

## Chapter 89

# The Role of Religiosity in Technology Acceptance: The Case of Privacy in Saudi Arabia

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### ABSTRACT

*Religion plays a major role in shaping individual behaviour, especially in the religious countries. This chapter sheds light on the effect of religiosity on the intention to use technology and privacy and will use Saudi Arabia as an example. Using the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) will help explain the intention to use technology. Thus, it clarifies that the intention to use technology is affected by the user behaviour. The user's behaviour is shaped by their religious beliefs which also affect their privacy views. A systematic review of the privacy literature shows that there is a lack of study on the effect of the religious beliefs on privacy. After reading this chapter, policy makers and managers will understand that religious belief should be considered when making new laws and regulations.*

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the effect of religion on user behaviour and acceptance of security measures. The impacts of religion on user behaviour will likely affect cyber security. Looking at the literature, it became apparent that religion is not an acceptable measurement scale; instead, religiosity should be used. Islamic religion will be the primary focus in this chapter, and it will be reviewed in the strict Islamic context of Saudi Arabia. According to the literature, people who strongly follow a religion, such as Muslims, tend to ignore the rules and regulations if they contradict their religious teaching. The evidence in this chapter supports this claim. Religion has an impact on individual cyber security through user behaviour, perception of online privacy and acceptance to use.

The need for secure information and communication systems has been dictated by governments, the private sector and by many people. Thus, policies had to be put in place to ensure the security of the information system. These policies have been made to regulate the use, behaviour, and handling

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of the information system by users (i.e. employees or ordinary people). However, there is evidence to show that many people do not follow appropriate use and behaviours for various reasons, even if they are obligated to do so (Bada & Sasse, 2014). Securing systems by advising people what to do and not to do is enough. The users need to understand and agree to the policies and how to implement them. Often, they need to do this despite their established behaviours and beliefs. Technology by itself cannot help secure the information system without the cooperation of the people who use it. When changing security protocols, adding new security controls or changing policy, the users must work for or with the new security measure rather than against it (de Lange & von Solms, 2013). Thus, the user's behaviour should be changed.

Beliefs affect the change of behaviour, and the main guides for the personal mental acceptance for taking action are attitudes and intentions (Bada & Sasse, 2014). When attitudes and intentions change, the individual behaviour will follow. This concept has been used in several behaviour models, such as the theory of planned behaviour, protection motivation theory, and theory of reasoned action (Bada & Sasse, 2014). This leads to the importance of using a behavioural model to test the effect of behavioural change and acceptance to use the technology under the new changes. This chapter proposes to use the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology UTAUT2 model, which will be explained later in this chapter in relation to religiosity and privacy perception.

This chapter will focus on the role of religion in affecting the individual's online behaviour and cybersecurity. After reading this chapter, cybersecurity policy makers and managers will have a better understanding of the effect of religion on cybersecurity through user behaviour and their acceptance to use the technology that is needed for security. Consequently, they will be able to make policies that will respect and be applicable to their religious employees and users, which will help to increase security and reduce threats.

## **RELIGION**

Religion is a major influence on human life. It plays a major role in the formation of behaviours and attitudes (Essoo & Dibb, 2010). Berger (1961) shows that religion is a causal part of social behaviour. Meanwhile, several researchers have argued that individual behaviours and attitudes are justified by their religious beliefs (Foxall, Goldsmith & Brown, 1998). Delener (1994) argued that religion comprises beliefs and values, performing the role which people follow or use as a guide to their behaviour.

There are 5.8 billion people who follow a religion such as Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam, which is 84 percent of the world's population (Harper, 2012). Religion, to some extent, helps to shape individual personality, moral standards, social norms, and behaviours. Furthermore, religion plays a major role in human behaviours and attitudes (Essoo & Dibb, 2010). Cohen and Hill (2007) argued that the boundary of moral standards, thoughts, judgments, attitudes and action of human behaviour are affected by religion, personal level and type of religiosity. In addition, Delener (1994) shows that religion comprises beliefs and values, performing the rules which people follow or use as a guide to their behaviour. For example, In Saudi Arabia, a Muslim country, many people pray five times a day. Four of these prayers are conducted in the business hours. At these times, all businesses close to giving time to people to pray. It has become a social norm that all businesses, social gatherings, meetings and activities are postponed for the time of prayer. Religious practices change individual behaviours and attitudes (Foxall, Goldsmith & Brown, 1998), affecting their social norms and shaping new ones.

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