**Compare Chinese and Western Privacy through Social Media Privacy Policies**

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**ABSTRACT**

Intercultural communication research believes that the understanding and application of privacy directly affects the effect of communication. Over the years, there have been several tendencies in Chinese people's recognition of privacy. The first is that Chinese people's concept of privacy is not equivalent to privacy in English. The second is that Chinese people do not have specific concept of privacy, privacy is a unique product of the west. The third is that Chinese people do not value privacy, while westerners value privacy too much. There is a more absolutist tendency to think that privacy is private Different cultures will produce different views of privacy, which will then show different views of time, space and topic selection. This thesis will consider Chinese and western privacy attitudes through comparing privacy policies of social media in China and the US. (After all, most social media applications are from these countries.)

**Concept of Privacy**

Internet privacy refers to "A kind of personal right that the privacy and private information enjoyed by citizens on the Internet are protected by law and are not illegally violated, known, copied, disclosed and utilized by others".

At present, the protection of online privacy mainly has two modes, one is the industry self-regulation mode represented by the United States, and the other is the European union-style legislative protection mode. Industry self-discipline mode in the United States there are two main forms: one is through advisory industry guidance for industry members provide guidance with operational network privacy left it is through a third party certification body to the site privacy protection of evaluation and supervision, to comply with the privacy protection website issued privacy protection. At present, China's social media mainly adopts the self-regulatory means of releasing privacy policies to reach agreements with users on privacy protection.

**Privacy Policy of Applications in Different Culture**

First, generally speaking, privacy policy of our country's social media's privacy policy is much less than the U.S. social media privacy policy in detail, such as, social media in the United States on how to ensure that the user's right to choose the method is clear and provides instructions for how to modify the information. 77% of social media in the US have a separate cookie policy detail but our country puts this content into the privacy policy announcement. In addition, the content of China's social media privacy policy is not as rich as that of the United States. 66% of the social media in the United States show that they follow the rules of data transmission, and many social media in the United States also formulate privacy protection policies for users in other countries. Sadly, none of a following example is found in our apps. Second, in terms of the humanization of privacy policies, social media in the United States is significantly better than that in China.

Firstly, YouTube and Reedit have set content links in the articles for cookie, pixel labels, server logs and other technical languages.

Secondly, American social media use a cordial tone to welcome users to use the application, hoping that users can read the privacy policy carefully. In terms of expression, colloquial words are often used, while in China, boring words such as "personal information collection" and "personal information management" are often used, making it difficult for users to read patiently.

**Principle of Difference Appearing**

According to intercultural communication research, the appearance is closely related to people’s recognition to privacy, which means that it is attached to some theories, for example, spatial zones from Edward Hall (1996), and Hofstede’s cultural dimensions.

Firstly, the contribution to the user’s privacy of western developers can be analyzed that there is a high level acquirement of personal privacy in western culture, so they need to keep spatial zone of individual. Reflecting on social media, there are detailed policies in this applications, aiming to protect users’ private zone. But in China, although the Chinese culture is also showing importance to humanity, we have looser private idea about social communication, including personal information, which means our private zone may be smaller than the requirement asked by the western. So you can see that we are not too care about if there is a bright and shining signal which tells users that their privacy is protected well.

Secondly, following the search of Hofstede, we can use power distance theory and individualism and collectivism theory to analyze this difference. Aiming to feet more Chinese user, Chinese apps like Mei Tuan is more likely to collect users’ information to give more fitted advertisement without giving a striking statement when users begin to use this application. Because in our culture, the bigger company has more power and money to control public voice. (May be it can be related to high-power distance). So they always to ignore rights of users, including the privacy. Also, we are in a culture of collectivism, which people like to get more information about the others so that loose policy of apps can benefit attracting more users. On the contrary, most users in the west, most of who is individualists do not think their private zone is so big, which means that if their privacy is violated, they will be angry at once. So western developers must give a striking signal that tells the user how to protect their online information, or the apps are hard to operate and get users.

**Conclusion**

Different culture condition and social structure make the difference of privacy attitude between the western and Chinese ideas, especially on the platform of online social communication. We like more information but ignore our information safety, so the companies do less on our privacy. We can learn more to protect users’ information, especially their attitudes from the western companies’ attitude towards to privacy which operate these social media applications well. By the way, there is a good thing that whoever leak huge amount of users’ information will fall into big trouble whether it's a Chinese company or an American company, but there may be different when they solve problems because of the power distance as we before analyzed.

The western people are more likely to keep their information protected, so they disagree to have unsafe communicating ways or places, which may harm their individualism attitude. Comparatively speaking, in a collectivism-culture, we may look down upon our privacy to exchange more information about others.

In conclusion, all of these differences can be concluded into cultural difference from root, according to the previous analysis, which can be ascribed to the characteristics of intercultural communication which extends on Internet.

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