


Chapter 1

Characteristic and Observational Information Disclosure on Social Networking Sites: A Two–Stage Analytical Model

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ABSTRACT

This chapter proposes a conceptual framework and a two-stage analytical procedure (linear and non-linear analysis) to provide a better understanding of information disclosure by social media consumers in the UK. The structural equation modelling results demonstrate the crucial role of institutional trust in mediating the impact of social gratification, perceived privacy risks, propensity to trust, and perceived information control on characteristic and observational information disclosure. While the results of fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis emphasize the significance of social gratification, perceived control of information, and propensity to trust in clarifying the phenomenon of the privacy paradox. The results suggest that consumers are less concerned about sharing their personal information when social networking sites provide a transparent environment and policy on how con-

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sumers can control their information. Practically relevant insights are obtained from the privacy calculus framework by replacing generic perceived benefits with social gratifications.

INTRODUCTION

Social networking sites (SNSs), with approximately 1.5 billion users, facilitate sharing of life experiences and emotions – forms of information sharing – through text, images, videos, and live streams (Wang et al., 2022). The sharing of information by social media consumers can be active or passive, driven by their preferences and motivations, and for personal or commercial purposes (Itani et al., 2017). Active sharing provides deeper insights for organizations (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021) and may enhance consumer well-being (Lee et al., 2020). Understanding the drivers of information sharing is crucial, given SNSs' impact on personal data and well-being (Ghaffary, 2021; Needham-Bennett, 2021). However, treating disclosure as singular or generic behavior misaligns with actual consumer behavior, leading to misunderstandings of key determinants of information sharing (Huaman-Ramirez et al., 2022; Koohikamali et al., 2019). This challenge is further aggravated by fragmented and inconclusive research on disclosure determinants (Kolotylo-Kulkarni et al., 2021). This study addresses these gaps by distinguishing between characteristic and observational information, leveraging their unique attributes to clarify the role of key determinants in information disclosure.

The privacy paradox, which occurs when consumers' privacy concerns do not align with their actual disclosure behaviors, further complicates information disclosure (Dienlin & Trepte, 2015; Kokolakis, 2017). The Cambridge Analytica scandal, for instance, did not lead to a significant decline in Facebook usage despite privacy violations (Hinds et al., 2020). While previous studies have adopted the privacy calculus framework to understand information disclosure (Cloarec et al., 2024; Goyeneche et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2021), they often fall short in explaining consumers' rational and irrational decisions in disclosing different types of information, particularly in the context of the privacy paradox (Wang et al., 2024).

To address gaps in current research, this study sets out two main objectives. First, it aims to develop a model that integrates the privacy calculus framework with the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) to better capture these complexities. Incorporating the UGT allows for a deeper understanding of psychological deviations such as the privacy paradox and helps clarify why consumers disclose personal information in exchange for specific gratifications (Massara et al., 2021; Menon, 2022). Given that social gratifications are crucial in understanding consumer engagement on digital platforms (Bae, 2018; Li et al., 2018), this modified framework better explains

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