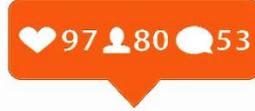


## Do users portray 'real life' on Instagram?



Social media platforms have experienced exponential growth within the last few years, which has resulted in social media users disclosing more personal information on these platforms. Such disclosure of personal information has been found to influence social media users' online image. If users wish to create or maintain a favourable image on social media, they may wish to adapt their offline behaviour to be more reflective of a favourable image when they perceive that they are being recorded for online purposes. This behaviour is referred to as the extended chilling effect. Various researchers have also shown that users' level of disclosure is related to the costs and benefits of self-disclosing.

A research study was conducted by Karla Rojas Garcia, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), to investigate whether costs and benefits predict the self-disclosure levels of Instagram users, against the backdrop of the privacy calculus and the Social Exchange Theory. This study focused on the effects of perceived privacy risk and distrust between social media users (as costs), and relationship maintenance and perceived enjoyment (as benefits) through self-disclosure of information via Instagram. As well as, to determine whether the measures of costs and benefits predict self-disclosure and if individuals exhibits extended chilling effect behaviour. This study was one of the first quantitative studies to investigate the extended chilling effect in South Africa. Data for the study was collected from 420 South African Instagram users through the use of an online questionnaire.

The findings of this study revealed that perceived enjoyment and relationship maintenance are the strongest factors that predict self-disclosure. The extended

chilling effect was found to be modest while, surprisingly, perceived privacy risk had the lowest impact on self-disclosure.

This study stresses the importance of understanding social media users' behaviour as it could enable marketers and academics to recognise some of the environmental cues that affect social media users' self-awareness and thus, their disclosure on social media platforms.

*This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2017 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Karla Rojas Garcia under the supervision of [Prof. Y. Jordaan. Do](#)*