Introduction & Objective

Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory provides a systematic process that articulates how individuals obtain, control, negotiate, and manage their private information (Petronio, 2002; 2013). One of the main tenets of CPM, Privacy Control, regulates the necessary conditions that grant and deny access to private information. In short, when private information becomes salient, individuals make decisions (i.e., develop privacy rules) about whom, when, how, and if they wish to share this information to others. The privacy rule criteria consist of: culture, gender, context, motivation, and risk-benefit ratio assessment (see below). Specifically, the present study aimed to confirm latent constructs that reflect the five criteria of CPM and determine what significant effects each of them have on an individual's likelihood to reveal private information.

Method

Participants were above 18 years of age and considered a ‘highly private matter’ that they had not communicated to a member in their social network: 480 individuals, 168 males, 312 females, ranging in age from 18 to 60 with a mean age of 20.89 (SD = 1.74). The participants were Caucasian (78.3%), with others reporting Asian (4.5%), African American (3.9%), Hispanic (9.5%), Native American (1.5%), and other (2.3%). Participants reported on the nature of their relationship with others reporting Asian (4.5%), African American (3.9%), Hispanic (9.5%), Native American (1.5%), and other (2.3%). Participants reported on the nature of their relationship with others reporting Asian (4.5%), African American (3.9%), Hispanic (9.5%), Native American (1.5%), and other (2.3%).

Data Analysis

Each of the CPM criteria variables were statistically confirmed using extant or modified extant measures in order to ensure the construct validity of the variables within the model (see Table). Once validated, these variables were used to advance the aforementioned hypotheses to predict an individual’s likelihood to reveal private information. In utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the researcher conducted Anderson and Gerbing’s (1988) two-step approach to analyze the data: (a) Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and (b) Hypothesized Structural Model. Mediation analysis observed two significant indirect effects via context and risk assessment (see Figure).

Results

The results of the CFA measurement model and finalized mediated model displayed good fit. The results of the analysis showed that four of the seven criteria displayed significant effects on the likelihood to reveal private information. Characteristics of the confidant displayed a significant relationship but in the opposite direction and quality of relationship did not show any significant relationship between the two latent constructs.

Discussion

Three CPM criteria variables exhibited direct effects
- Contextual criteria (positive relationship)
- Risk Assessment (inverse)
- Characteristics of the Confidant (unexpected inverse)

Four CPM displayed indirect effects
- Family Relational Culture (positive via Risk)—open families when considering risk, more inclined to disclose
- Personal Characteristics (via Context)—traits linked to disclosure more likely when considering context
- Reciprocity (inverse via Context)—individuals who maintain a high reciprocity rate with the potential confidant may have had ample conversational opportunities to disclose the private matter, but have been continually confirmed in their decision to remain concealed.
- Characteristics of the Confidant (positive via context)—regarding direct effect: individuals are less likely to disclose private information to a person they have deemed trustworthy and supportive, not because they fear that the confidant will leak the information, but are concerned with disclosing negatively-perceived private matters to a person with high moral character and strong ethics. In considering context, it shows positive as appropriate timing clarifies this relationship.

References