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Cross-Cultural Similarity and Differences in Parents "Sharenting" Using Online Social Media from Information Privacy Perspective: The Case of Snapchat

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ABSTRACT

Online communication using social networks represents a major risk for users in terms of information privacy. While the trend for social network use becomes more popular, it has already created new social risks in the form of information overuse such as sharenting. The term "sharenting" denotes the correlation between sharing and parenting and represents the overuse of parents' efforts in distributing digital content about their children. To date, sharenting was not actively explored within the information research context and its risks to the user privacy, as well as demonstration of sharenting in various cultures. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to provide a proposal for the cross-cultural study of sharenting from a privacy perspective using the context of the social network Snapchat.

Keywords

Sharenting, Protection motivation theory, Privacy management theory, Concern for information privacy (CFIP)

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of digital devices and social media tools has led to the development of new lifestyles adopted by the most active Internet users. These users are often described as early adopters of the emerging technologies and pioneers in information sharing principles. Such people can be found among children and adolescents who tend to share the just-captured moment of their life in a company of friends, a selfie with their significant other, or an opinion on the recent world events online. Meanwhile, the transformation of the experience brought by smartphones and online social media has become popular among adult parents themselves, resulting in the overuse of content sharing that revolves around their children (Kamenetz, 2019). It has led to the coining of the "sharenting" term, which denotes the correlation between sharing and parenting and represents the overuse of parents' efforts in distributing digital content about their children. Sharenting is mostly seen as the consequence of high user attachment to the digital ways of information sharing, with children being used as content role models. Such instances include the cases of mothers sharing the photos of their recently born babies (Baron, 2019). However, recently, sharenting has become highly criticized from the information privacy standpoint since it is believed to be a reason for the increasing cases of 'digital kidnapping'(Steinberg, 2017).

Sharenting exists in almost every society and , its existence has been conceptualized depending on the regions' cultural attributes. The common view in the contemporary social and behavioral studies is that the classification of cultural attributes differs between Eastern and Western economies as they have collectivistic and individualistic cultures respectively. The association with any of these cultures influences individual behaviors, search for self-identity, as well as social values and norms in a society (Bansal, Zahedi, & Gefen, 2016). In a networked society, sharenting is related to the eagerness and motivation of individuals to follow the sharenting trend despite the awareness of potential privacy risks (Belanger & Crossler, 2011). Through the lenses of recent research, sharenting is also seen as an example of privacy paradox. Furthermore, privacy paradox shows that perception of risks enhances awareness about potential privacy protection strategies, while insufficiently motivates users to apply these strategies online (Gerber, Gerber, & Volkamer, 2018). Hence, studying cross-cultural similarities and differences among societies regarding sharenting is essential for understanding the associated privacy risks and providing recommendations to alleviate them.

Sharenting in online social networks (OSNs) should also be understood with respect to the psychological changes in the users' mindsets that emerged as the result of new ways of online communication. The idea behind this invention is that Snapchat capitalized on the importance of people to talk to each other, which was envisioned by Spiegel as a method of stimulating relationship building rather than creating a cloud storage that accumulates an insurmountable amount of personal data. In one year after the launch, Snapchat`s base of users started to dynamically increase since teenagers were actively

fleeing Facebook due to their parents creating accounts there while Snapchat promised to delete all communication threads in a short period of time (Marks, 2019). However, Snaps are often saved as screenshots and processed by the third-party applications afterward. It has led to a security incident in December 2013 of 4.6 million user accounts being hacked and reposted on a separate website (Marks, 2019). Finally, there was a major controversy after the Snap Map application was launched since it allowed sharing one's location across the network of Snapchat friends. The users must deactivate this function manually to become invisible. Eventually, it was asserted that Snapchat could still be used as the mean of sharenting, considering that parents attempt to create fake accounts to communicate with their children, oversee their passwords to view the screenshots of Snaps and Stories, as well as simply forbid children to use Snapchat upon realizing that they cannot control the conversation thread unless connected as friends. However, culturally, such behaviors still require a more exploration to understand the extent of sharenting in Snapchat and its existence in Eastern and Western societies.

Thus, the research will attempt to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the differences and similarities in sharenting behaviors among the Eastern and Western societies?

RQ2: How do privacy protection laws and principles affect the demonstration of sharenting behaviors in two societies?

RQ3: From cultural perspective, how could the Hofstede's cultural dimensions be used to understand sharenting behaviors in two societies?

PROPOSED MODEL

The proposed study uses the APCO framework which expands model used by James, Wallace, Warkentin, Kim, and Collignon (2017

The refined model that would be used for research is summarized under Figure 1. This model is based on the author's newly proposed privacy control principle denoted as the Perceived Risk of Information Overuse (PRIO), which defines the relationship between the severity of behaviors demonstrated by parents while sharenting and the certainty of sharenting users might feel when they realize that their information privacy is breached by their parents. The antecedents are captured from the model proposed by James et al. (2017) with several changes. First, considering the previous remarks on the importance of extending the individualistic/collectivistic approach that is broadly used by the adoption of Hofstede's theory in the cross-cultural IS research, it is proposed to replace the first antecedent with the five dimensions of Hofstede's theory.

Figure 1
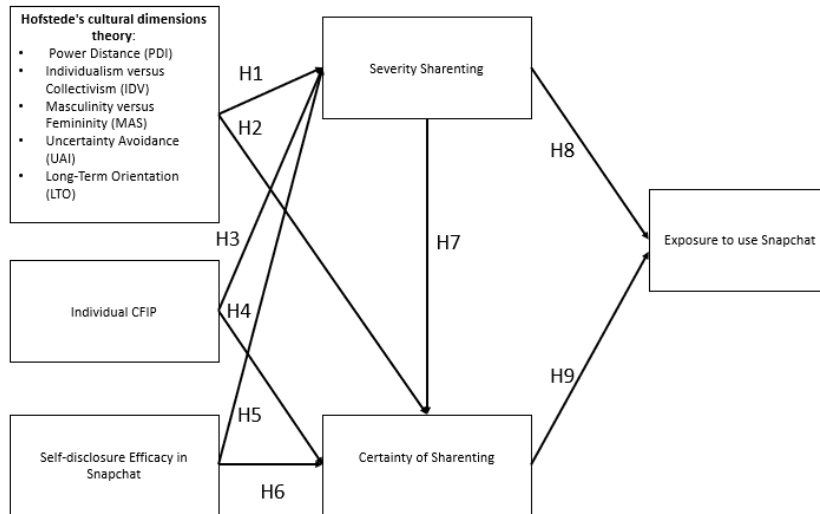
Second, since the focus area concerns the research about Snapchat, the discourse of self-efficacy is shifted from common users to children while the aspect of individual concern for information privacy (CFIP) remains the same due to its previously confirmed importance for the APCO models application. Finally, the expected outcome lies in constructing the vision of how the essential components of PRIO are related to the privacy protection behavior in different cultures. In this context, privacy protection behavior is defined by how Snapchat users would react to the increasing sharenting efforts demonstrated by their parents, with user's self-association with either Western or Eastern society being the important criteria.

Based on privacy management theory, disclosers should be responsible not only for the privacy of the information they disclose but also for the effect of the disclosure attempt. It means that Hofstede's cultural dimensions will lead to more frequent observations by parents and consequently increase sharenting exposure. Hence:

H1: The extent of the severity of sharenting is directly influenced by each of the Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

The research conducted by Fox and Hoy (2019) also implies that children who experience the effect of the privacy paradox will eventually become vulnerable to the manifestations of sharenting if one unintentionally portrays their lifestyle in any forms and creates a chain of co-owners. Eventually, it means that sharenting could be harmful for their intensions to be close with the family and create fear of collective actions taken online. Hence:

H2: The higher Certainty of sharenting is associated with each of the Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

The second antecedent is the CFIP, which has been considered as the core aspect for the APCO models regardless the research subject because of the construct importance for describing individual behaviors when dealing with privacy (see Dinev & Hart, 2016; Dinev et al., 2013). It means that privacy concerns of children regarding parents sharenting would have an impact on fear of control; however, children have little or no influence on the parents' power of sharenting. Hence:

H3: Individual concerns about information privacy are positively associated with the severity of sharenting among Snapchat users.

H4: Individual concerns about information privacy are positively associated with the certainty of sharenting among Snapchat users.

The third antecedent is the product of privacy management theory, which postulates that information disclosure attempts involve not only consumers responsible for revealing or concealing private information, but also the individuals affected by this attempt (Petronio, 2013). In other words, the information owner should consider that once the private information is shared publicly, the recipients automatically become information co-owners. In terms of privacy management theory, digital information is particularly vulnerable when shared in terms of privacy rights, since one is much easier to be interpreted in a different context and shared further (Fox & Hoy, 2019). It assumes that self-disclosure efficacy could lead to more frequent online activity of children and therefore triggers more interest from parents to engage in this activity. On the contrary, it leads to less responsible privacy control by children and therefore creates a feeling of artificial safety from sharenting (Gerber et al., 2018). Hence:

H5: Severity of sharenting among parents will increase with the increasing self-disclosure efficacy.

Finally, the last two hypotheses are experimental and are based on the existing IS cross-cultural research. These hypotheses will use Eastern and Western

H6: Self-disclosure efficacy among Snapchat users will decrease with the increasing certainty of sharenting.

H7: The Certainty of sharenting is directly influenced by the severity of sharenting ..

PMT posits that when the perceived severity and perceived certainty are high, people tend to engage in a protection behavior, thus:

H7: The exposure to use Snapchat will decrease when the severity of sharenting increases.

H8: The exposure to use Snapchat will decrease when the fear of control increases.

MEODOLOGY

The study survey will be written in English and later will be translated to Arabic and reviewed by experts for content validity. For data collection we will use Qualtrics. Finally, for the analysis, structure equation model will be used.

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(<u>ENSURE THAT ALL REFERENCES ARE FULLY COMPLETE AND ACCURATE AS PER THE EXAMPLES</u>)

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