Brought to you by INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

Scopus

Back

The mediating effect of perceived controllability on the relationship between perceived severity and adopting SNS privacy protective measures

Social Sciences and Humanities Open • Article • *Open Access* • 2026 • DOI: 10.1016/j.ssaho.2026.103878

Bawazir, Ala [a] ; Okela, Abdelmohsen Hamed [b]

[a] Department of Arabic for International Communication, KSTCL, IIUM, Pagoh, Johor, Muar, 84600, Malaysia

Show all information

0
Citations

Full text Export Save to list

Document Impact Cited by (0) References (55) Similar documents

Abstract

Social Networking Sites (SNS) users face varying privacy risks, prompting them to take precautions to avert privacy breaches. A research endeavor evaluated the impact of two key factors, namely perceived severity and perceived controllability, on the adoption of SNS privacy protective measures. The article also examined the role of perceived controllability in the relationship between perceived severity and the adoption of protective measures. The proposed hypotheses were tested by having 387 Yemeni international students enrolled in Malaysian public universities complete a questionnaire. The results indicate that perceived severity has a positive and significant effect on both perceived controllability and the adoption of privacy-protective actions on SNS. While perceived controllability shows a positive association with the adoption of protective measures, its impact is comparatively limited in the structural model. The indirect effect of perceived severity on adoption through perceived controllability is positive but not statistically significant. Although this pattern deviates from a fully mediated coping-appraisal pathway, it remains consistent with Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) by highlighting the dominant role of threat appraisal. The findings extend PMT by demonstrating that, in the SNS privacy context, perceived severity exerts a greater influence on protective behavior than do coping appraisal mechanisms. The study suggests that SNS companies should not only raise awareness of privacy risks but also improve users' practical ability to manage and control their personal data. Copyright © 2026. Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Author keywords

Mediation analysis; Perceived controllability; Perceived severity; Privacy protection; Protective behavior; SNS

Corresponding authors

Corresponding author	A. Bawazir
Affiliation	Department of Arabic for International Communication, KSTCL, IIUM, Pagoh, Johor, Muar, 84600, Malaysia
Email address	Tai_fy@yahoo.com