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ABSTRACT

The nature of social media encourages people to contribute voluntarily to public web and inevitably, leaving a persistent and cumulative repository of personal information. Aware of the privacy risks, about one third of the Internet users in the United States have expressed concerns of their personal privacy. However, users are often cavalier in the protection of their own data profile. There is often a discrepancy between users' intentions to protect privacy and their actual behavior. This behavior is often termed as "privacy paradox". The privacy paradox might arise because users balance between risks and benefits of disclosing information on social media. Using the privacy calculus model as the theoretical background, the study examines how perceived risks and benefits affect information disclosure behavior on a Chinese social media site. In addition, the study investigates the antecedents of perceived benefits and risks as well as the effect of gender on information disclosure behavior.

420 valid responses were collected from a Chinese crowdsourcing website. Partial Least Squares (PLS), specifically SmartPLS 2.0, was used to assess the psychometric properties of the measurement model and to test the hypotheses. The study finds that perceived privacy risk is not significantly related to information disclosure ($\beta = -0.01$, $p > 0.10$). However, the relationship between perceived benefits and information disclosure is significant ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.001$). Perceived government intrusion is positively related to perceived privacy risk ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.001$) while community identification ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.001$) is significantly related to perceived benefits. The study finds significant evidence that gender is related to information disclosure. Males disclose significantly more than females.

The study makes several contributions to privacy research and practice. First, the study contributes the existing privacy literature by concluding that perceived benefits and risk do not play an equal role in information disclosure, offering some explanation on the phenomena "privacy paradox". Second, we contribute the literature by identifying antecedents of perceived risk and perceived benefit. Two contextual factors that received little scholarly attention, perceived government intrusion concern and community identification, were investigated in the context of social media privacy. Third, the study is among the first to examine privacy in microblogging platforms in China.

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Lixuan Zhang received her Doctoral degree at University of North Texas. Her main research interest is social media use and interface design. She has published in *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, *Computers in Human Behavior*, *CyberPsychology, Behavior and Social Networking* and many other journals.

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