Paradigm and My Doctoral Research

Reconciling Privacy and Reputational Risk Among UK Self-Employed Client-Facing Professionals on LinkedIn and Facebook

Course: Advancing to Doctoral Research Stage
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What Is a Paradigm, and Why Does It Matter?

1. Foundations

A shared framework for inquiry

A research community shares exemplars, assumptions and standards that guide normal science.

Legitimate questions → **Accepted evidence** → **Standards of judgement**

My framing determines whether I seek measurable relationships or situated meanings.

Kuhn (2012), including the 1969 postscript; Aguzzoli et al. (2024)

The Philosophical Sequence

1. Foundations

Ontology	Multiple situated meanings of experienced risk
Epistemology	Knowledge develops through dialogue and interpretation
Axiology	Values and my professional background shape inquiry
Methodology	Semi-structured interviews and reflexive thematic analysis

Lincoln and Guba (1985); Crotty (1998); Guba and Lincoln (2005)

Privacy Calculus: Knowledge, Evidence and Method

2. The focal literature

Knowledge

Relationships between defined variables

Evidence

Self-reported survey measures

Method

Statistical modelling of associations

Perceived benefits and risks → **Disclosure decisions**

A recent LinkedIn example uses surveys and structural equation modelling.

Dinev and Hart (2006); Eitiveni et al. (2023)

The Privacy Paradox and Alternative Accounts

2. The focal literature

Privacy paradox

Expressed concern can coexist with disclosure. Variable relationships alone do not explain each situation.

Digital resignation

Continued use may reflect constrained agency or perceived futility.

Platform norms

LinkedIn and Facebook organise self-presentation differently.

Barth and de Jong (2017); Draper and Turow (2019); van Dijck (2013)

The Research Gap and Sample Boundary

2. The focal literature

Provisional gap

How professional dependence and platform norms shape reconciliation across people and platforms.

Who is eligible?

UK self-employed professionals who work directly with clients and depend on online visibility for attracting clients, relationships or credibility.

Focus: privacy exposure and professional reputation

Revised DBA proposal; van Dijck (2013); Eitiveni et al. (2023)

My Position: Interpretivism with Constructivist Assumptions

3. My paradigmatic position

Interpretivist orientation

Purpose: understand how professionals make sense of reconciliation in context.

Constructivist assumptions

Multiple situated meanings. Knowledge develops through participant–researcher interaction.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) call their position constructivism. I use it to specify the assumptions supporting my interpretivist study.

Crotty (1998); Guba and Lincoln (1994); Lim (2023)

Why My Question Requires Situated Accounts

3. My paradigmatic position

A model-testing frame

Estimates relationships between predefined constructs.

Translates accounts into the model's categories.

My meaning-focused question

Explores how choices acquire meaning in specific professional situations.

Allows participants to introduce unexpected distinctions.

Privacy calculus informs interpretation. My question requires situated accounts beyond predefined measures.

Crotty (1998); Dinev and Hart (2006); Braun and Clarke (2022)

Axiology and My Positionality

3. My paradigmatic position

My professional position

Digital marketing and business development experience.

I may assume visibility is necessary or prioritise commercial benefits.

Reflexive practice

Open prompts and concrete episodes.

Memos on assumptions, interview interactions and alternative readings.

Consent and confidentiality guide the use of professional stories.

Braun and Clarke (2022)

Research Questions and What Counts as Data

4. Paradigm in practice

RQ1 How do participants reconcile privacy and reputational risk with continued use?

RQ2 How do professional dependence and platform norms shape reconciliation?

RQ3 How do participants' accounts inform, challenge or extend existing explanations of continued social media use?

RQ4 What forms of reconciliation emerge, and how can they form a provisional typology?

Data: accounts of concrete situations, perceived choices and reasons for continued participation

Revised DBA proposal; Braun and Clarke (2022)

Recruitment and My Interpretive Role

4. Paradigm in practice

Purposive recruitment: 15–20 participants

Professional networks and LinkedIn/Facebook groups. Screen UK self-employment, direct client work and dependence on visibility. Interview via Microsoft Teams.

Illustrative analysis example, not a finding

Account
“Clients check my profile”

→

Initial code
Maintaining visibility

→

Possible theme
Visibility as a professional obligation

My reflexive question: am I assuming a commercial benefit where the account describes obligation?

Revised DBA proposal; Braun and Clarke (2022)

Rigour in Reflexive Thematic Analysis

4. Paradigm in practice

Conceptual coherence	Questions, assumptions and analytic claims fit together.
Reflexive openness	Explain my position and how interpretations develop.
Meaningful themes	A clear organising concept, beyond topic summaries.
Persuasive analysis	Use extracts, address variation and make proportionate claims.

Braun and Clarke (2021; 2022; 2024)

Boundaries and the Strongest Alternative

5. Boundaries and alternatives

What interpretivism cannot give

Population prevalence

Behavioural prediction or causal effects

Independent verification of platform activity

Strongest alternative: a survey

Estimates associations between defined variables.

My present aim requires situated accounts and forms of reconciliation that remain open.

A critical resignation lens could examine power. I will explore constraint without assuming every account means resignation.

Dinev and Hart (2006); Draper and Turow (2019); Braun and Clarke (2022)

Central Argument and Learning Since Part 1

6. Conclusion

Central argument

A meaning-focused question requires coherence between philosophy, interview evidence, reflexive analysis and contextual claims.

Learning since Part 1

I can justify design choices through their commitments, recognise my influence and set boundaries on what the study can claim.

Contribution: contextual understanding and a provisional typology

Kuhn (2012); Crotty (1998); Braun and Clarke (2022)

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