



**THE STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF PRIVACY
CONCERNS AND TRUST TOWARD SELF-DISCLOSURE
ACTIVITIES AMONG CHINESE SOCIAL MEDIA USERS**

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**AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
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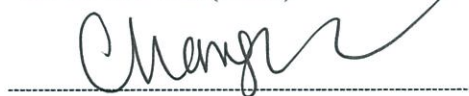
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Abstract

The study at hand endeavors to elucidate the intricate interplay among privacy concerns, trust, and self-disclosure behaviors exhibited by social media users while simultaneously investigating the potential influence of demographic variables such as gender, age, education, and duration of social media usage on these constructs. Employing a methodical approach, the researchers conducted an online survey in December 2023, utilizing convenience sampling to gather data from a sample of 400 participants. After a rigorous screening process, 390 valid responses were retained for subsequent analysis. The researchers leveraged the capabilities of the Social Sciences Statistical Package (SPSS) to meticulously analyze the collected data, employing a combination of analysis of variance (ANOVA), correlation analysis, and Cronbach's alpha analysis to assess the relationships among variables and ensure the robustness of the research instruments. Recognizing the paramount importance of understanding the complexities of social media in an era characterized by rapid digitalization, this study delves deeply into the variables of privacy concerns, trust, and self-disclosure behaviors, grounding its findings in demographic data. By providing valuable insights for practical applications, this research contributes significantly to the advancement of a more secure,

conscious, and transparent digital social environment. The study's findings hold the potential to inform strategies aimed at fostering a healthier and more responsible online ecosystem, empowering users to navigate the digital landscape with greater awareness and confidence.

Keywords: Privacy Concern; Trust; Self-Disclosure; Social Media

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With the accelerated advancement of Internet technology, social media platforms have evolved into a key tool for maintaining and expanding social connections. The immediacy and interactivity of these platforms allow users to share their opinions, attitudes, and life moments at any time, however, this process also increases the risk of personal privacy disclosure. Academics have explored this issue and concluded that the study of users' information disclosure behavior is of great value in enhancing users' self-awareness of privacy disclosure, prompting social platforms to manage private information in a more scientific manner, and even promoting the healthy development of enterprises. Therefore, in-depth investigation of social media users' information disclosure behavior and its influencing factors is of indispensable research significance for understanding the complexity and dynamics of contemporary information disclosure.

1.1 Research Background and Motivation

The link between technological advances and the proliferation of social media platforms has allowed individuals across the globe unprecedented access to an intertwined digital network for instant communication, information sharing, and social interaction (Hsu et al., 2013). Particularly in China and globally, popular social networking platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and TikTok allow users to record their daily lives using text, images, and short video formats (Cao et al., 2018). This information-sharing behavior, which is prevalent in academia, has been uniformly referred to as social media disclosure behavior, which involves users' initiative and awareness of being revealed their thoughts, feelings, and experiences on these platforms (Jiang et al., 2013).

However, as technology propels society into the digital age, norms of privacy and personal information disclosure are evolving, which poses a range of challenges and

implications for users. It has been noted that in the decision-making process of privacy disclosure, users often need to weigh the convenience of customized services against the possible risks associated with information leakage (Li, 2023). Social media platforms, backed by complex algorithms, are carefully designed to encourage users to share more personal information, which is further used to personalize advertisements and user experiences (Du et al., 2018). As a result, users often have to navigate through waves of privacy concerns while enjoying these conveniences (Ai, 2023).

In recent years, researchers in the fields of communication, media education, and psychology have taken a keen interest in the interaction between privacy perceptions and personal information disclosure behaviors. Taddei and Contena (2013) showed that although social media users have a basic perception of the possible risks associated with disclosing their personal information, this perception does not inhibit their tendency to share information on these platforms Heravi et al. (2018) further note that when users express concerns about data privacy, their online disclosure behaviors are often inconsistent with their claimed concerns, and that this discrepancy between behavior and intent constitutes the so-called "privacy paradox". The existence of this phenomenon makes it important for researchers to re-examine the link between privacy perceptions and behaviors in social contexts. In addition, users' decisions to disclose personal information are influenced by their privacy concerns and other attributes, and there is a subtle and complex interaction between users' privacy concerns and their disclosures.

Therefore, the correlation between privacy concern and self-disclosure behavior is a complex phenomenon, and on the other hand studies have shown that trust also has a strong correlation for social media users' self-disclosure behavior. According to Wang (2022), the trust factor mainly consists of trust in the social platform and interpersonal trust in other platform users with whom the individual intersects. The more a user trusts the social platform he or she frequently uses, the more he or she will believe that the platform's online environment is healthy and safe, and in such an environment he or she will unconsciously reduce security precautions, and will likewise be more assured of his or her disclosure behavior.

This study plans to adopt an integrative analytical perspective that focuses on the complex interactions and implications between privacy concerns, trust and self-disclosure behaviors of social media users. In addition to this, socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, and education level will also be included in the study to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how these factors influence users' self-disclosure behavior on social media (Niu, 2022). Such an exploration is crucial because the dynamic relationship between these variables and privacy issues may provide valuable insights into self-disclosure patterns on social media platforms. Adopting a multidisciplinary approach that encompasses principles from the disciplines of communication arts, media education, and psychology, this study aims to explore the multidimensional network of users' perceptions, intentions, and behaviors, presenting a holistic understanding of the social media environment.

1.2 Problem Statement

In the current social media environment, studies related to privacy concern, trust, and self-disclosure behaviors have shown increasing diversity and complexity, and these studies usually incorporate multidisciplinary perspectives from psychology, sociology, and other disciplines. This study combines past domestic and international literature to delve into the average current status of privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behaviors, as well as how the differences and correlations among the three are under contextual variables.

In the social media environment, users need to disclose information to establish and maintain social relationships, and with the proliferation of privacy concerns on social media and the outbreak of information scandals, they are therefore often in a dilemma (Chen & Pang, 2012). Privacy risks are ubiquitous, including users' inability to effectively control the recipients of the information they send, their inability to effectively control what others post about them (Lu, 2018), and the vulnerability of users to data leakage and identity theft (Shin, 2010). Threats from "all sides" make social media users deeply worried, and these increasing risk factors make users more concerned about privacy issues.

"Privacy concern" reflects individuals' sensitivity to and awareness of potential privacy leakage and invasion, which reflects people's subjective evaluation of and reaction to the privacy situation (Qu, 2018). Several studies have demonstrated that when users' privacy concerns increase, they will reduce the disclosure of personal information accordingly, and also affect their other online activities. For example, Li (2021) study states that users with high privacy concern share less private information than those with low concern. Alashoor et al. (2017) study states that users' privacy concerns may be exacerbated by worries about their personal privacy security during information disclosure, which in turn may motivate them to provide incorrect or incomplete information. In response to the above literature combing, it can be seen that the level of users' privacy concerns has a significant impact on their disclosure behavior either directly or indirectly.

In addition, users' trust in social media platforms is another key factor influencing their disclosure behavior; trust reflects users' beliefs about the reliability and security of the platforms in handling their personal information (Yang, 2020). The findings of Hew et al. (2017) suggest that users' increased trust is directly proportional to their willingness to disclose information on the corresponding platforms, and this trust mitigates users' uncertainty about the possible risks to their personal information and leads them to believe that the platform will properly protect their privacy. This not only reduces users' wariness of the platform, but also leads to increased reliance on the platform. On the other hand, a study by Chen and Sharma (2013) found that there is also a positive association between social media users' trust in the people they interact with online and their information disclosure behavior. In response to the above literature combing, it can be seen that users' trust in social platforms as well as online social relationships promotes their personal information disclosure behavior to a large extent.

Studies on the correlation between privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior have also been analyzed by different scholars from various perspectives. For example, in the relationship between trust and privacy concern, the study of Edwards et al. (2021) pointed out that trust can mitigate the negative effect of privacy concern on users' disclosure behavior. In the relationship between trust and self-disclosure

behavior, Jonson et al., (2010) explored the relationship between privacy, interpersonal trust, and self-disclosure in an online context and found that the higher an individual's level of online interpersonal trust, the less they are concerned about protecting their privacy, and consequently, the higher their level of online self-disclosure. In the relationship between privacy concern and self-disclosure behavior, Lu & Bai (2021) found that the greater the risk of privacy violation perceived by users, the higher the corresponding level of privacy concern, and the more negative the attitude of information disclosure behavior.

In summary, privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior is a complex and contradictory issue in the social media environment, and this issue is affected by a variety of factors, including an individual's level of privacy concern, social media trust, and various socio-demographic background factors.

1.3 Research Objectives

The rapid growth of social media platforms and their intricate nature has created an environment where personal information is increasingly being shared either voluntarily or through complex algorithms (Wang, 2022). Understanding the nature of this disclosure therefore becomes critical. As highlighted by the privacy paradox, in-depth research into the discrepancy between expressed privacy concerns and actual disclosure behaviors is key to this goal, and similarly trust in social media and the online interpersonal relationships behind it is a key factor examined, including the subtle interactions between contextual variables and the prevailing privacy paradigm, which also becomes an important finding of the study.

Given the above background and extensive literature review, this study aims to fulfill a number of research objectives as follows:

- A. To investigate the current status of social media users' privacy concerns, trust, and self-disclosure behaviors.
- B. To analyze the differences in privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behaviors of social media users in relation to gender, age, education and

length of social media use and the differences in privacy concern, trust, and self-disclosure behaviors of social media users in relation to gender, age, education, and length of social media use

- C. To Explore the correlation between privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behaviors of social media users

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the purpose of this study, the specific research questions are as follows:

- A. What is the current status of privacy concerns, trust and self-disclosure behaviors of social media users?
- B. Do factors such as social media users' background variables (gender, age, education, and length of time using social media) have any differences in privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behaviors?
- C. What is the correlation between the three factors of privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior of social media users?

1.5 Research implications: theoretical and practical perspectives

From a theoretical perspective, while existing studies provide fragmented insights, there is a lack of a comprehensive analysis that integrates these factors, particularly privacy concerns, trust, and self-disclosure behaviors. This study further explores the multidimensional interactions between these complex elements in the social media environment by analyzing these variables. Based on the theoretical foundations of communication, media education and psychology, a more comprehensive and multidimensional perspective is provided, thus further enriching the theoretical discourse. This in-depth and comprehensive understanding not only helps to promote further discussion in the academic community, but also provides a solid foundation for the direction and methodology of future research.

From a practical perspective, a thorough understanding of the complexities of social media, especially in terms of privacy concerns, trust, and self-disclosure

behaviors, has become increasingly important as the digitalization process accelerates. In an environment where personal data is viewed as an important asset and complex algorithms influence individual disclosure behavior, a deeper understanding of user mindset and intent is of key importance (Ai, 2023). Policy makers, social media platform developers, and other multi-stakeholders are better able to make decisions, design platforms, and organize educational campaigns through a nuanced understanding of privacy concerns, trust, and self-disclosure behaviors (et al., 2023). As social media users become increasingly connected to the digital world, insight into their psychological and behavioral patterns in this context becomes particularly important. This study provides an in-depth exploration of the three variables of privacy concern, trust, and self-disclosure behavior, set against the backdrop of socio-demographic data, to provide valuable insights for practical application, which in turn can help to advance a more secure, self-aware, and information-transparent digital social environment.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Privacy concerns

"Privacy concern" reflects an individual's worry and sensitivity to the risk that his or her privacy may be subject to loss of control. This concern not only includes awareness of specific privacy breaches, but also covers a wide range of perceptions of privacy invasions, and is an individual's internal reaction and subjective evaluation in the face of potential privacy risks (Sun, 2021). The discussion of privacy concerns has become particularly important at a time when the Internet is developing rapidly. The increasing prevalence of individuals posting information on the Web to obtain services has driven academics to delve deeper into the concept of privacy concern in this digital environment. In the context of business website use, privacy concern has been defined as the fear of loss of privacy due to voluntary disclosure of information to a website (Dinev & Hart, 2006). This definition emphasizes the act of voluntary disclosure during information exchange and its impact on the privacy security of individuals. In contrast,

in the context of social media usage scenarios, the meaning of privacy concern extends to a comprehensive worry about potential privacy threats to the platform, reflecting the high prevalence of privacy risks and the complexity of their sources in social media (Shin, 2015). This privacy concern specific to social platforms highlights users' sensitivities and reactions in the face of widespread and uncertain privacy threats. In summary, "privacy concern" represents an individual's comprehensive perception of privacy protection, which includes both concerns about specific breaches and subjective assessments of a wide range of privacy threats in a digital society, and is an indispensable perspective for understanding and studying privacy issues in the digital age.

1.6.2 Trust

Trust is a complex concept that has been studied across disciplines, and is centered on the willingness and degree of individual or collective reliance on others in uncertain situations, which is based on positive expectations and evaluations of others' words, promises, and behaviors, and is a key dynamic in social interactions and transactions (Mayer et al., 1995). Different disciplines have focused on understanding and exploring trust, demonstrating its interdisciplinary research value. In the field of psychology, trust is considered to be the foundation of interactions between individuals, focusing on the analysis of how individuals build trust based on judgments about the character and behavior of others. Such judgments involve not only the credibility of verbal commitments, but also the consistency and reliability of nonverbal behaviors, and are an integral part of interpersonal relationships (Tian & Qin, 2008). Management studies, on the other hand, have examined trust from the perspective of the organization-customer relationship, arguing that trust contributes to higher customer satisfaction and lower transaction and operational costs. This perspective emphasizes that trust is not only a tool for reducing uncertainty and risk, but also a key factor in enhancing organizational efficiency and fostering cooperation (Shankar et al., 2002). In social context research, trust is concerned with individuals' expectations of others' fulfillment of their duties and obligations, and is a form of mutual assurance based on the principle of reciprocity and mutual benefit (Hu, 2005). Trust demonstrated through behavior not

only promotes the development of interpersonal relationships, but also provides stability and predictability in social interactions. In summary, trust, as a multidimensional concept, plays a crucial role in different disciplinary fields, not only involving individual emotions and cognition, but also being an indispensable element in understanding individual behavior and social interaction mechanisms.

1.6.3 Self-disclosure behavior

Self-disclosure behavior refers to the behavior of individuals who voluntarily and actively disclose personal information about themselves in order to present themselves to others. This behavior not only includes an individual's basic situation, interests, experiences and opinions, but also covers a wide range of descriptive, evaluative, and emotional information (Phase, 2018). In the context of social media, self-disclosure is not only the basis of personal social interaction, but also the key to establishing and maintaining online relationships. By sharing personal information, users are not only able to enhance their attractiveness and attract the attention of others, but also facilitate social interactions and the exchange of information (Li et al., 2018). This online self-disclosure contributes to a reciprocal social relationship network, where users, by disclosing their personal information, not only satisfy the needs of others to know about themselves, but also expect to use it to trigger others to share information, forming an interactive model of information resource sharing (Tufekci, 2008). In summary, the implementation of self-disclosure behavior is not static, and it can be adjusted according to an individual's social goals, the closeness of the relationship, and the specific needs of the communication environment. Self-disclosure plays an indispensable role in maintaining existing social connections and expanding new social networks, and is a central element in interpersonal and social interactions.

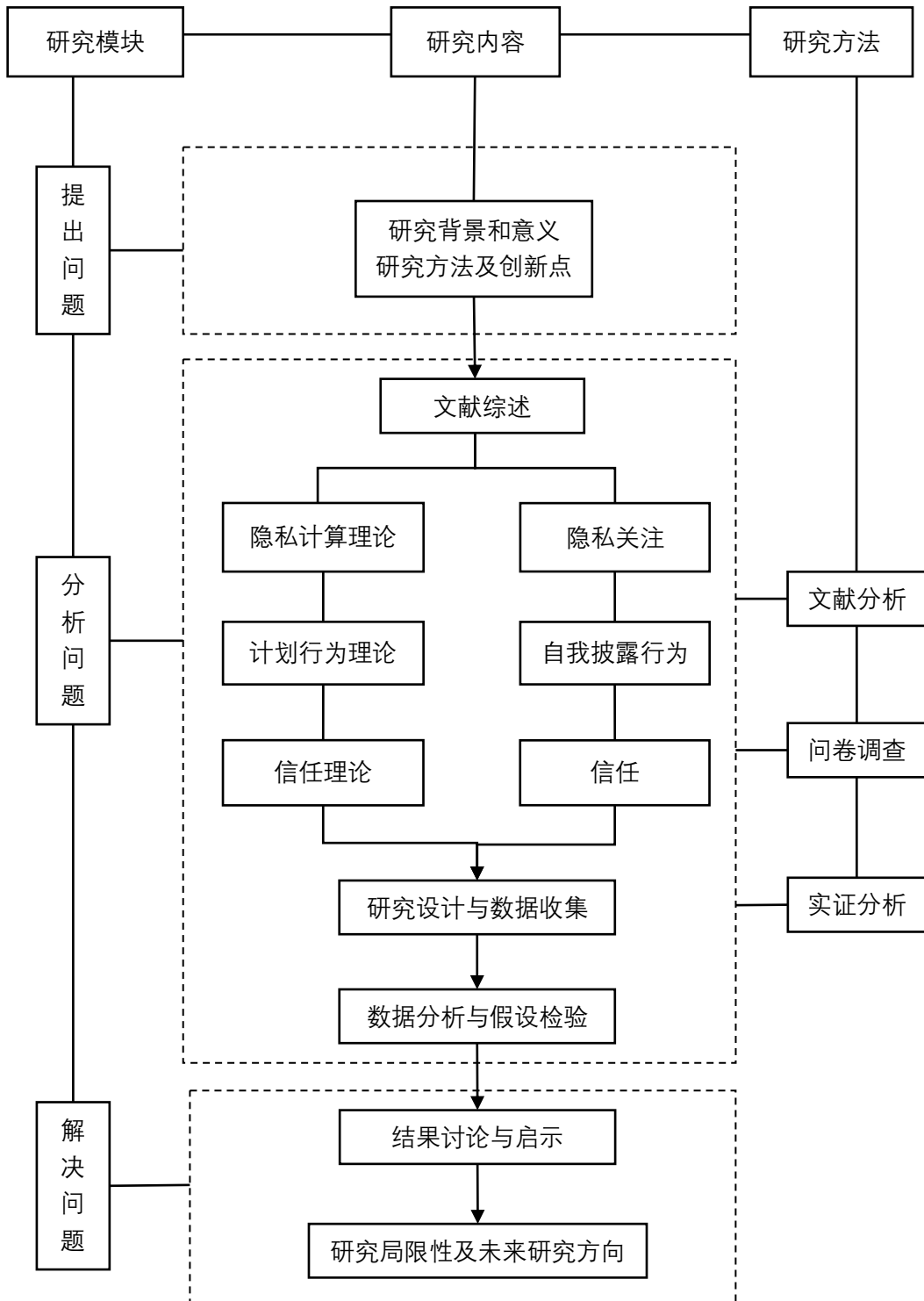
1.7 Research Process

The research in this article can be summarized in the following three parts. The first part is to present the problem. In the introduction, the research topic is clarified, the research background is sorted out, the current status of dom

estic and international research on related issues is described, and the research problem and research purpose of this paper are put forward, the significance of researching the influence between privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behaviors of social media users is accounted for, and the technological roadmap of the research is given. The second part is to analyze the problem. The relevant literature is sorted out, the current research status of privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior of social media users is outlined, and the theoretical direction and research hypotheses of this study are introduced. To ensure the validity and feasibility of the research method, questionnaire survey was finally chosen as the method of empirical research, and SPSS statistical analysis software was used to collect and analyze the data. The questionnaire was designed to collect data on users' privacy concerns, trust levels, and self-disclosure behaviors on social media platforms. The survey was distributed online and targeted a diverse sample of social media users. The collected data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to test the hypothesized relationships between the variables. The third part is problem solving. This part summarizes the conclusions of the empirical analysis, and on the basis of which a revelatory analysis is conducted, as well as pointing out the shortcomings of the study and looking forward to the direction of future research. The findings of the study provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between privacy concerns, trust, and self-disclosure behaviors on social media platforms. The results highlight the importance of building trust and addressing privacy concerns to encourage user engagement and self-disclosure. The study also identifies potential limitations, such as the cross-sectional nature of the data and the reliance on self-reported measures. Future research directions are suggested, including longitudinal studies, qualitative approaches, and the exploration of additional factors that may influence user behavior on social media. The summarized results of the above are shown in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1

Research Process Flowchart



Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Primary Theories Adopted for the Present Study

2.1.1 Privacy Computing Theory

Laufer and Wolfe first proposed the basic concept of privacy computing in 1977, which was subsequently named privacy computing theory by Culnan and Armstrong in 1999 (Wang, 2022). The theory is heavily influenced by the utility maximization theory in economics, the social contract theory in social psychology, and the social exchange theory, and provides a solid theoretical foundation for understanding the internal psychological processes and behavioral reasons of individuals when faced with privacy disclosure decisions (Sun, 2021).

The privacy calculus theory states that individuals make an inherent "benefit-risk" trade-off when deciding whether or not to disclose personal information. When the perceived benefits of disclosure (e.g., personalized service, social support, etc.) outweigh the perceived risks (e.g., privacy leakage, data misuse, etc.), individuals are more inclined to disclose personal information. Conversely, if the perceived risks exceed the benefits, individuals will reduce or avoid disclosing information (Li, 2021).

With the rapid development of social media, the privacy disclosure decisions faced by users have become more complex and diverse. On the one hand, the personalized services and social interaction needs of social media platforms prompt users to share more personal information; on the other hand, the risk of privacy leakage and data security increases. This complexity requires users to find a balance between enjoying the convenience of social media and maintaining personal privacy.

In addition, the application of privacy computation theory reveals some social media-specific behavioral patterns, such as more active sharing of information in trusted social circles and more conservative attitudes on social platforms with lower trust environments (Krasnova et al., 2010). This suggests that social environments and

platform policies play an important role in users' privacy calculations, influencing individuals' willingness and behavior to disclose information.

In summary, the privacy calculus theory provides an important theoretical framework for understanding and explaining users' privacy disclosure decisions in modern digital environments, especially in terms of its applicability and value in analyzing the behavior of users of social media platforms.

2.1.2 Trust Theory

The study of trust originated in the field of psychology and is regarded as the core of social interaction between individuals and the establishment of interpersonal relationships, and psychologists believe that trust is an individual psychological trait that has a profound impact on people's behavior and decision-making (Deng, 2021). With the rapid development of the Internet and social media, the issue of trust in the network environment has attracted the attention of scholars, expanding and deepening the traditional trust theory. Online trust not only covers users' trust in social platforms, but also the construction of trust in online interpersonal interactions. White (2003) points out that online trust research is constructed on the basis of traditional trust theories, on which specific understandings and perspectives for the online environment have been developed. Online trust is considered to be a user's trust in a social media platform based on the platform's reputation and privacy protection policies in an online environment, and this trust is an important factor in a user's decision to disclose personal information (Sillence et al., 2007). A high degree of online platform trust can motivate users to cross privacy boundaries and be more willing to share personal information and participate in social interactions on social media. In addition, online trust is also reflected in interpersonal relationships between users, and through online interactions and self-disclosure, users are able to build trust in others, facilitating the exchange of information and the deepening of social relationships (Niu & Meng, 2019). The richer the self-disclosure, the higher the degree of familiarity between users, thus increasing the possibility of trust establishment. In summary, trust is the cornerstone of maintaining interpersonal relationships and promoting information exchange and communication, both in traditional social interactions and in cyberspace in the digital

era, which covers both users' trust in social media platforms and trust building in online interpersonal interactions. Understanding and promoting the establishment of online trust in the context of social media has important theoretical and practical value for protecting user privacy, promoting healthy interactions among users, and enhancing the reliability and attractiveness of social platforms.

2.1.3 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), proposed by Ajzen in 1991, is an important framework for understanding and predicting individual behavior, and has shown its unique explanatory power especially in parsing an individual's intention to disclose information and its behavioral processes (Chang, 2019). According to this theory, the direct antecedent of an individual's behavior is his or her behavioral intention, which itself is influenced by three key factors: personal attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of social media, this theoretical framework reveals the psychological mechanisms behind users' disclosure behaviors, i.e., users' attitudes toward disclosure, their perceptions of social pressures or norms, and their perceptions of their ability to control the disclosure process combine to shape their intention to disclose information (Li, 2012). When individuals face the decision of whether or not to disclose personal information on social media, they first assess the possible benefits and risks of this behavior, forming an overall attitude toward information disclosure. At the same time, they also consider the expectations and pressures, i.e. subjective norms, in the social environment. This may come from the perceptions of people or groups they consider important as to whether or not they should disclose information. Finally, individuals will assess their ability to disclose information in a given social media environment, which includes technical ability, time resources, and the ability to control the information from being seen by unwanted viewers, i.e., perceptual-behavioral control. In summary, the application of the theory of planned behavior is not limited to explaining individuals' disclosure behaviors on social media, but its far-reaching influence is also reflected in the understanding of the phenomenon of privacy paradox. Although users may have negative attitudes or

concerns about privacy disclosure, they may still choose to disclose personal information under the influence of strong social norms or in situations where they possess a strong sense of control (Xie et al., 2018). The theory reflects the complex decision-making process of individuals under the action of multiple psychological dynamics, and can also better predict and explain the behavioral patterns of users in the digital environment.

2.2 Privacy Concern (PC)

2.2.1 Concept and Definition of Privacy Concern

Since 1977, when Laufer and Wolfe first introduced privacy concern into the academic discourse, describing it as "the consumer's fear that personal information will be collected and utilized" (Laufer & Wolfe, 1977), it has initiated scholarly interest in the topic. Smith et al. (1996) introduced the concept of "information privacy concern" and defined it as "an individual's psychological apprehension about potential threats to privacy", emphasizing this apprehension as a negative attitude toward privacy violations.

With the rapid development of Internet technology and the popularity of social media platforms, the collection, use, and leakage of personal information have received increasing attention from the public and scholars, and Milberg et al. (2000) argued that privacy concern reflects "the level of individual concern about the collection and processing of data by an organization," highlighting the role of an organization's behavior in triggering individual privacy concerns. (2000) argue that privacy concerns reflect "individuals' level of apprehension about the collection and processing of data by organizations", highlighting the role of institutional behavior in triggering privacy concerns. Ou and Yuan (2016) further clarify the scope of privacy concern, defining it as "users' internal worries about the collection and application of personal data by platforms and their needs for the right to control and the right to know", which strengthens the perspective of emphasizing the right to control information.

In recent research, Niu's (2022) definition focuses on "individuals' subjective perceptions of their online information exposure and their apprehension about the collection and application of personal information by social networking platforms," which focuses on privacy concerns in the social networking environment. Meanwhile, Campbell and Carlson (2022) described privacy concern as "a set of subjective perceptions that individuals have about the illegal disclosure of their privacy", which further broadens the meaning of privacy concern and emphasizes the impact of illegal activities on individuals' privacy worries.

Based on this, this study refers to Niu's (2022) point of view and redefines privacy concern as the level of subjective perceptions and concerns that social media users have about the process of collecting, utilizing, and disseminating their online information privacy, in light of the specific characteristics of the current social media environment. .

Table 2.1

Summary of Privacy Concern Definitions

Scholars	Definitions
Laufer and Wolfe(1977)	Consumer concerns about the collection and use of personal information.
Smith et al. (1996)	Individual-based psychological apprehension about potential threats to privacy
Milberg et al. (2000)	Individuals' level of concern about data collection and processing by organizations
Ou & Yuan (2016)	Users' internal concerns about the collection and use of their personal data by platforms and their need for control over their personal data and the right to know
Niu (2022)	Individuals' subjective perceptions of their online information exposure and their apprehension about the collection and use of personal information by social networking platforms
Campbell and Carlson (2022)	Individuals' subjective perceptions of unlawful disclosure of privacy

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

2.2.2 Privacy Concerns Theory and Scale

With the in-depth study of the phenomenon of privacy paradox in social networks, academics have gradually focused on how privacy concerns affect the self-disclosure behavior of individuals on social platforms. The privacy calculus theory, argues that an individual's disclosure decision on social media is essentially a trade-off and game centered around privacy concerns and expected benefits. Some relevant studies further confirm the validity of this theoretical framework. For example, Chang and Heo (2014) empirical study reveals that perceived benefits, as a motivational factor, play a decisive role in driving social users to share personal information. A study by Gerber et al. (2018) points out that consumers may be apprehensive about the possible adverse consequences of sharing personal data, but if they believe that the benefits of disclosing the information could outweigh the damage to privacy, they will still decide to disclose their information. By investigating users' behavior in disclosing personal information on mobile social services, Zhao (2011) found that privacy benefits significantly motivate users to disclose their personal information and that privacy concerns somewhat inhibit users' willingness to make such disclosures. In exploring the field of privacy concerns of social network users, the international academic community has developed a variety of scales for assessing the level of privacy concerns, which provide a rich methodological tool for measurement based on different research contexts and theoretical foundations. Representative scales include: the information privacy concern scale developed for traditional market environments; the privacy concern multidimensional scale proposed for online environments; and the Internet user information privacy concern scale proposed for the characteristics of Internet users, the latter of which follows the development trend of the Internet and provides a more precise measurement tool for studying Internet users (Chang, 2019).

Domestic scholars consider that the privacy concern characteristics of Chinese users may be significantly different from those of the West, taking into account cultural differences and social media usage habits. To address this difference

nce, Ou and Yuan (2016) specifically developed a privacy concern scale adapted to the local social environment based on the specific environment of Chinese social media, aiming to more accurately reflect the privacy concerns and needs of domestic users.

2.2.3 Relevant Studies on Privacy Concerns

Privacy concerns have revealed their importance in the context of individual disclosure behavior and attracted the research interest of many scholars. As a core topic in privacy research, privacy concern has become the focus of academic discussions. Relevant foreign studies have found that privacy concern significantly affects users' information behavior, indicating that individuals who are highly sensitive to privacy are more cautious in providing personal information compared to those who are less concerned, further pointing out how privacy concern affects individuals' willingness to disclose and their behavior (Pentina et al., 2016). In addition, a study reveals that during the disclosure process, users' privacy concerns are exacerbated by concerns about the security of their personal privacy, and this exacerbated privacy concern in turn leads to reservations in providing information (Alashoor et al., 2017). This suggests that privacy security concerns motivate users to adopt a more prudent approach to information disclosure in order to avoid potential privacy risks. In the domestic research context, studies conducted on users on social platforms revealed an important finding, that users' privacy concerns may have a dampening effect on their willingness to share information (Yang, 2020). Users' high privacy vigilance motivates them to carefully consider the closeness of their relationship with the recipient when sharing information, and accordingly adjust the extent of their information disclosure. In addition, it has been shown that users' privacy concerns on social networks are influenced by personal traits, with individuals who have higher media literacy and are more sensitive to privacy and security risks tending to be more concerned about privacy protection (Li, 2021). This suggests that an individual's traits and attitudes play a key role in shaping his or her concerns about social network privacy. In summary, users' privacy concerns, especially concerns about privacy security, are key factors that influence whether and how they choose to disclose information. Increased privacy concerns may hinder full and truthful

disclosure of information, reflecting users' needs and expectations for personal privacy protection in social networking environments.

2.3 Trust

2.3.1 Concept and Definition of Trust

In social networks, the definition of trust has experienced rich evolution and diverse interpretations. Scholars have carefully analyzed trust from different perspectives and constructed a comprehensive framework covering expectation, security, responsibility fulfillment, and risk facing. Bai (2004) regarded trust as the expectation of another party to accomplish a delegated task in a network environment, which is not only the embodiment of trust, but also the basis of the interaction strategy. Krasnova et al. (2012) demonstrated the role of trust in protecting the security of personal information by emphasizing the individual's trust in the legitimacy of platforms' processing of personal data. Li et al. (2018) defined trust as the expectation of remaining in accordance with an individual's expected behavior in situations where others have choices, highlighting the relationship between trust and personal expectations. Zhao et al. (2021), on the other hand, started from the risky nature of online interpersonal interactions and argued that online trust is an individual's expectation of the safety of others in the face of potential risks, emphasizing the importance of trust in online interactions. Xia's (2023) definition of trust emphasizes the trust in others that individuals maintain even in situations where they may encounter uncontrollable consequences, including trust in social platforms and interpersonal trust. Based on the above scholars' definitions and considering the specific context of this study, this study defines trust as the trust that individuals hold in other individuals or platforms in the social media environment, despite the possibility of encountering unpredictable consequences.

Table 2.2

Summary of definitions of trust

Scholars	Definitions
Bai (2004)	Expectation of another party to fulfill a delegated task in an online environment
Krasnova et al. (2012)	The individual's trust in the legitimacy of the platform's processing of personal data
Li et al. (2018)	Expectation that the individual will behave according to his/her expectations in situations where others have choices
Zhao et al. (2021)	Expectation of the safety of others in the face of potential risks
Xia et al. (2023)	Individuals' trust in others, including social platforms and interpersonal trust, even in situations with uncontrollable consequences

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

2.3.2 Trust-related theories and scales

Trust theory occupies a central place in the field of social psychology, focusing on how people form and maintain trusting relationships in environments of high uncertainty. This theory is particularly important for understanding people's privacy disclosure behaviors, providing a key perspective for analyzing how people deal with private information. Zimmer views trust as the root of social relationships, emphasizing its critical role in social development. Trust has been confirmed in several research fields and practical application scenarios as an important factor influencing individual behavior. Lu and Yu (2005) argued that in social media environments, users' trust in other users and platforms contributes to the formation of social interactions and drives the practice of self-disclosure, which in turn satisfies users' needs for social communication and personal expression. In addition, Zhang et al.'s (2019) study showed that users' level of trust in the celebrities or fans they follow can have a significant impact on their disclosure choices, and that when users are in a social circle of close relationship interactions, it can also increase their level of trust, which in turn leads to a greater tendency to engage in self-disclosure. In the study of trust

measurement, Ding & Shen (2005) developed an online interpersonal trust questionnaire for the domestic setting, which was customized to the specific context of China based on traditional interpersonal trust and interpersonal-specific trust measurement tools. The scale uses a five-point Likert-type scoring system, in which higher scores symbolize greater trust in social media's ability and measures to protect privacy.

2.3.3 Related research on trust

Trust plays a key role in the process of social interaction and information sharing. Especially in the context of studying personal information disclosure, trust is seen as a central factor that determines users' assessment of the trustworthiness of social networking platforms in processing data, as well as the degree of people's willingness to rely on others (Krasnova et al., 2012). A study by Lo and Riemenschneider (2010) states that when users hold a sense of trust towards social media platforms and their administrators, they tend to share personal information, a behavior that is based on trust in the platform to safeguard their personal interests, which in turn leads to an increase in disclosure behavior. Trust is considered to be one of the main motivations for users to share information, and when faced with an organization with low trust, users are more inclined to retain information without sharing it in order to ensure the security of their private data. In addition, Zhou (2020) showed that as users' trust in social media platforms increases, their self-disclosure behaviors on social platforms not only become more frequent, but the depth of their disclosures also increases accordingly. This further suggests that trust can effectively reduce users' hesitation and uneasiness due to privacy concerns, thereby reducing the hindering effect of privacy concerns on disclosure behavior. Niu & Meng (2019) argued that trust on social media can also influence users' perceptions of privacy risks, and in particular, interpersonal trust in the network plays a key role in reducing concerns about privacy risks. In conclusion, trust has a central influence in social media users' information disclosure behavior, which not only enhances users' willingness to share personal information, but also plays a key role in protecting users' privacy and reducing the perception of risk.

2.4 Self-Disclosure Behavior (SDB)

2.4.1 Concept and Definition of SDB

Self-disclosure behavior, as an individual's action to disclose personal information in a social environment, was initially proposed by Jourard and Lasakow in 1958, and defined as the process by which an individual presents information related to him/herself to the outside world. Over time, especially with the rise of social media, the act of self-disclosure has become more diverse and complex (Pu, 2020). Self-disclosure has expanded in the social media environment to become more than just the sharing of personal information, but a strategy for maintaining interpersonal relationships and fulfilling personal needs. Posey et al. (2010) further explain this by arguing that self-disclosure is the voluntary revelation of personal information by an individual to a specific object in a public space as a means of maintaining interpersonal relationships. Xie and An (2016) viewed it as an information-sharing process in which users spontaneously share their opinions, emotions, and details of their lives with others on media platforms, highlighting the voluntary and honest nature of this behavior. Subsequently, Phase (2018) defines self-disclosure behavior from the perspective of privacy information, which refers to the spontaneous disclosure of users' own private data to enterprises or their permission for enterprises to collect and apply such information based on specific privacy terms. This definition highlights the centrality of the exchange and processing of personal information in the interaction between businesses and users. Wang (2020) defines self-disclosure behavior as a user's act of revealing his or her information to others through social platforms in the form of text, pictures, videos, etc., demonstrating the diversity and breadth of self-disclosure on social media. Based on the views of the above scholars and in light of the characteristics of the modern social media environment, this study defines self-disclosure behavior as the process in which an individual actively shares his or her personal privacy information with others or enterprises on social media, a process that not only reflects the user's intention to maintain social connections and achieve personal goals by

disclosing personal information, but also includes the user's attitude toward the enterprise's handling of personal information in accordance with privacy protocols.

Table 2.3

Summary of Self-Disclosure Behavior Definitions

Scholars	Definitions
Jourard and Lasakow (1958)	The process by which individuals present information about themselves to the outside world.
Posey et al.,(2010)	Individuals voluntarily reveal personal information to specific objects in public space as a means of maintaining interpersonal relationships
Xie & An (2016)	The process by which users spontaneously share their opinions, emotions and details of their lives with others on media platforms highlights the voluntary and honest nature of this behavior
Sang (2018)	Users spontaneously disclose their private data to companies, or give companies permission to collect and apply such information according to specific privacy terms
Wang (2020)	The act of users disclosing their information to others through social platforms in the form of text, images, videos, etc.

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

2.4.2 Theories and Scales Related to Self-Disclosure Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior emphasizes the critical role of intentions as an important bridge between attitudes and behaviors in explaining how individuals translate specific privacy attitudes into specific behaviors (Chang, 2019). This theory is widely used to parse and predict different behavioral manifestations, where an individual's acceptance of a behavior does not occur in isolation, but is profoundly influenced by behavioral intentions, and the occurrence of a behavior in a specific context is directly driven by behavioral intention, which is determined by a combination of three factors: the individual's behavioral attitudes, perceived control of the behavior, and subjective norms about the behavior (Wang & Zheng, 2016). Among them,

behavioral attitudes reflect an individual's intrinsic tendencies, which are mainly influenced by an individual's subjective assessment of the potential risks of information disclosure. Dienlin and Trepte (2015) found that privacy disclosure intention should be considered as a key mediator from privacy concern attitude to self-disclosure behavior, emphasizing the existence of an intermediate level between privacy attitude and behavior connected through behavioral intention. In addition, the division of disclosure intention between the distant and the near future elucidated how social media users' privacy concern affects the distant disclosure intention, further explaining the paradoxical phenomenon between privacy concern and disclosure behavior. Combining the theory of planned behavior with factors such as privacy concerns, Xiang (2018) found that consumers' disclosure intention directly determines their information sharing behavior in the m-commerce environment. Meanwhile, research on the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior in the social media environment showed that the theory helps to understand users' motivations for sustained participation in social networks and emphasizes the key role of subjective norms in increasing users' willingness to participate in social network activities.

2.4.3 Related Research on Self-Disclosure Behavior

In previous studies, information disclosure is the self-disclosure behavior of users' personal information privacy in the process of communicating with others on the Internet platform. As user information disclosure has become more and more important, scholars have become interested in the motivation and process of user self-disclosure online (Shih et al., 2017). Through relevant research, it has been found that users' decisions to share personal information on social networks are jointly influenced by multiple factors, including socio-cultural backgrounds, characteristics of online environments, individuals' psychological states and personality traits. The interaction of these factors reveals how users balance privacy protection considerations while satisfying social needs and self-expression desires.

First, socio-cultural factors have a significant impact on self-disclosure behavior, where differences in individualistic and collectivistic cultural backgrounds lead to

significant differences in users' willingness and scope of disclosing personal information. Users from different countries also show different preferences in disclosing specific types of information (e.g., emotional or family information), reflecting the profound influence of cultural differences on online self-disclosure behavior (Kisilevich & Last , 2011). Second, online environmental factors such as anonymity, information sensitivity, and online security influence users' disclosure behavior. In situations where the online environment is perceived to be secure and information is less sensitive, users' self-disclosure is higher, indicating that the characteristics of the online environment are important factors that influence users' behavior in disclosing personal information (Kuang, 2018). In addition, individual psychological factors, including personality traits, self-esteem, social cohesion, and motivation, can promote self-disclosure behavior. These intrinsic factors drive users to engage in more positive self-expression and information sharing on social media platforms (Hollenbaugh & Ferris, 2014).

2.5 Correlations among PC, Trust, and SDB

2.5.1 Analysis of the Average Current State of PC, Trust and SDB

Under different research backgrounds and measurement tools used, domestic and foreign scholars illustrate the current level of privacy concern, trust and disclosure behavior.

First of all, relevant studies show that a large number of users choose to disclose their real name information on social platforms, among which 93.4% of Facebook users disclose their real names, while Myspace has 63.7%. Further measurements showed that social users disclosed their personal information on social media with an average score of 3.35, indicating a tendency towards higher levels of disclosure of personal information, a tendency that was also verified in another study through a score of 3.30 on a 5-point Likert scale. In particular, in the study on Instagram, social users in Kuwait tended to disclose truthful information that was beneficial to them, with the highest mean value of 3.65 for positive disclosure, followed by honest disclosure with a mean

value of 3.52, indicating that users' willingness to disclose on the platform is proactive (Tufekci , 2008; Taddei & Contena, 2013).

In addition, research on trust in social media shows that users have a high level of trust in the WeChat platform, especially in terms of its adherence to privacy protection protocols, with a mean value of 3.32, suggesting that users hold a relatively high level of trust in the privacy protection of the WeChat platform (Zhou, 2020). Yang et al. (2017) who (2008) found that users' privacy concern was similarly located at a moderately high level through the Privacy Concern Scale, with a mean score of 3.67. This finding is consistent with previous studies, suggesting that online users' concern for privacy is generally at a moderately high level. In summary, the following hypotheses are proposed in this study:

H1: The average status of privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior is at a moderately high level.

2.5.2 Analysis of Demographic Variables in PC, Trust, and SDB

According to domestic and international studies, demographic characteristics have significant differences in the variables related to this study. Female users show a stronger awareness of privacy protection compared to men, and this gender difference leads them to be more cautious about sharing personal information on social platforms. This caution is not limited to the amount of information, but also extends to the type of information; for example, women tend to share information that involves less personal contact information and prefer to share relatively safe content such as personal interests and beliefs (Benamati et al., 2017). In addition, age and education level likewise have an impact on an individual's privacy attitudes. Older users and those with higher education usually hold more sensitive attitudes towards online privacy risks, and this high level of vigilance motivates them to manage their information more prudently on social networks. In particular, more highly educated individuals who feel uncertain about their ability to protect their privacy in cyberspace enhance self-privacy protection (Yang et al., 2008).

In terms of self-disclosure, gender and age not only influence the amount of personal information disclosed in social media, but also determine the type of content disclosed. Teenage users, in particular, are more open to sharing private information on social platforms and are relatively weaker in using privacy-protecting features compared to adult groups. In addition, differences in educational attainment further influence users' disclosure habits in social networks, with users from higher education backgrounds tending to adopt a more conservative approach to information sharing due to their deep awareness of online privacy threats (Li-Barber et al., 2011). In summary, the following hypotheses are proposed in this study:

H2: There are significant differences in privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behaviors across different gender, age, education and other background variable factors.

2.5.3 Correlation Analysis of PC, Trust, and SDB

According to domestic and international studies, it has been revealed that users' privacy concerns and trust levels on social media have a significant impact on their self-disclosure behavior. Some studies have shown that users' concern for personal information security, i.e. privacy concern, usually stems from the uncertainty of the online environment and the lack of control over personal information. This concern tends to influence users' disclosure behaviors on social platforms, as shown by the fact that the higher the privacy concern, the less users disclose their personal information (Bansal & Davenport , 2010). Specifically, privacy concerns not only reflect individuals' worries about information security, but also involve a broader sense of insecurity about how information is collected and disseminated.

Furthermore, trust plays a central role in the disclosure behavior of social media users. Users' trust in social platforms and other users significantly promotes their self-disclosure behavior, and increased levels of trust reduce users' security precautions, which in turn increases the extent to which they disclose content on the platform (Sun, 2021). Positive feedback on user content or being in an environment where acquaintances pay attention to each other further enhances users' trust, which encourages more self-disclosure. A study by Eastin et al. (2016) noted that trust can

motivate individuals to go beyond the boundaries of privacy, with higher levels of trust leading to individuals relaxing their privacy boundaries more broadly. Meanwhile, a study by Bansal and Zahedi (2008) noted that trust can significantly mitigate the negative impact of privacy concerns on self-disclosure behavior. When users' trust level is high, their privacy concerns have less inhibitory effect on self-disclosure behavior. In summary, this paper proposes the following hypotheses:

H3: There is a correlation between privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior.

CHAPTER 3

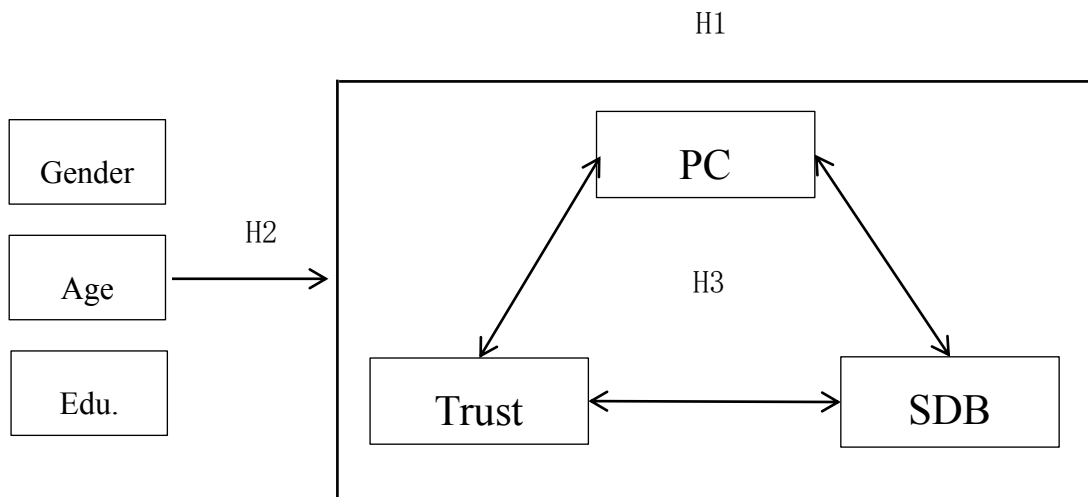
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Framework

Based on the previously described research questions, research objectives, and research hypotheses, this study proposes a research framework diagram as shown below for the three variables of this study: privacy concerns, trust, and self-disclosure.

Figure 2.1

Research Framework



Note 1: Privacy Concern (PC); Trust; Self-Disclosure Behaviors (SDB)

Note 2: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

3.2 Research Sample

According to the 52nd Statistical Report published by China Internet Network Information Center 2023, the gender ratio of Chinese Internet users is 51.3% male to 48.7% female, showing that Chinese Internet users are balanced in gender distribution without showing significant deviation. In terms of age distribution, the proportion of teenagers aged 10-19 years old reached 14.3%, showing that nearly 96% of minors have been generally exposed to the Internet. In addition, the youth group aged 30-39, as the

core users of the Internet, accounted for 20.3%. Meanwhile, the proportion of middle-aged and elderly Internet users aged 40-59 increased to 34.5% from 33.2% in December 2022, reflecting the further popularization of the Internet for the middle-aged and elderly groups (Xia, 2023). Based on the above analysis, this study positions the target research group as social media users of all ages 10 and above.

3.3 Questionnaire Survey Method

Questionnaire Survey Method (QSM) is a common research method used to collect and analyze data to understand people's perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and opinions. Collecting and analyzing data to understand people's perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and opinions. It is applicable to various research fields, such as social sciences, psychology, market research, etc. (Chen Lida) such as social sciences, psychology, and market research (Chen & Lee, 2017). In this study, the main variables of interest cover users' personal characteristics, trust on social media, privacy concerns, and the degree of self-disclosure of personal information, all of which are measured by items derived from validated scales.

3.4 Operational Definition and Demographic Variables

3.4.1 Background Information of Participants

The basic information of this study includes gender, age, and education.

A. Gender: male, female

B. Age: 10-20 years old, 21-30 years old, 31-40 years old, 41 years old and above

C. Education: high school, specialized, undergraduate, graduate and above

3.4.2 Privacy Concerns

A. Operational Definition

Niu (2022) argues that privacy concerns are individuals' subjective perceptions of their online information disclosure and their anxiety about the collection and control of personal information by social networking platforms.

B. Measurement Tool

The scale is based on a five-point Likert scale, with higher scores representing higher levels of privacy concern. Yang et al. (2008) pointed out that the collection dimension is the starting point of any privacy concern, the control dimension is the most important, and the higher the user's expectation of the platform's privacy protection, information control, and information transparency, the higher his or her privacy concern will increase. The reliability of this scale is 0.844, which is good, and the measurements of the social media privacy concern scale in this paper are shown in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1

Privacy Concerns Scale

Dimension 1: Control	I can control the purposes for which personal information is used on the Platform I have the right to determine what personal information may be collected by the Platform I have the ability to manage the personal information I give to the Platform
Dimension 2: Collection	Providing personal information to the platform helps me to get the services I want. Sharing my life situation, information and opinions enables me to better integrate into the social networking group. Providing personal data to social media platforms enables me to communicate better with people and meet like-minded people. friends
Dimension 3: Cognition	The social media platform has obtained my informed consent to the collection and use of my personal information. The social networking platform clearly informed me of all relevant interests I am not unclear about all my rights and interests on the social media platforms

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

3.4.3 Trust

A. Operational Definition

Xia's (2023) definition of trust emphasizes the trust in others that individuals maintain even in situations where they may encounter uncontrollable consequences, including trust in social platforms and inter-personal.

B. Measurement Tool

The scale of trust in social platforms is used to test the more trust users have in the privacy protection measures and capabilities of social platforms (Fogel & Nehmad, 2009). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this section is 0.846 and the KMO value is 0.826, which indicates good results for reliability and validity testing. The Online Interpersonal Trust Scale is used to test the degree of trust users feel towards other users in social media (Niu & Meng, 2019). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this part is 0.816, the KMO value is 0.721, and the Bartlett's spherical test $p < 0.001$, which indicates that the results of reliability and validity testing are good. The Social Platform Emotional Trust Scale is used to test the user's experience of emotional trust during interpersonal interactions (Guo et al., 2015), and the internal consistency coefficient of the scale is 0.88, indicating good reliability. The measurement indicators are shown in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2

Trust Scale

Dimension 1:	Social Platform Trust
	I feel that social media platforms can be trusted
	I am confident that social media platforms are capable of safeguarding personal privacy.
	I think the privacy protection mechanism of social networking platforms is quite good.
Dimension 2:	Cyber-interpersonal trust
	I trust that social media platforms will enforce rules to protect my privacy
	I trust that people will not invade my privacy even if I don't group my photos.

I trust that my privacy will not be infringed upon if I upload a photo of myself.

I believe that even if I disclose my location information, others will not violate my privacy.

Dimension 3: Social Media Emotional Trust

On social media, the other person and I can freely share thoughts, feelings and hopes.

On social media, I feel I can freely discuss difficulties I am having with the other person, and I know the other person is willing to listen.

On social media, we both feel lost if we can't work together.

On social media, if I tell the other person about a problem I'm having, I know the other person will be constructive and show concern.

On social media, I feel that we have been more affectionate prior to this communication.

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

3.4.4 Self-Disclosure Behaviors

A. Operational Definition

Xiang (2018) defines self-disclosure behavior from the perspective of privacy information as the process by which individuals actively share their personal private information to others or platforms on social media, a process that not only reflects users' intentions to maintain social connections and achieve personal goals by disclosing their personal information, but also includes users' attitudes toward the platforms' handling of personal information in accordance with privacy protocols.

B. Measurement Tool

The scale used is the Young (2020) Privacy Disclosure Behavior Scale, which includes four dimensions, and the reliability of this scale is 0.839, which is good. The measurement indicators are shown in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3

Self-Disclosure Scale

Dimension 1: Frequency of disclosure

I frequently discuss topics related to myself on social media platforms.

I am reserved when discussing my privacy on social media.

I don't express myself freely on social media.

Dimension 2: Depth of Disclosure

I don't mind disclosing my financial situation on social media platforms

When using social media platforms, I usually share personal information directly.

When it comes to topics that concern me on social media, I will share information for a long time.

On social media, when it comes to topics that are relevant to me, I will share complete information.

Dimension 3: Accuracy of Disclosure

I'm very genuine on my social media platforms

My profile on social media platforms reveals a lot of real information.

The emotions, activities, or experiences I display on social media platforms match my real life exactly

I am unsure if I am being truthful about my emotions and experiences on social media platforms

Dimension 4: Propensity to disclose

I tend to share positive information about myself on social media platforms.

I tend to disclose more useful information about myself in my social media profiles.

I tend to share more negative than positive information about my feelings or experiences on social media profiles.

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

3.5 Sampling Technique

In this study, the online network questionnaire survey was conducted in September 2023 using the Convenience Sampling (CAP) method. In the pretest questionnaire, Xu & Li (2013) considered the number of pretest subjects to be 5-10 times the number of subscales that include the most questions in the questionnaire, in this paper, the privacy concern scale has 10 questions, the trust scale has 12 questions, and the self-disclosure scale has 14 questions, so the self-disclosure scale has the most 14 questions, which is calculated according to the 5-10 times, so 70-140 copies are needed, taking into account that there may be invalid questionnaires. It is expected that 100 questionnaires will be collected for pre-test analysis, both to ensure that the number of valid questionnaires is higher than 70.

3.6 Pilot Study

In this paper, data from 106 official questionnaires were collected from September 17 to September 21, 2023, and after deducting 6 invalid questionnaires, there were 100 valid questionnaires, with a validity rate of 94.33%. Specific criteria for recovery were set in this study: first, limiting the submission of only one copy per address; second, considering that the questionnaire has 36 questions, based on the fact that each question is expected to use at least 4 seconds of time, if the questionnaire's completion time is less than 140 seconds, the questionnaire is considered invalid (Pu, 2020).

3.6.1 Reliability Analysis

This study analyzed the reliability of all indicators using spss26.0 program and concluded that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient values of the three variables of trust, privacy concern, and self-disclosure were all greater than 0.8 and the CITC values were all greater than 0.5, which indicates that there is a good correlation between the analyzed items. Therefore, it indicates that the reliability of the questionnaire designed for this thesis is qualified for the next step of analysis. The results are summarized in the following tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.6.

Table 3.4

Confidence Dimensions-Cronbach's Reliability Analysis

Item Content	(CITC)	Cronbach's α (After Deletion)	Cronbach's α
I feel that social media platforms can be trusted	0.622	0.898	0.906
I am confident that social media platforms are capable of safeguarding personal privacy.	0.594	0.900	
I think the privacy protection mechanism of social networking platforms is already quite good	0.641	0.897	
I believe that social media platforms enforce privacy protection rules	0.667	0.896	
I believe that even if I don't take grouping measures, others will not invade my privacy.	0.536	0.903	

I believe that even if I upload my personal photos, others will not violate my privacy.	0.637	0.898
I believe that even if I disclose my location, others will not violate my privacy.	0.667	0.896
I feel free to share my thoughts, feelings and hopes with others on social media.	0.732	0.893
On social media, I feel free to discuss my difficulties with the other person and I know that the other person is willing to listen.	0.606	0.899
On social media, we both feel lost if we can't work together.	0.624	0.898
On social media, if I tell someone about a problem I'm having, I know they will be constructive and concerned	0.570	0.901
On social media, I feel that we have bonded more before this communication	0.693	0.895

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

Table 3.5

Self-Disclosure Behavior-Cronbach's Reliability Analysis

Item Content	(CITC)	Cronbach's α (After Deletion)	Cronbach's α
I frequently discuss topics related to myself on social media.	0.526	0.831	0.844
I don't mind disclosing my financial situation on social media.	0.533	0.831	
When using social media platforms, I usually share personal information directly	0.653	0.823	
When it comes to topics that are relevant to me on social media, I share information for a long time.	0.586	0.828	
When it comes to topics that concern me on social media, I share complete information.	0.541	0.831	
I am sincere on social media	0.625	0.825	

My social media profiles reveal a lot about me.	0.594	0.827
The emotions, activities, or experiences I display on social media are consistent with my real life.	0.540	0.831
I tend to share positive information about myself on social media platforms	0.611	0.825
I tend to disclose more information about myself on my social media profiles that is beneficial to me	0.648	0.823
I tend to share more negative than positive information about my feelings or experiences on social media profiles.	0.799	0.812
I am unsure if I am being truthful about my feelings and experiences on social media platforms.	0.695	0.820
I don't express myself freely on social media platforms	0.492	0.833
I am hesitant to discuss my privacy on social media platforms	0.751	0.904

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

Table 3.6

Privacy Concerns-Cronbach's Reliability Analysis

Item Content	(CITC)	Cronbach's α (After Deletion)	Cronbach's α
I can control the purposes for which personal information is used on the Platform	0.630	0.892	0.901
I have the right to determine what personal information may be collected by the Platform	0.730	0.885	
I have the ability to manage the personal information I give to the Platform	0.650	0.891	
Providing personal information to the platform helps me to get the services I want.	0.678	0.889	
Sharing my life situation, information and opinions enables me to better integrate into the social networking	0.582	0.895	

group.		
Providing personal data to social media platforms enables me to communicate better with people and meet like-minded people.	0.680	0.889
It is beneficial for me to provide personal information to social media platforms.	0.701	0.887
The social media platform has obtained my informed consent for the collection and use of my personal data.	0.617	0.893
The social media platform clearly informs me of all relevant interests.	0.633	0.892
I am not unclear about my rights on the social media platforms.	0.606	0.894

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

3.6.1 Validity Analysis

Validity was verified using KMO and Bartlett's test, as can be seen in Table 3.8 above: the dimensions and overall KMO values were greater than 0.8 The study data was well suited for extracting the information.

Table 3.7

KMO and Bartlett's test

	Trust	PC	SDB	Total
KMO	0.913	0.882	0.896	0.825
Bartlett sphericity test	589.954	509.331	699.714	2144.324
Approximate chi-square	df	66	45	91
	p-value	0.000	0.000	0.000

Note 1: Privacy Concern (PC); Trust; Self-Disclosure Behaviors (SDB)

Note 2: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

3.7 Official distribution and collection of questionnaires

This study aims to explore the behavior of social media user groups, and data collection was conducted in the form of an online questionnaire to ensure a balanced

sample in terms of key demographic variables such as gender, age, and education. Based on the Six Degrees of Separation theory, this study takes into account the shrinking average distance of interpersonal connections in the Internet era, and considers that the questionnaire link is delivered to at least three people to ensure the initial representativeness of the sample (Qi & Li, 2018).

The questionnaire was constructed through the Questionnaire Star platform and distributed on major social media platforms in China, utilizing the snowball method to gradually increase the sample size. In order to safeguard data quality, this study set strict questionnaire recovery standards, limiting each address to submitting the questionnaire only once and requiring that the total time to fill out the questionnaire should not be less than 140 seconds, so as to screen out valid questionnaires. In addition, given the variables and questions included in the study design, the number of valid questionnaires needed to be at least ten times the total number of questions on the variables involved to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results (Churchil, 1982). In this study, three variables and a total of 36 relevant question items were included, therefore, a target total number of valid questionnaires of 360 or more was set up to meet the needs of the subsequent analysis. The questionnaires were distributed from December 27, 2023 to January 7, 2024, a total of 400 questionnaires were collected in a 12-day period, leaving 390 valid questionnaires after excluding invalid questionnaires, and the questionnaire had a validity rate of 97.5 percent.

3.8 Data Analysis

3.8.1 Descriptive Analysis

This study utilizes descriptive statistical analysis to provide a brief description of the structure of social media users. Based on the data of demographic variables, we observed the distribution of the interviewed social media users on the questionnaire's facets and questions and related statistics, and mainly analyzed the gender, age, education, years of social media use, and social media use time of the social media users to understand the structure of the research sample.

3.8.2 Reliability Analysis

Reliability describes the stability or consistency of the results of multiple measurements of the same object, i.e., it is a measure of the reliability of a measurement instrument. A Cronbach's α close to 0 indicates low reliability, while a value close to 1 indicates high reliability (Nunnally, 1978). Generally, we assess the internal consistency of a measurement instrument based on the value of Cronbach's α . When Cronbach's α is less than 0.6, it indicates poor internal consistency across topics; Cronbach's α values between 0.7 and 0.8 indicate good internal consistency across topics; and Cronbach's α values greater than 0.8 indicate excellent internal consistency across topics (Li et al., 2019).

3.8.3 Validity Analysis

Validity analysis is the process of assessing the ability of a scale to accurately measure a given indicator. The higher the validity, the better the measure shows the true qualities of the subject to be measured (Chen et al., 2022). This study focuses on exploring the overall validity of the privacy concern, trust, and self-disclosure behavior scales.

3.8.4 Variance of Analysis

Both the independent samples t-test and the one-way ANOVA are used to determine whether there is a significant difference in the means of the same variable. The main difference between these two statistical methods is the number of sample groups they deal with: the independent samples t-test is used to compare whether the means of two groups of data differ on a particular variable, whereas the one-way ANOVA is used to compare the differences in the means of three or more groups of samples on the variable (Wu, 2020).

3.8.5 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation analysis of the variables of the study to examine the strength of the correlation between the variables, the positive and negative values of which indicate that the correlation between the two is positive or negative (Qiu, 2006).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter there are six subsections to discuss, the first subsection is the descriptive statistical analysis of the data of the respondents; the second and third subsections are the analysis of the reliability of the questionnaire; the fourth subsection is the correlation analysis of the variables of this study. The fifth subsection is the analysis of the variability of the demographic characteristics of the test demographics on the variables; the sixth subsection concludes with the results of the validation of the research hypotheses proposed in the previous section.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The sample size of this study was 390 people. Among them, there are 238 males and 152 females, accounting for 61.03% and 38.97% respectively; in terms of age, respondents aged 31-40 and 21-30 years old are in the majority, accounting for 32.82% and 26.15% respectively, followed by those aged 10-20 years old, accounting for 21.03%, and once again those aged 41 years old or older, accounting for 20.00%; in terms of education, undergraduate From the perspective of education, the largest number of respondents are those with bachelor's degree, accounting for 35.38%, followed by those with specialties and graduate degrees and above, accounting for 26.67% and 25.64%, respectively, and the smallest number of respondents are those with high school education, accounting for 12.31%. The results of the above data are summarized in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1

Descriptive statistics of background variables (N=390)

Demographic Variables	Category	N	Percentage (%)	Accum.(%)
Gender	Male	238	61.03	61.03
	Female	152	38.97	100.00
Age	10-20 years	82	21.03	21.03
	21-30 years	102	26.15	47.18
	31-40 years old	128	32.82	80.00
	Above 41 years old	78	20.00	100.00
	High School	48	12.31	12.31
Education	Specialized	104	26.67	38.97
	Undergraduate	138	35.38	74.36
	Graduate students and above	100	25.64	100.00
	Total	390	100.0	100.0

Note 2: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

In the descriptive statistical analysis of the data investigated in this paper, the observed indicators of each variable were summed and averaged to observe the values of each variable. This study used a five-point Likert scale, and the mean value of trust was 4.110, which is 3 points above the median value, indicating that the trust of the respondents of this survey is moderately high status. The mean value of privacy concern is 3.668, which is 3 points above the median value, indicating that the current status of privacy concern of the respondents of this survey is moderately high. The mean value of self-disclosure is 3.709, which is 3 points higher than the median value, indicating that the self-disclosure of the respondents in this survey is moderately high. The summary results of the above data are shown in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2

Descriptive statistical analysis of variables

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Median
Trust	390	2.417	5.000	4.110	0.714	4.167
PC	390	2.000	5.000	3.668	0.867	3.800
SDB	390	2.214	4.714	3.709	0.726	3.857

Note 1: Privacy Concern (PC); Trust; Self-Disclosure Behaviors (SDB)

Note 2: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

4.2 Reliability Analysis

In this section, the collected questionnaire data were tested for reliability, and Cronbach's α coefficient and Corrected Item Total Correlation (CITC) were used as the main indexes for assessing the questionnaire's reliability. According to the generally accepted standards in current academic research, the Cronbach's α coefficient for each measure needs to be more than 0.7, while the CITC value needs to be higher than 0.5 to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire (Zhou, 2022). In this study, the reliability analysis of all indicators using spss26.0 program shows that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient values of trust, privacy concern, and self-disclosure are all greater than 0.9, and the CITC values of the analyzed items are all greater than 0.5, which indicates that there is a good correlation between the analyzed items. Based on the results of this analysis, it is confirmed that the reliability of the questionnaire of this thesis is qualified, which meets the design criteria of the questionnaire and can be analyzed in the next step. The summarized results of the above data are shown in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3

Reliability Results

Item	CITC	Cronbach's α (After Deletion)	Cronbach's α
Trust 1	0.730	0.927	
Trust 2	0.670	0.929	
Trust 3	0.689	0.928	
Trust 4	0.701	0.928	
Trust 5	0.727	0.927	
Trust 6	0.716	0.927	0.933
Trust 7	0.714	0.927	
Trust 8	0.772	0.925	
Trust 9	0.651	0.930	
Trust 10	0.717	0.927	
Trust 11	0.712	0.927	
Trust 12	0.681	0.929	
Privacy Concern 1	0.705	0.930	
Privacy Concern 2	0.756	0.928	
Privacy Concern 3	0.748	0.928	
Privacy Concern 4	0.740	0.929	
Privacy Concern 5	0.767	0.927	0.935
Privacy Concern 6	0.742	0.929	
Privacy Concern 7	0.714	0.930	
Privacy Concern 8	0.716	0.930	
Privacy Concern 9	0.771	0.927	
Privacy Concern 10	0.750	0.928	
Self-Disclosure Behavior 1	0.697	0.940	
Self-Disclosure Behavior 2	0.737	0.939	
Self-Disclosure Behavior 3	0.729	0.939	
Self-Disclosure Behavior 4	0.646	0.941	
Self-Disclosure Behavior 5	0.772	0.938	

Item	CITC	Cronbach's α (After Deletion)	Cronbach's α
Self-Disclosure Behavior 6	0.669	0.940	
Self-Disclosure Behavior 7	0.712	0.939	0.943
Self-Disclosure Behavior 8	0.696	0.940	
Self-Disclosure Behavior 9	0.720	0.939	
Self-Disclosure Behavior 10	0.731	0.939	
Self-Disclosure Behavior 11	0.729	0.939	
Self-Disclosure Behavior 12	0.732	0.939	
Self-Disclosure Behavior 13	0.763	0.938	
Self-Disclosure Behavior 14	0.692	0.940	

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

4.3 Validity Analysis

KMO is a statistic used to test the suitability of data for factor analysis. It has a value between 0 and 1, with the closer to 1 indicating that the data is more suitable for factor analysis. Usually, if the KMO value is more than 0.7, it is considered acceptable (Qiu, 2006).

Table 4.4

Confidence Validity Analysis Scale

KMO and Bartlett's test		
KMO		0.958
	Approximate cardinality	2672.014
Bartlett Sphericity Check	df	66
	p-value	0.000

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

As can be seen in Table 4.4 above, the validity of the trust scale was verified using KMO and Bartlett's test, and the KMO value was 0.958, which is greater than 0.7, indicating that the research data was well suited for extracting information.

Table 4.5

Privacy Concerns Validity Analysis Form

KMO and Bartlett's test		
KMO		0.950
	Approximate cardinality	2509.393
Bartlett Sphericity Check	df	45
	p-value	0.000

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

As can be seen in Table 4.5 above, the validity of the Privacy Concerns Scale was verified using the KMO and Bartlett's test, with a KMO value of 0.950, which is greater than 0.7, suggesting that the research data was well suited for extracting the information.

Table 4.6

Self-Disclosure Behavioral Validity Analysis Scale

KMO and Bartlett's test		
KMO		0.960
	Approximate cardinality	3387.513
Bartlett Sphericity Check	df	91
	p-value	0.000

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

As can be seen in Table 4.6 above, the validity of the self-disclosure behavior scale was verified using the KMO and Bartlett's test, with a KMO value of 0.960, which is greater than 0.7, suggesting that the research data was well suited for extracting the information.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

This study utilizes correlation analysis to investigate the correlation between trust, self-disclosure, and privacy concern, and uses Pearson's correlation coefficient to indicate the strength of the correlation. Specific analysis shows that the correlation coefficient between trust and self-disclosure behavior is 0.331, which reaches the

significance level of 0.01, which indicates that there is a significant positive association between the two. The correlation coefficient between trust and privacy concern is -0.342, which reaches the significance level of 0.01, which expresses that there is a significant negative association between the two. The correlation coefficient between privacy concern and self-disclosure behavior is -0.379, which reaches the significance level of 0.01, which indicates that there is a significant negative association between the two. The results of the above data are summarized in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7

Correlation analysis table

Pearson Correlation Analysis

	Trust	Self-Disclosure Behavior	Privacy Concern
Trust	1		
Self-Disclosure Behavior	0.331**	1	
Privacy Concern	-0.342**	-0.379**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

4.5 T-test and ANOVA

4.5.1 Variance of Analysis in Genders

Using independent samples t-test to get the results: different gender samples for trust, privacy concern and self-disclosure behavior all show significance ($p < 0.05$), which means that different gender samples for trust, privacy concern and self-disclosure have differences. The results of the above data are summarized in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8

Summary Table of Differences by Gender (T-test)

	Gender (mean ± standard deviation)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Male (<i>n</i> =238)	Female (<i>n</i> =152)		
Trust	4.19±0.69	3.98±0.74	2.877	0.004**
Privacy Concern	3.56±0.85	3.84±0.86	-3.236	0.001**
Self-Disclosure Behavior	3.80±0.69	3.57±0.76	2.916	0.004**

The test value is significant at the 0.05 level

4.5.2 One-Way ANOVA

One-way ANOVA was used to obtain the results: all the behaviors of trust, privacy concern and self-disclosure showed significance ($p < 0.05$), which means that there are differences in trust, privacy concern, and self-disclosure among the samples of different ages. The results of the above data are summarized in Table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9

Summary Table of Differences by Age (One-Way ANOVA)

	Age (mean ± standard deviation)				<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	10-20 years (<i>n</i> =82)	21-30 years (<i>n</i> =102)	31-40 years (<i>n</i> =128)	Over 41 years (<i>n</i> =78)		
T	4.23±0.66	3.93±0.76	4.08±0.72	4.28±0.64	4.7460	0.003**
PC	3.50±0.83	3.94±0.86	3.58±0.92	3.64±0.76	5.1850	0.002**
SDB	3.93±0.69	3.44±0.73	3.70±0.75	3.84±0.60	8.6010	0.000**

**The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.*

Note 1: Privacy Concern (PC); Trust; Self-Disclosure Behaviors (SDB)

4.5.3 One-Way ANOVA in Academic Differences

One-way ANOVA was used to obtain the results: all the behaviors of trust, privacy concern and self-disclosure showed significance ($p < 0.05$), which means that there are differences in trust, privacy concern, and self-disclosure among the samples of different ages. The results of the above data are summarized in Table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10

Summary Table of Differences in Different Educational Attainment Scenarios

	Education (mean ± standard deviation)				F	p
	High School (n=48)	College (n=104)	University (n=138)	Postgraduate (n=100)		
Trust	4.62±0.46	4.26±0.61	4.04±0.71	3.80±0.75	19.057	0.000**
PC	2.95±0.96	3.73±0.73	3.61±0.81	4.03±0.82	19.568	0.000**
SDB	4.30±0.43	3.84±0.66	3.64±0.70	3.38±0.75	21.838	0.000**

**The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.*

Note 1: Privacy Concern (PC); Trust; Self-Disclosure Behaviors (SDB)

4.6 Validation of Research Hypothesis

As a result of the analysis in the previous subsections, it was concluded that the average current status of privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behaviors is at a moderately high level; privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behaviors are significantly different on different contextual variables; and there is a correlation between privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behaviors.

Therefore the hypotheses proposed in this study:

H1: The average status of privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior is at a moderately high level.

H2: There is a significant difference between different background variables on privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior.

H3: There is a correlation between privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior.

All three hypotheses are true, and the results of the above data are summarized in Table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11

Results of the research hypothesis

Hypothesis of the Current Study	Results
H1: The average status of privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior is moderately high	Accept
H2: There are significant differences in privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior across background variables	Accept
H3: There is a correlation among privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior	Accept

Note 2: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is divided into three subsections, the first subsection is the conclusion and discussion of the study, in which all the results of the research in this paper are briefly explained and discussed; the second subsection is the research recommendations, in which the author's recommendations are mainly based on the results of the study, from different perspectives, for the future research as a reference; the third subsection is the limitations of the study and recommendations, in which the shortcomings of the study are pointed out, as well as the proposed Suggestions for future research.

5.1 Conclusion and Discussion

In accordance with the results of the statistical analysis in the previous section, this subsection is divided into three parts. Analysis of the current state of privacy concern, trust, and self-disclosure behavior; analysis of the variability of subjects with different demographic background variables under privacy concern, trust, and self-disclosure behavior; and the relationship between the effects of privacy concern, trust, and self-disclosure behavior.

5.1.1 Status of Privacy Concerns, Trust, and Self-Disclosure Behavior

In response to the RQ1 proposed in this study, "What is the average status of privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior of social media users?" , it was found through empirical analysis that the mean value of privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behavior of social media users is (3.668), the mean value of trust is (4.110), and the mean value of self-disclosure behavior is (3.709), and the average status quo of the three variables is in the middle to high level. The results of this study are consistent with the results of some studies that although social media users are generally aware of the associated risks and will have a high level of privacy concern, they still tend to disclose personal information on social media, and the users' concerns about personal data privacy and their actual disclosure behaviors are contradictory, and thus users will

have both a high level of privacy concern and selfdisclosure in social platforms (Taddei & Contena, 2013; Heravi et al., 2018), and there are also related studies pointing out that the more users trust the social platforms they frequently use, the more they believe that the platform's network environment is healthy and safe, and in such an environment they will unconsciously reduce their security precautions, and subsequently their disclosure behaviors increase in degree, and thus the users' trust in the social media platforms is also generally high (Niu & Meng, 2019; Zhang & Li, 2019). Overall, the average status quo levels of the three variables in this study are consistent with the relevant empirical results, and at the same time consistent with the hypotheses proposed in this study.

5.1.2 Differences across Demographic Variables in PC, Trust and SDB

In response to the study's RQ2, "Is there a statistically significant difference between social media users' background variables (gender, age, and education) and privacy concern, trust, and self-disclosure behaviors?" , it was found through empirical analysis that privacy concern, trust and self-disclosure behaviors are significantly different across background variables.

The results of this study are consistent with the results of some studies, in terms of gender, it has been found that compared to men, women show higher alertness and concern for the protection of personal privacy, and female users have more privacy concerns than men on social networks, which leads them to share personal information more conservatively. Meanwhile, women are more sensitive to negative content appearing in social media and adopt a more cautious attitude in social interactions (Li, 2021). These findings highlight the important role of gender in social media use behavior, especially in the way privacy is protected and social engagement is conducted.

Because of the cognitive differences between males and females, male users will have higher levels of trust and openness than female users (Zheng et al., 2017), and male users will use social platforms as a dating tool, tending to make new friends through more self-disclosure (Yang, 2017).

In terms of age, Adorjan and Ricciardelli (2019) found that minors growing up in a technological environment are not concerned about platform privacy leakage and are

in the stage of exploring new things and will be more willing to disclose themselves on social media (Mo et al., 2020), suggesting that the higher level of trust among minors may be due to their upbringing. In addition, with the widespread popularity of mobile technology, more and more middle-aged and elderly people are getting involved in social media, however, this group has a relatively low perception of the risks of the Internet and may not be aware of the risks of personal data leakage and its potential negative impacts (Zhang et al., 2022). Therefore these two age groups have lower levels of privacy concern and higher levels of trust and self-disclosure than the youth group (Wang & Zhu, 2013; Feng & Xie, 2014).

In terms of education, the level of privacy concern of users with higher education level (e.g., postgraduate group) will be significantly higher than that of users with lower education level, which indicates that well-educated people, on the one hand, are more sensitive to the privacy risk in cyberspace and are more likely to perceive higher privacy risks, and on the other hand, they are more uncertain about their own ability to withstand privacy risks, and they take the initiative to enhance their awareness of self-privacy protection, and at the same time, they will take corresponding privacy protection measures (Yang et al., 2008; Lu & Bai, 2021), while users with lower education levels often do not realize the great value of data, and think that even if their privacy is violated, the loss of their own interests is not significant (Wan & Sun, 2023), which indicates that education increases users' recognition of the value of private information, and that higher educated users, with broader channels of access to information, have more or deeper understanding of information leakage or misuse incidents have more or deeper knowledge, and therefore will have a lower level of trust and maintain a more cautious attitude toward self-disclosure (Yang et al., 2008; Wu & Yao, 2022).

Overall, the results obtained in this study are more consistent with the results of related empirical studies and the social reality, as well as with the hypotheses proposed in this study.

5.1.3 Correlates of Privacy Concerns, Trust, and Self-Disclosure Behavior

In response to RQ3 "Is there a correlation between privacy concerns, trust and self-disclosure behavior of social media users?" , it was found through empirical analysis

that there is a significant correlation between the three variables in this study and that there is a negative and significant relationship between privacy concern and self-disclosure behavior, a negative and significant relationship between trust and privacy concern, and a positive and significant relationship between trust and self-disclosure behavior.

The results of this study are in line with the results of some studies, Awad and Krishnan (2006) proved through empirical research that online users' personal privacy disclosure behavior decreases as the level of privacy concern increases. Users' level of privacy concern plays a decisive role in making decisions about whether to disclose private information or not. Users who are highly concerned about privacy mainly consider whether their private information can be handled and protected securely, whereas users who are less concerned about privacy are more inclined to weigh the value and benefits of services they can obtain from using their personal information when making disclosure decisions, and give relatively less consideration to the security of their personal privacy (Lankton et al., 2017). This suggests that privacy concerns are related to what platforms do with the information, and thus privacy concerns are often used as a measure of why people do not make disclosures (James et al., 2017). Currently, various communication channels are reporting on privacy disclosure behaviors and their potential harms in the Internet environment, which leads to a gradual increase in Internet users' concern for privacy issues, and this increased awareness directly affects users' behaviors on the Internet, making them more cautious about disclosing information behaviors.

In addition, studies have shown that when an individual's trust in users of other platforms increases, the individual's ability to perceive risk decreases, which in turn is more likely to result in information disclosure behaviors (Krasnova et al., 2010), which indicates that the trust of social media users belongs to a variable that is endogenous to themselves and affected by interpersonal relationships, and significantly affects the privacy disclosure behaviors of users. Meanwhile, in a trust environment, users' privacy disclosure behavior is significantly influenced by platform credibility. Specifically, when users perceive the platform as trustworthy, they are more inclined to exchange

their personal privacy in exchange for the services provided, but when the platform is perceived by users as an untrustworthy environment, users choose to retain their private information to avoid potential risks and insecurities (Mosteller & Poddar, 2017).

This phenomenon emphasizes the crucial role of establishing and maintaining trust relationships for social media platforms. By strengthening privacy protection measures, such as improving data security and reducing information leakage incidents, social media platforms can not only enhance their own image, but also increase users' trust (Wang, 2022). In addition, by effectively managing and punishing violations within the platform, it can promote the establishment of trust among users, thus optimizing the platform's social interaction environment. Therefore, for social media platforms, shaping a favorable trust environment is one of the key strategies to enhance user engagement and activity. Overall, the results of this study are more consistent with the results of related empirical studies, and at the same time consistent with the hypotheses proposed in this study.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Users Perspective

In the digital era, social media has become an integral part of people's daily lives, and privacy protection has become an important issue that users have to face. For social media users, effective privacy protection requires not only the efforts of platforms, but also the active participation of users themselves. Based on this, the following recommendations for social media users are proposed to help users better understand and cope with the challenges of privacy protection.

First, comprehensively recognize the online environment and privacy risks: users should invest time in understanding how social media works and privacy policies, including how user data is collected, used, and shared (Ai, 2023). In-depth awareness of the possible consequences of personal information shared in social media and awareness of the privacy risks behind data analysis and mining (Du et al., 2018).

Second, actively improve personal privacy protection capabilities: strengthen personal information protection awareness, learn and utilize various privacy protection tools and settings. For example, utilize the privacy setting options provided by social media platforms to control the public scope of personal information; change passwords regularly and use security measures such as multi-factor authentication to enhance account security (Heravi et al., 2018).

Third, it is prudent to build and maintain online trust: before sharing personal information, carefully consider the sensitivity of the information and the need to share it. Be wary of social media platforms and applications of unknown origin and avoid downloading and using them (Li & Wang, 2015). Maintain a certain degree of screening ability for information and people on the Internet, especially when adding new social contacts, and carefully consider their impact on one's privacy and security.

Fourth, balancing social needs and privacy protection: while enjoying the convenience and fun brought by social media, one should also maintain a constant concern for privacy protection. While satisfying social needs, find the right balance to ensure that you can express yourself as well as protect your privacy in social interactions.

Through the implementation of the above recommendations, this study hopes that social media users can enjoy the convenience brought by social networks while at the same time effectively protecting their privacy security.

5.2.2 Social Media Perspective

As contemporary society enters the digital era, social media has become a major tool for daily communication, while the security of users' privacy has also become a key issue. Although social media has enhanced the efficiency and breadth of communication, the accompanying privacy violations cannot be ignored. Based on the insights of social media users' privacy concerns and their self-disclosure behaviors, here are a few suggestions for social media platform management to enhance users' trust in the platforms, reduce privacy concerns, and improve the overall user experience.

First, transparent privacy policies: social media platforms need to implement more

transparent privacy policies. Instead of default consent, users should be encouraged to take the initiative to understand and choose whether or not to agree to the privacy policy. Transparent policies can help users better understand how their data is collected, used, and shared, thus building trust in the platform (Fan, 2019).

Second, strengthen privacy protection measures: social media platforms should continuously strengthen privacy protection measures, including but not limited to technical means such as data encryption and prevention of unauthorized access, as well as strict penalties for privacy leakage (Yuan & Niu, 2021). In addition, platforms should cooperate with other organizations in the industry to jointly promote the improvement of privacy protection standards.

Third, improve user privacy control: platforms should continuously optimize the privacy setting function so that users can manage their information more easily. In addition, differentiated privacy protection suggestions are provided according to the characteristics of different user groups, especially for those user groups with relatively weak privacy awareness, such as teenagers and middle-aged and elderly people, platforms need to provide more privacy protection education and guidance (Liu & Deng, 2018).

Fourth, cultivate users' privacy awareness: social media platforms should actively carry out privacy protection awareness education activities to raise users' awareness of personal information protection (Wang, 2022). By educating users to identify potential privacy risks, users are encouraged to enjoy the convenience of social media while also being able to take steps to protect their privacy.

Fifth, promote the establishment of trust among users: in the process of user interaction, social media platforms should take measures to protect the relationship of mutual trust among users, such as by strengthening the regulation of user behavior and cracking down on the misuse of personal information, so as to create a safe and trustworthy communication environment within the user community (Zhang & Li, 2019).

Through the implementation of the above measures, the trust of social media users can be effectively increased and their concerns about privacy and security can be

reduced, thus promoting the healthy development of social media platforms and the enhancement of user experience.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

Although this paper has obtained some valuable conclusions, there are some shortcomings, and the following is the analysis of the insufficient aspects of the study and the prospective suggestions for future research directions:

First, the sample size is small. Only 390 valid questionnaires were collected in the empirical research stage of this study, which is still an insufficient sample size compared to the current huge user group of social media platforms, which leads to the limitations of the research conclusions. Therefore, future research can explore more diverse data collection methods to obtain richer and more accurate sample data to better understand the behavior and attitudes of social media users.

Second, the scope of social platforms is broad. The conclusions drawn from this study using social media as the research object may be too broad. Studies have shown that different types of social platforms may have different impacts on users' privacy attitudes and behaviors. For example, there may be differences in user disclosure behavior between WeChat, which enables strong relational connections, and Weibo, which has weak relational connections. Future studies may consider expanding the scope of research and setting up comparative studies to test whether there are differences in the impact of different social media platforms on users' privacy attitudes and behaviors, which will help to understand the impact of social media platforms on users' behaviors in a more comprehensive way.

Third, the measurement method is limited. In this study, data were collected through the questionnaire method to analyze the subjective feelings and behavioral tendencies of social media users, and although this method is efficient, there are some limitations. When respondents answer the questionnaire, the accuracy of their answers may be affected by their biased understanding or cognitive bias of some questions, which may have some impact on the reliability of the results of the study. Therefore,

future studies should consider combining other research methods other than questionnaires, such as in-depth interviews, in order to obtain a more comprehensive perspective and more accurate data. This multi-method research strategy can not only make up for the shortcomings of a single method, but also improve the reliability and validity of the research results, thus providing a more solid theoretical and empirical foundation for an in-depth exploration of the behavioral patterns and psychological mechanisms of social media users.

Fourth, self-disclosure behavior considerations of specific groups of people. The survey respondents of this study cover social media users of different age groups and education levels, but the research on the unique needs and behavioral characteristics of specific user groups, especially middle-aged and elderly users, is still insufficient. With the popularization of mobile Internet technology, more and more middle-aged and elderly people have begun to access and use social media, and their self-disclosure habits and the motivations behind them may be significantly different from those of younger users, a phenomenon that deserves in-depth investigation. Future research should focus on examining the specific behaviors and needs of middle-aged and elderly social media users to reveal the influencing factors of their self-disclosure behaviors. Such a study will not only enrich the understanding of social media users' behavioral patterns, but also encourage social media platforms to design more humanized service functions to better meet the actual needs of users of all ages, including middle-aged and elderly users, so as to optimize the user experience.

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Research Question—Chinese Version

中国社交媒体用户隐私关注、信任和自我披露行为调查问卷

您好！

首先感谢您在百忙之中填写此份问卷，我们正在进行一项学术研究的调查工作，旨在了解我国社交媒体用户个人数据披露行为的影响因素，随着移动互联网技术和社交网络的飞速发展，社交媒体已经融入到人们的日常生活之中。目前，国内外主流的社交媒体平台有微信、微博、抖音、知乎、Facebook、Twitter 等。这些平台有效的促进人们的交流和信息共享，但也带来了数据泄露的风险，为了更好的了解影响用户在社交媒体中披露个人数据的因素，进行此次问卷调查。问卷结果仅用于科学研究，对于您提供的任何信息将予以严格保密，请您放心填写。希望您能腾出宝贵的时间，为我们的研究提供宝贵的真实数据。本次调查采取匿名方式，问题的答案没有正误之分，请根据您的实际情况进行回答。我们保证：此次调查研究数据仅用于学术研究，不会在任何情况下公开个人的相关信息，同时此次调查研究所获得的数据不会用于任何商业用途。如果您对本项研究的研究结论感兴趣，可以与我们联系，我们会在研究结束后将研究结果发送给您。邮箱：462076822@qq.com

第一部分：基本信息统计

一、个人信息

Q1:您的性别是：

- 男
- 女

Q2:您的年龄段是：

- 10~20 岁
- 21~30 岁
- 31~40 岁
- 41 岁以上

Q3:您的学历是：

- 高中
- 专科
- 本科
- 研究生及以上

第二部分：主要问题

信任量表	
维度 1：社交媒体信任	
1	我觉得社交平台是可信任的
2	我确信社交平台具备保障我的个人隐私的能力
3	我认为社交平台的隐私保护机制已经相当完善

维度 2: 网络人际信任	
4	我相信社交平台会执行保护个人隐私的规定
5	我相信即便不采取分组措施, 他人也不会侵犯我的个人隐私
6	我相信即便我上传个人照片, 他人也不会侵犯我的隐私权
7	我相信即便我公开位置信息, 他人也不会侵犯我的隐私权
维度 3: 社交媒体情感信任	
8	在社交媒体上, 我和对方可以自由分享想法、感受和希望。
9	在社交媒体上, 我觉得我能和对方自由地讨论我遇到的困难, 我知道对方也愿意倾听。
10	在社交媒体上, 如果我们不能一起合作, 我们都会感到失落。
11	在社交媒体上, 如果我向对方讲述我遇到的问题, 我知道对方会提出建设性意见并表示关切。
12	在社交媒体上, 我觉得在这次沟通之前我们已经较有感情。
隐私关注量表	
维度 1: 控制	
13	我可以控制个人信息在平台的使用目的
14	我有权决定平台可以收集哪些个人信息
15	我有能力管理给到平台的个人信息
维度 2: 收集	
16	提供个人信息给平台有助于我获取所期望的服务
17	分享生活状况、信息、看法使我更能融入社交平台的群体中
18	提供的个人数据给社交平台使我能更好的和人交流, 认识志同道合的朋友
19	提供个人信息给社交平台对我是有好处的
维度 3: 认知	
20	社交平台在收集使用我的个人信息时取得了我的知情同意
21	社交平台很清楚地告知了我的所有相关利益
22	我对社交平台上的所有权益没有什么不清楚的地方
自我披露量表	
维度 1: 披露频率	
23	在社交平台上我频繁地讨论与自身相关的话题
24	在社交平台上我讨论自身隐私时会有所保留
25	在社交平台上我不随意表达自己的想法
维度 2: 披露深度	
26	在社交平台上我不介意披露自身经济情况
27	使用社交平台时, 我通常会直接分享个人信息
28	在社交平台上, 当涉及到与我有关的话题, 我会长时间的分享相关信息
29	在社交平台上, 当涉及到与我有关的话题, 我会完整的分享相关信息
维度 3: 披露准确性	
30	我在社交平台上是非常真诚的
31	我在社交平台上的资料暴露了很多真实信息

32	我在社交平台上展示的情绪、活动或经历与我的现实生活完全相符
33	我对于自己是否在社交平台上真实反映了我的情感和经历感到不确定
维度 4: 披露倾向性	
34	我倾向于在社交平台上分享与自身相关的积极信息
35	我的社交平台个人资料里, 我倾向于公开更多对我有益的信息
36	我在社交平台上分享的情感或经历等信息总是消极多于积极