

Paradigm and My Doctoral Research

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

Course: Advancing to Doctoral Research Stage

Course Code: LCDB7012

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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.



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

The Philosophical Sequence

1. Foundations



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.

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.

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



My Position: Interpretivism with Constructivist Assumptions

3. My philosophical position

Interpretivist orientation

Alien C in Jawad's Seven Aliens framework

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.

Why My Question Requires Situated Accounts

3. My philosophical position

A model-testing frame

Estimates relationships between predefined constructs.

Translates accounts into the model's categories.

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

My meaning-focused question

Explores how choices acquire meaning in specific professional situations.

Allows participants to introduce unexpected distinctions.

Axiology and My Positionality

3. My philosophical 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.

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 accounts support, extend or challenge privacy calculus and digital resignation?
- 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

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



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

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.

Boundaries and the Strongest Alternative

5. Limits and alternatives

What interpretivism cannot give

Population prevalence

Behavioural prediction or causal effects

Independent verification of platform activity

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

Alternative paradigm: Postpositivism

A survey estimates associations between measurable constructs.

Measures provide fallible evidence about an external reality.

My question asks how professionals interpret risk in context.

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

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