Protect What I Value: The Relevance of Values in Privacy-Preserving Behavior and Technology Design

Susen Döbelt

susen.doebelt@psychologie.tu-chemnitz.de

Professorship of Cognitive Psychology and Human Factors, Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences, TU Chemnitz, Wilhelm-Raabe-Str. 43, 09120 Chemnitz, Germany

User-centered technology design is sustainable because it avoids resources for development and promotes acceptance as it considers user needs from the beginning. In the course of digitalization, data and privacy protection are becoming increasingly important needs, e.g., when using smartphone apps. However, a comprehensive understanding of privacy-preserving behavior still requires research. Besides attitudes and beliefs, especially values are crucial for certain behaviors such as proenvironmental behavior, which shares some similarities with privacy preservation.

In an online study within the research project PANDERAM, we therefore investigated how smartphone app users differ with respect to the expression of values. Nonparametric comparisons between the behavioral stages *Predecision* (n = 13) and *Postaction* (n = 42) showed that individuals slightly differed with respect to self-serving values. For self-transcendent values, no differences could be found. In addition, there were marginal differences between the two stages in terms of the reported orientation towards tradition and achievement. The results show that individuals, who practice privacy-preserving behaviors, tend to follow individually oriented values to a higher degree than individuals who do not preserve their privacy.

As most of the study participants were students and the sample size was rather small, the expression of values could have certain specific characteristics limiting the validity of the results. However, the results may contribute to the characterization of privacy-preserving behavior as value-based. Furthermore, the findings can support the development of digital tools fostering privacy-preserving behavior by suggesting solutions tailored to behavioral stages and respective distinct values.