of private information on Facebook was adapted from

adapted from (Spiekermann, 2005), while the questionnaire for boundary rules of private information on Facebook, linkage rules of private information on Facebook and permeability rules of private information on Facebook was adapted from (Child, et al., 2009).

To ensure the reliability of the measurement instruments, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each construct. The reliability coefficients for all scales exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency for the survey items. A normality analysis was conducted to verify whether the data followed a normal distribution, which is a prerequisite for parametric statistical analyses. Both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were employed, and the results indicated that the data met the assumptions of normality (p > 0.05 for all constructs). Descriptive statistics, including skewness and kurtosis, were also examined and found to be within acceptable ranges (± 2), further supporting the normality of the data.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship Facebook usage behaviour through control of private information, boundary rules of private information and linkage rules of private information. 150 set of questionnaires has been distributed among public sector employees in Penang, Malaysia and 108 was return, hence it indicated 72% return rate. The respondents' profile as shown in table 1 has shown the background of the respondents. It has shown that the higher percentage of respondents for this study were female by the results of 66.7% (n=72) while the rest 33.3% (n=36) were male. For age the higher percentage number of respondent were at age 31-40 years old with 64.8% (n=70), followed with age 41-50 years old that result 11.1% (n=12) and the rest respondent were more than 50 years old with 3.7% (n=4). On the other hands, majority of the race of respondents were Malay with 93.5% (n=101) and followed with Indian that result 6.5% (n=7). Meanwhile, for education level It shows that the majority of educational level of respondent were others with 41.7% (n=45). It followed by diploma with 33.3% (n=36) and the rest respondent's educational level were degree with 25% (n=27). For the preferred devise to log into Facebook, majority choose computer with 52.8% (n=57). It followed by smartphone with 43.5% (n=47) and the rest respondent used others with 3.7% (n=4) as their device. Lastly, table shows that the majority of respondent have been using a Facebook account more than five (5) years or above with 67.6% (n=73). It followed with others respondent that owned a Facebook account in three (3) to four (4) years with 13.9% (n=15). However, there were respondents that owned a Facebook account in one (1) to two (2) years with 13.0% (n=14) and the rest of respondent have owned a Facebook account less than one (1) year with 5.6% (n=6).

Table 1 Respondents' Profile

Description	Percentage (%)	Description	Percentage (%)	
Gen	der	Educational leve		
Male	33.3	Diploma	33.3	
Female	66.7	Degree	25	
Ag	e	Others 41.7		
20 years old or less	-	Preferred Device		
21 - 30 years	20.4	Computer	52.8	
31 – 40 years	64.8	Smartphone	43.5	
41 – 50 years	11.1	Others	3.7	
More than 50 years old	3.7	How long have you been using your Facebook account?		
Rac	ce	Less than 1 year 5.6		
Malay	93.5	1 - 2 years	13	
Chinese	-	3 - 4 years	13.9	
Indian	6.5	5 years or above 67.6		
Others	- -			

Table 2 Normality Analysis

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
Control of Private Information on Facebook	.060	.172
Boundary Rules of Private Information on Facebook	021	-1.338
Linkage Rules of Private Information on Facebook	570	.597
Facebook Usage Behaviours	1.604	2.457

Based from table 2 above, the Skewness and Kurtosis for Control of Private Information on Facebook variable were 0.060 and 0.172. Followed by Boundary Rules of Private Information on Facebook score for the Skewness and Kurtosis were -0.021 and -1.338. The Skewness and Kurtosis for Linkage Rules of Private Information on Facebook were -0.570 and 0.597. The Skewness and Kurtosis for Facebook Usage behaviour were 1.604 and 2.457. Therefore, the normality of the data is acceptable.

Table 3 Reliability Analysis

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Strength
Control of PrivateInformation on Facebook	0.749	7	High
Boundary Rules of Private Informationon Facebook	0.819	4	Very High
Linkage Rules of Private Informationon Facebook	0.745	4	High

The Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to determine the consistency of each item's measurement. Table 3 has shown the Cronbach's Alpha scores for control of private information on Facebook was 0.749 which indicate as high reliability, boundary rules of private information on Facebook was 0.819 which have very high reliability, and linkage rules of private information on Facebook was 0.745 also shows high reliability. This indicated that all of the scales are valid and reliable.

Table 4 Mean Analysis

	Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Independent Variables	Control of Private Information on Facebook	108	4.12	.428
	Boundary Rules of Private Information on Facebook	108	4.32	.541
	Linkage Rules of Private Information on Facebook	108	3.95	.653
Variables	Facebook Usage Behaviour	108	1.69	.877

Table 4 has demonstrated the descriptive statistics for standard deviation and mean of privacy concern and Facebook usage behaviours. The independent variables for control of private information on Facebook have the mean score with (M=4.12, SD=.428), boundary rules of private information on Facebook with (M=4.32, SD=.541), linkage rules of private information on Facebook with (M=3.95, SD=.653) and the mean score for dependent variables Facebook usage behaviour with (M=1.69, SD=.877).

Variables	1	2	3	4
Control of Private Information on Facebook (1)	1	.110	.003	.097
Boundary Rules of Private Information on Facebook (2)	.110	1	.056	006
Linkage Rules of Private Information on Facebook (3)	.003	.056	1	079
Facebook Usage Behaviour (4)	.097	006	079	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)				

Table 5 Correlation Analysis

H1: There is positive relationship between control of private information and Facebook usage behaviour

According to (Mendis, 2014), since correlation value is less than +0.5 and nearest to the 0, that relationship is very weak. The findings indicate that control of private information on Facebook and Facebook usage behaviour has very weak relationship (r=0.097, p=0.316). Thus, there is no significant relationship between control of private information on Facebook and Facebook usage behaviour because the p-value is more than 0.05 (p>0.05). Therefore, hypotheses one (H1) was rejected for this study.

H2: There is positive relationship between boundary rules of private information and Facebook usage behaviour

The findings indicate that boundary rules of private information have a negative with very weak correlation with Facebook usage behaviour (r=-0.006, p=0.954). Thus, there is no significant relationship between boundary rules of private information on Facebook and Facebook usage behaviour because the p-value is more than 0.05, (p>0.05). Therefore, Hypotheses two (H2) was rejected for this study.

H3: There is positive relationship between linkage rules of private information and Facebook usage behaviour

The findings indicate that linkage rules of private information have a negative with very weak correlation with Facebook usage behaviour (r=-0.079, p=0.413). Thus, there is no significant relationship between linkage rules of private information on Facebook and Facebook usage behaviour because the p-value is more than 0.05 (p>0.05). Therefore, Hypotheses three (H3) was rejected for this study.

5. Conclusion

This study employs Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory to analyze how decisions regarding the provision or withholding of information—whether truthful or deceptive—impact the relationship between privacy concerns and Facebook usage behavior among employees in the public sector. The findings indicate that specific elements of CPM theory effectively relate to employees' behaviors in managing their privacy on Facebook. Notably, the research reveals the highest average scores among privacy concern factors related to Facebook usage, laying the groundwork for more targeted theory development in this field.

A total of 108 questionnaires were distributed to public sector employees in Penang, with all questionnaires returned. The study found that female respondents (66.7%, n=72) outnumbered male respondents. The majority of participants were aged between 31 and 40 years (64.8%, n=70), with Malays comprising the highest percentage of the sample (93.5%, n=101). All respondents were employed in the public sector (100%, n=108), and 41.7% (n=45) had educational qualifications categorized as "other." Most respondents reported using computers to access their Facebook accounts (52.8%, n=57), and 67.6% (n=73) had owned their accounts for five years or more.

Additionally, a correlation test was conducted to examine the relationship between privacy concerns and Facebook usage behavior, addressing the research questions and assessing the acceptance or rejection of hypotheses. The analysis elucidated the interplay between privacy concerns and Facebook usage behavior.

Overall, among the three dimensions of privacy concern factors—control of private information, boundary rules, and linkage rules—the results indicated that boundary rules regarding private information on Facebook had a particularly high mean score (M = 4.32, SD = .541). For the second research objective, aimed at exploring the relationship between privacy concerns and Facebook usage behavior through the lens of CPM theory, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient method was utilized. The results demonstrated that none of the four privacy concern factors exhibited a significant relationship with Facebook usage behavior.

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