IRGF Final Report

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Canadians' digital privacy concerns and perception of data-driven message personalization

1.1 Project Summary

This research project was designed to explore the privacy issues related to data driven messages. The data collection is complete, and based on the findings of this study, the PI is in the process of designing a further study to delve into the topic of digital privacy.

1.2 Project Outcomes and Impacts

The PI and undergraduate student research assistants (RAs) conducted 1:1 in-depth interviews with a total of 21 individuals who met the inclusion criteria for this study. Using semi-structured interview guides, the interviewers (i.e., researchers) asked questions about participants' social media use patterns, attitudes toward data-driven message personalization, concerns about digital privacy, and knowledge of regulations/policies related to digital privacy. Upon HREB approval and participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for data analysis. Following grounded theory principles, the research team analyzed the interview transcripts and uncovered important insights regarding people's digital privacy concerns on emerging media platforms. Based on the findings of this study, the PI is preparing a quantitative research study to confirm the results from this interview-based research and to further investigate digital privacy issues. The PI is currently writing up the results of this study, which will be submitted to a conference soon. In combination with the findings from the upcoming quantitative research, the PI plans to write a research article for journal publication. Additionally, this research project provided a valuable learning opportunity for the student RAs. After joining the project, the RAs received training in qualitative research methods, particularly in conducting in-depth interviews. Under the supervision of the PI, they were actively involved in recruiting participants and conducting the interviews.

2.1 Use of Awards Funds

This project was funded by the Fall 2023 IRGF (SSHRC Explore Grant). The funding has been used to (1) hire two student RAs for data collection, (2) compensate the participants, (3) subscribe video-conferencing service to audio-record and transcribe the interviews, and (4) attend conference to share preliminary findings and find new research ideas. (1) Student RAs: $20 * 78 hours in total, and an additional 17% for employer's cost. $1825 (2) Participant compensation: $25 gift cards * 21 people. An unused gift card was requested for a refund. $525 (3) Video conferencing service: Zoom subscription for PI and 2 RAs * 2 months. $135.38 (4) Conference attendance: American Marketing Association summer conference. $2421.35 There will be no additional expenses incurred for this project.

2.2 Additional Outcomes/Research Issues

N/A

2.3 Dissemination of Project

The preliminary findings of this study were shared in a session about digital privacy in AMA, to discuss ideas of research-in progress and seek new research opportunities. The research methods and findings will be shared with students in PUBR3855: Research Methods for Public Relations.

2.4 Future Research Plans

The writing of this research finding is in progress and will be submitted to a conference (Target conference: Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication). Informed by the findings of this study, the PI is preparing another study, which is based on a quantitative research approach, to further examine this topic. The new research idea will be submitted for external funding opportunities.