

Article

Examining Employees' Perceptions of Facebook Post(s)-based Terminations Based on Skarlicki and Kulik's Model of Facebook Firing: Evidence from the United Kingdom

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Abstract: The purpose of this empirical study is to identify employees' perceptions of Facebook post(s)-based terminations (FPTs) in the UK based on Skarlicki and Kulik's (2005) model of Facebook firing. This study considered three such perceptions of FPTs as independent variables: perceived non-job-related post(s) (PNJRPs) (considered as a single independent variable), perceived intentional sabotage (PIS), and perceived organizational justice (POJ). On the other hand, this study considered three dependent variables perceived by employees as the consequences of such FPTs: fairness perception (FP), privacy perception (PP), and trust perception (TP). We purposively selected 472 employees from the UK as our survey respondents and utilized a covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) to test the proposed hypotheses using AMOS 29. The study identified that PNRJPs, as a single independent variable, has significant negative relationships with FP and TP, while the variable (PNJRPs) has an insignificant relationship with PP. PIS has significant positive relationships with all three dependent variables. Finally, POJ was found to have significant positive relationships with all three dependent variables. This research can contribute to a crucial internal emphasis on Facebook-based dismissals to evaluate how employees perceive such a practice. Additionally, this study can provide insights to the policymakers and HR professionals about employees' responses to the application of Facebook-based terminations considering fairness, privacy, and trust perceptions. We believe that academics as well as policymakers/HR professionals can benefit alike from this initial effort in studying FPTs and subsequent employee responses.

Keywords: Social Media; Facebook; Facebook Post(s)-based Terminations; Employee Perceptions; Organization

1. Introduction

Social media (SM) has enabled current organizations' simultaneous access to their employees' information (if such information is made publicly available by the respective users), and the managers

can monitor such information [1–6]. Since employees are regarded as the ambassadors of their organizations [7], organizations are increasingly being entrusted with (additionally, praised for) and confronting the ramifications of (also, recognized for employees' optimistic attainments) employees' SM activities. As for example, employees' negative or non-constructive SM-based activities can result in severe organizational reputation-related damage or downgrade organizational credibility to the external stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, strategic partners, and regulating agencies [4,7–14]. An organization's reputation can be harmed in a variety of ways, including public relations crises [12,13], lawsuits [12,14], disclosure of confidential or proprietary information [12], and exclusion from the consumer society [9]. Therefore, organizations have a rightful interest in monitoring and regulating their employees' SM activities, such as SM-based posts.

Maybe, based on this particular ground, at present, many organizations are increasingly being engaged in terminating convicted employees based on their (employees') Facebook-based or Twitter-based post(s) (such as photos, comments, likes/dislikes, and sharing) to reduce external actions that many scholars/researchers have named or branded as "Facebook-based firing" [4] or "Twitter-based firing" [3]. Similarly, the positive impact on SM is important for those organizations that are focused on developing their social impact of business [15] and innovation [16]. Notably, Facebook post(s)-based terminations (FPTs) are becoming increasingly widespread practices being used by numerous organizations in many western countries [5,17–19]; although, the information determining how such terminations are applied by the organizations is considerably distinct from the statistics that were indicated previously [20]. Nowadays, organizations are very concerned about information and technology related issues [21–27]. According to O'Connor and Schmidt [11]; Abril et al. [14]; and Mantouvalou [28], such Facebook contents may be ethically doubtful or unnoticed and may be shared by employees only during their free time/non-working hours from their Facebook profiles. Consequently, applying the dismissal process based on Facebook post(s) can lead to internal repercussions for an organization since such a practice can provoke depressing reactions from the remaining employees and can damage the organization-employee relationship.

Particularly, there may be employees who know the terminated employee(s) very well; or may be very intimately connected to him/her or them, who may include supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates [4,10,29–31]. Based on Skarlicki and Kulik's [32] "Third-party Reactions to Employee Mistreatment (TREM)" model, the employees (remaining) can negatively perceive their organizational treatment toward them through witnessing such dismissals. Such incidents can negatively impact their judgmental perceptions and succeeding reactions. For example, Skarlicki and Kulik [32]; Skarlicki et al. [33]; and Brockner and Greenberg [34] indicated that further investments in skill and knowledge development at the organizations and deviant behaviors eventually could be determined by the organizations themselves. Additionally, O'Connor and Schmidt [11]; Skarlicki and Kulik [32]; and Kulik et al. [35] provided this FPTs-based literature argument in a more extended version. Additionally, other scholars also provided supportive arguments; and they indicated that the knowledge and information that employees share on any platform are very crucial for the organizations [for example, 36–41].

Expanding the model of Skarlicki and Kulik [32] on Facebook-related firings demonstrates an alternative method of dismissal decisions being practiced by organizations. Likewise, it represents a rewriting of socially accepted standards around personal and professional boundaries, which will probably have a substantial impact on other co-workers. As a result, it is critical to understand

whether and how such terminations can generate negative responses, affecting employees' standpoints that are typically counterproductive to organizations. Although the issue of Facebook-centric terminations being practiced by many organizations is an appropriate, recent, and relevant research area in academia, so far, there are quite a few empirical research studies conducted focusing particularly on this issue (FPTs). However, the competent organizations are very concerned about the perception, satisfaction, and well-being of their employees [42–47].

The first one is a published paper based on the empirical study conducted by Valentine et al. [48]; the second one is an unpublished Master's thesis prepared by Bishop [49]; the third one (and the most relevant one) is a Doctoral thesis submitted by Omansky [4] at the City University of New York, focusing on the survivors' [those who were intimate to the victimized employee(s), but not terminated] reactions to FPTs initiated by their organizations. The fourth one is a published paper based on the empirical study conducted by O'Connor and Schmidt [11]. The fifth one is a published paper based on the empirical study conducted by Mantouvalou [28]. The final one is a published paper based on the empirical study conducted by Parker et al. [5]. The purpose of the current study is to identify the perceptions of general employees regarding FPTs. According to our knowledge, there is a large gap between theory and practice concerning this indicated organizational activity due to its primary stage [4–10,29–31]. For example, the constructs and items of FPTs have not yet been defined by these existing six studies. In addition, there is a dearth of insights concerning employees' perceptions while they witness such practices by their organizations and concerning their (employees') responses that can be person-to-person different. Furthermore, another purpose of this research is to investigate on how organizations terminate their employees based on Facebook-based post(s) and what might be the consequences of such terminations.

This study was conducted considering three independent variables perceived by employees: perceived non-job-related post(s) (PNJRPs), a term incorporating the characteristics of Facebook-based post(s) that is/are not closely connected to their jobs or organizations although the profile-owner(s)/employee(s) has/have been terminated— was partially adapted from Gilliland [50], perceived intentional sabotage (PIS), a term incorporating the characteristics of Facebook post(s) that is/are posted or tagged intentionally by another person to the accused employee's Facebook wall that is/are destructive to the organizational image, and the employee(s) who is/are the owner(s) of the posted Facebook account(s) has/have been subsequently terminated although he/she/they is/are not responsible for such reputation damage; and perceived organizational justice (POJ) indicates the source of the Facebook post(s) that has/have been intentionally posted by the concerned guilty employee(s), and the convicted employee(s) later has/have been rightfully terminated [50–52]. On the other hand, this study incorporated three dependent variables that are also associated to employee perceptions: fairness perception (FP), privacy perception (PP), and trust perception (TP) based on the scant literature available. This empirical study is one of the few initiatives considering this novel issue (FPTs) being practiced. In addition, this study can be considered unique since it was conducted based on employee perceptions in the UK, where no such studies had been conducted before. Being motivated by the research rationale and objectives, we put forward the following research question to be answered:

RQ: What are the employees' perceptions of different Facebook post(s)-based terminations (FPTs)?

2. Literature Review

2.1. FPTs: Concept and Nature

As a recent phenomenon but growing practice, the concept and definitions of FPTs should be understood with definite nature and characteristics. One of the basic intentions of this empirical study is to provide an elementary perspective concerning the questions regarding whom, where, when, how, and why the organizational actions of FPTs take place. Further and most significantly, we tried to unveil the employees' perceptions regarding such organizational actions. Finally, this study provides academics and practitioners an opportunity to recognize several trends and ideas that probably reveal a variety of directions for future research studies. Many organizations, particularly in the western countries, are increasingly practicing FPTs, as observed by a rise in the number of lawsuits over time in recent years [3–10]. The reason can be partially attributed to the increased use of SM by the present organizations and their employees [53]. Organizations can now easily discover destructive employee-created SM activities since they are already using and monitoring employees' (if not all, at least many) individual social networking sites (SNSs) while cyber-vetting their employees [1,2,52–55]. The top three SNSs utilized by the organizations in 2021 were LinkedIn (96%), Facebook (66%), and Twitter (53%) [2]. Such arguments are consistent with the findings of Kemp [3] and Omansky [4] where they identified that the most considerable portion of disciplinary measures included substantial evidence that were shared, circulated, or posted on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, conveying that managers may be remarkably influenced by employee activities on these three SM platforms.

The reason for increased FPTs may also be attributed to the increased use of SNSs by employees [53] and the ever-changeable workforce contexts. An investigation conducted by Omansky [4] indicated that employees aged between 18 to 49 years were mostly terminated or punished due to their intentional or unintentional Facebook posts. Such a result is well-anticipated, assuming that people under 18 are less likely to be at work and those aged between 18 to 49 are the most common users of various SNSs. On the other hand, adults aged 65 or older are the least active SNS users [53]. Additionally, the workforce is now dominated by this high-risk age group, while the forthcoming workforce comprises members who are being raised with over usage of SM. This circumstance is particularly concerning since earlier research studies on cyber-vetting indicated that using SM for organizational decision-making processes causes adverse responses (for example, notions of privacy concern and deficient corporate attractiveness) among communities between the age group of 18 to 50 [56]. In a similar manner, Drouin et al. [10], Stoughton et al. [56], and Aguado et al. [57] reported that such utilization of SM for organizational decision making can lead to lower fairness perceptions. Therefore, additional research initiatives on FPTs are essential for greater awareness of the environment that exists where organizations might (or might not) participate in such an application. Especially, it is imperative to know how it is regarded by both present and future organizational staff members to whom it has been implemented or will be executed, knowing that it may have consequences on the ability of organizations in attracting and retaining talented employees [3,4].

Omansky [4] identified two concepts, "crossing of corporate boundaries" and "worker agency and control" that may deliver a primary understanding of the components that affect employees' actions regarding FPTs. Moreover, an FPT indicates a unique termination method that differs considerably from traditional dismissal processes, thereby requiring the organizations to move across the distinction between organizational life and personal life to coordinate disciplinary proceedings in an unusual manner. That is why plenty of further research studies are necessary since many

organizational and employee-oriented aspects can determine how FPTs are perceived based on legitimacy, rationale, justification, and subsequent responses. These characteristics may encompass the following: the post-occurrence, the existing organizational SM policy, the post-discovery, employee infractions, and lastly, the employment of the accused worker(s). Such cases that appeared to obtain the highest level of support for the organizations seemed those that were most obviously work-related, and in which somewhat the Facebook content(s) had been shared within the workspace. For example, those contents that were published while the employee(s) was/were on duty [58–60] from the organization's Facebook accounts/pages [61–63]; and/or those that readily demonstrated that employees were willfully violating the organizational rules and regulations, unwilling to continue job, unexpected behavior with customers/co-workers/seniors [64]. In such situations, organizations are often notified by the common public, clients, other staff members, and media organizations, because such SM contents usually turn viral very fast and their businesses experience (more or less) unfavorable reviews.

Even though SM-related activities that occur during working hours within the work domain that can be specifically identified, other uniqueness appeared to be even more important for other peoples' expectations relating to the organizational level of transparency and relatedness regarding when and in what manner administrators ought to embrace FPTs. In this pertinent, Omansky [4] indicated that these attributes may include organizational accountability, detection of the SM post(s), category of the job(s), and type(s) of unlawful SM activities. Most of these cases usually entail punishing employees for incidents performed outside of the workplace and almost exclusively on personal SNS user accounts, exhibiting an enormous amount of "boundary crossing" into the personal affairs of employees [4,11,65]. Furthermore, there are few examples of specific organizations developing their SM policies in such circumstances, demonstrating that these types of organizations are not accessible, open, and accountable about their SM monitoring; and that their employees may be uninformed of such activities. Ultimately, such cases are expected to face higher levels of employee resistance or dissatisfaction toward the practicing organizations [11,65]. Nevertheless, in several instances, organizations may be convinced to make decisions by other influencers. According to Omansky [4], when organizations respond to an approach by actively monitoring their employees, this boundary-crossing throughout private profiles used for cyber-vetting can be observed as more justified or legitimate, exemplified by the propensity of staff members to experience more backlash in such instances.

Moreover, Omansky [4] indicated that considering the nature of the job, industry type, and misconduct themes, sectors such as education, healthcare, social aid, fine performing arts, tourism and amusement commonly maintain FPTs. Most of the mentioned occupations include those in education (school and college teachers, and tertiary level professors), healthcare (nurses, healthcare technicians, and assistants), public safety (police and firefighters), media (editors and journalists), legal (judges and solicitors/lawyers), and catering (food, cooking, and beverage). Teachers, professors, medical professionals, and law enforcement personnel generally possess high-status positions. They are, therefore, expected to continue having superior standing as the "role models" who consistently adhere to the values of service, rules, and regulations. Consequently, these professionals are generally expected to be held to a higher standard of conduct when they are not even on duty. Employees performing SM-based acts that appear to be against their organization's norms instead of protecting its reputation and proving commitment to its principles, might indicate a value-incongruence

between the individual and the organization [4,66]. Therefore, an organization going beyond to scrutinize and making sure employees' behaviors are consistent with its principles may be considered as understandable and proper for some jobs, even when such behaviors are lawful or more harmless (such as, posting about drinking while over 21 or posting in a short dress), particularly if such behaviors are viewed as job relevant. In addition, if a particular staff member has authority over the inferior members of the professional community, he/she may be exposed to SM comments that reflect evident abuses of his/her authoritarian power and can identify such a conduct to be morally wrong or unethical. Even if the incident occurs somewhere other than the place of employment, or it has nothing to do with related employment responsibilities, the general population might interpret such a situation as allowing the organization to take proper action against the associated employee(s). O'Connor and Schmidt [11]; and Elizalde [67] identified hate speech being one of the most common categories of unacceptable behavior for which law enforcement employees were convicted. Likewise, Štverková and Pohludka [68]; Elizalde [67]; DeGregory and Li [64]; O'Connor and Schmidt [11]; and Chiaramonte [69] indicated that high school and college teachers are generally diligent in inappropriate interactions with their students inside and outside of the educational settings, for example, allowing them in vulnerability or participating in illicit relationships.

Because of their representativeness in the respective organizations, employees' SM-related behaviors are an admirable indicator of their characteristics, judgments, preferences, talents, and knowledge level [70]. If the organization can create and ensure such an atmosphere, managers may initiate FPTs. Although certain Facebook posts directly concern an employee's job obligations, in other circumstances, such posts may be relevant to how other employees perceive the compatibility for the position or impair that specific employee's reputation as a reliable co-worker. One potential reason behind FPTs can be attributed to the professions of individuals employed in the fine-arts, media, entertainment, and amusement sectors that are especially likely to be attractive professionals, role models, or public figures in the ordinary people's eyes, making their SM activities more noticed and apparent. Particularly, media celebrities, film actors, sportspeople, and news presenters almost always possess distinct public SM profiles. Additionally, for indicated careers (for example, positions held by CEOs, public personalities, or superstars with advertising agreements), performing as a "Brand Ambassador" may be a legitimate component of the job description. In this circumstance, Omansky [4]; Abril et al. [14]; Olazabal and Abril [15]; and Dworkin [71] suggested that if a staff member's SM behavior violates the organization's desired public identity, the organization may rightfully terminate that specific employee from his/her employment. These instances generate problems concerning which SM-related behaviors are considered relevant for an individual's assigned duties, the time when such occurrences were conducted, for which sorts of SM posting organizations consider responsive, and how these viewpoints differ depending on the employment. Furthermore, the findings of Omansky [4] showed that distinctiveness may be equally or more pertinent, depending on other FPT-related features, highlighting the requirement for additional research studies exploring how these factors interact to influence various perceptions.

Some specific behavioral patterns of employees are empirically assessable based on the types of jobs/professions and have the possibility to disseminate violent SM contents that ultimately lead to their dismissal. Omansky [4] explained some examples of these behavior patterns, such as the authenticity of the post's (or posts') origin, the extent of confidentiality, the chance for detection, and the possibility of an employee's SM-based offenses. He [4] also claimed inadequate evidence of how

these components determine people's response to FPTs, and how they assign responsibility, suggesting further studies are required in this domain. An employee can circulate any personalized post, although several public view postings may be shared with co-workers and outsiders. Furthermore, in numerous instances, third parties might have uploaded or re-shared items to broadcast what they assumed to be egregious or undesirable conduct on the part of that employee; or might have contacted the organizational authority to notify such behavior. However, the post's security level, content source, and message of the content might have indicated various intents on the side of the individual who posted and might have raised different perspectives on accountability for other employees [4]. More specifically, the confidentiality level might have varied even though it was encoded distinctively because of the incomplete information in the reviewed sources. This discrepancy might imply various intents and degrees of control even over disseminating the same content(s).

Notably, the aftermath of misbehavior, open SM contents, and outsiders' perceptions of the FPT issues may provide constructive messages to the worker community. For instance, employees who associate themselves with their organization(s) in the SM platform (for example, by wearing a company uniform); or who exhibit their SM contents with co-workers may be more at risk of having their SM-related functions recognized and utilized as a basis for disciplinary measures being taken by the organization(s). Moreover, the employee union is sometimes misplaced in circumstances of obviously improper activity done by the guilty employee (for example, writing lies about the organization or disclosing someone's drug addiction issue). Similarly, employees can be considered at fault if they behave inappropriately in public or publish any content on SM without thinking of the consequences.

Overall, the objective of this present research is to explore some novel insights related to FPTs, a unique cause of termination being practiced by numerous organizations. It also emphasizes the need to obtain in-depth knowledge of why particular behaviors may cause unfavorable employee responses, and when these responses would be pointed at the business or the concerned individual(s). Given that FPTs are relatively new practices, an enhanced awareness of why they cause criticism should be properly understood by the policymakers or employers or HR professionals. Besides, it is also essential for formulating standards and implementing regulations that direct employees to proactively participate in more sensible SM-related activities to avoid future repercussions.

2.2. Understanding Models to Measure Third-Party Reactions to Employee Treatment or Mistreatment

The model proposed by Skarlicki and Kulik [32] was anchored on the ideas of "organizational fairness and justice" and was intended to benefit all the stakeholders (including employees, clients, and investors). Previously, this model was employed by Folger and Cropanzano [72]; Folger [73]; and Lerner et al. [74] in their research studies. The model is basically based on two psychological assumptions, both of which have roles but are not designated as "variables" in the model. First, outsiders notice how employees are treated (properly or improperly), because people appreciate fair behaviors and may feel morally concerned while they are outraged by unfair organizational treatment. Second, outsiders are also concerned whether employees were treated fairly or unfairly in the past, because the organization may treat (as they perceive) them fairly or terribly in future instances once they apply for the job and get recruited.

These reservations drive the outsiders to create a general evaluation procedure when they find out about how an organization treats their employees (i.e., via termination). The initial stage of this procedure entails a third authority developing an assessment of the "adverse consequences" of how the organization treats, as identified by the researchers, as the degree of negativity of the action(s) and its outcomes on the employees, including both the accused individual(s) and others involved. For instance, if an employee were dismissed, the financial loss and the way of dealing with the dismissal process would lead other parties to believe that the person had suffered a severe negative effect. The adverse consequences of the situation influence the perceptions of external observers regarding the party (here, the organization), that is accountable for the unjust treatment of its employees, which may include the employees themselves and/or other external entities.

The current study aims to empirically examine and further emerge Skarlicki and Kulik's model (proposed as the base model of this study) in two distinct manners. First, the proposed model presents a theoretical structure for acquiring insights into the potential reactions of survivors (those who witnessed an FPT but survived) in response to an occurrence of FPT. Second, the current research intends to examine the application of Skarlicki and Kulik's model within the context of terminating an individual's employment based on his/her Facebook post(s). Skarlicki and Kulik postulated how the organization treats its employees could instigate an evaluative process resulting in a survivor assessing and responding to the stated treatment. As a preliminary measure in this procedure, the individuals who have experienced the adverse effects assess the detrimental consequences of the treatment. FPTs may generally induce some detrimental effects for dismissed workers, such as loss of employment and money [11], unhappiness [1], possible public criticism [9,13], declined prospects for future employment [9], and feeling less valued [2]. An FPT can be thus probably considered by survivors (other employees who witnessed the process of organizational FPT) as having significant adverse effects on the victim(s) (dismissed employee or employees who were not guilty). Therefore, FPTs are anticipated to lead to either fair or unfair evaluations by the survivors.

According to Skarlicki and Kulik's model, the actor's features of the dismissal will influence survivors' judgments of the termination's justice (and consequent negative effects). Both the dismissed employee and the organization may be described by these traits. This research aims to investigate how individual traits affect survivors' views of fairness in various ways while the negative effect (the dismissal) remains the same. Particularly, it intends to examine different dismissals of employees' situations and perspectives. Additionally, this study aims to examine how survivors refer fairness perception (FP), privacy perception (PP), and trust perception (TP) regarding an organizational FPT. Besides, the study wants to uncover employees' perspective whether it is justifiable for the organization to dismiss an employee just because of his/her online SM activities. Finally, the current research aims to explore the model of Skarlicki and Kulik [32] by investigating different survival responses (in this study, such three perceptions are FP, PP, and TP) that might be influenced by another three different perceptions (PNJRPs, PIS, and POJ) of FPTs.

2.2.1. Perceived Non-Job-Related Posts (PNJRPs)

PNJRPs are those Facebook-based posts, shares, comments, or sharing contents that are not closely connected to the job or organization. However, although such contents are not related directly to the profile owner's (also employee's) job or organization, he/she has been terminated [50] from the job. Such an outcome is quite unfortunate from the viewpoints of survivor employees due to two

apparent reasons. First, Facebook was initiated for and is regarded solely as a personal and social SM platform that many users do not want to use for any other purpose (for job purposes) [2,52,75]. Second, the accused one as well as other employees might consider that it is an injustice to punish an employee or employees solely for the Facebook content(s) posted who is/are not directly responsible since such content(s) is/are unrelated to the job or organization. PNJRPs was considered as an independent variable in our study.

2.2.2. Perceived Intentional Sabotage (PIS)

In this study, we branded employees' Facebook-based content-related actions that might affect the decisions of FPTs perceived as PIS by the employees. PIS indicates Facebook post(s) that is/are harmful for organizational reputation but not actually posted by the accused employee. Rather, such post(s) is/are intentionally shared or tagged on the accused employee's Facebook wall by other employee(s) or individual(s) inside or outside the organization. Alternatively, such post(s) connecting to the targeted employee(s) is/are authored by other employee(s) capturing targeted employee's or employees' public behaviors or prominent stakeholders, for example, consumers, patients, and students [4].

For example, reposting another individual's negative post is an example of a post published by someone except its original writer. In this study, we branded such posting as "PIS" since such post(s) is/are really damaging for an organization although the accused employee(s) may not be responsible for such an act. Such acts are normally done by other employees(s) or outsider(s) who may have personal or professional conflict with the targeted employee(s). As an example, an employee might be drinking or partying being drunk can be shared by another employee. Again, an employee's previous photos or comments might be re-shared by posted employee or outsider that might be potentially harmful for organizational reputation.

2.2.3. Perceived Organizational Justice (POJ)

In this empirical study, employees' perceptions regarding any organizational action (FPT) that is based on Facebook content(s) posted by the accused employee was considered as "POJ". We argue that organizations have the right to take necessary actions and can eventually terminate the accused employee as part of disciplinary actions. Therefore, in this case, the real accused employee who intentionally posted such damaging content(s) indicating an organization can be terminated after a thorough and transparent investigation. Therefore, organizations have their rights to take stern actions against the posted employee after a thorough investigation and a fair trial. We branded such an organizational action as POJ since justice had been served in this case against the real guilty employee.

Thus, from the standpoint of an organization, an employee who is responsible can be brought under disciplinary actions and such actions are usually considered as perceived justice upheld by the organization in the eyes of other employees. However, the organization should clearly identify the employee action(s) that is/are related to personal SNSs such as Facebook or Instagram, that is, what they can or cannot post on such SNSs regarding the organization.

2.2.4. Fairness Perception (FP)

In this study, one characteristic of employee perception concerning the FPTs was termed as FP, that is, if the employees perceive the organizational disciplinary actions (FPTs) as fair or unfair. FP was considered as a dependent variable in this empirical study. According to Skarlicki and Kulik's [32] model, when an organization terminates an employee for Facebook-based post(s), other employees may start wondering whether they should be alarmed, how they might react to the news, or what type of future actions to take for the same SM post(s). Individuals may interpret a dismissal resulting from personal SNS (such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram) or a post that is unrelated to the job as unlawful or comparatively more unfair than a dismissal because of a work-related post [28]. Consequently, post(s) unrelated to one's job or published by outsiders may not be considered legitimate criteria for determining organizational decisions [32].

2.2.5. Privacy Perception (PP)

Technological progress enables organizations to have unrestricted access to employees' private data, weakening the defined boundaries between their professional and personal lives [4,76]. At present, many organizations have access to employees' personal data and social networking profiles of their employees. According to Hosain and Mustafi [2]; Omansky [4]; Eddy et al. [77]; and Stone and Stone-Romero [78], employees believe that their employers must safeguard their personal data carefully and use it only for legitimate business purposes following widely recognized ethical standards of workers' rights.

Given that SNSs were mainly created for private and social purposes, employees might have overlooked that their information (posted and shared Facebook contents) would be scrutinized and utilized by their enterprises while possessing the limited ability to protect these kinds of usage; and safeguard their confidentiality and autonomy beyond their jobs. Consequently, any incident of organizational misuse of FPTs would affect employees' opinions of whether their right to privacy has been violated by the organization.

2.2.6. Trust Perception (TP)

According to this research, the prospect of trust of any employee would be affected by the organization's willingness to be transparent. Based on an elaboration of Skarlicki and Kulik's [24] concept, we argue that an FPT applied to an employee can influence other employees' susceptibility to the organization by determining their expectations of the organization's future behaviors/actions toward them. We further propose that an organization that is clear and upfront in an FPT situation would attain stronger staff loyalty due to its transparency. Moreover, if the organization is not transparent enough and executes unfavorable FPT-based judgments, it will demonstrate a lower standard of trust.

2.3. PNJRPs and FP

Since employees may not consider non-work-related Facebook post(s) as acceptable criteria for management decisions, termination decision(s) based on such post(s) may be regarded as an injustice or unfair practice compared to terminations based on work-related post(s) [32]. Valentine et al. [48] revealed in an inside-subjects vignette study of learners and professionals that outsiders observe termination for posting or blogging not related to their jobs as unethical or unfair compared to job-related blogging. An FPT should result in lower privacy violation perceptions if the Facebook (or any

other SM platform) post is job-related or posted by the accused employee, and/or if the dismissal by the organization is transparent, as opposed to whenever a post is made that has nothing to do with the suspected employee or when the organization itself is not transparent concerning the dismissal.

However, in regard to the above discussion, Omansky [4]; Mantouvalou [28]; Alge et al. [79]; and Stone and Stone-Romero [78] suggested that employees may experience greater awareness and concerns regarding privacy violations when they perceive their organization's data monitoring, compilation, as well as usage rules and procedures as unlawful and unjust that are violating their authority over their private data on SM platforms, ultimately disregarding their privacy standards regarding such actions. Thus, based on the assertions put forth by the scholars, we intend to examine the reliability of the following research hypothesis:

H1: *PNJRPs (as an independent variable) has a negative relationship with employees' FP.*

2.4. PNRPs and PP

Facebook originated as a personal and social networking site (SNS), meant to be virtually associated with friends and relatives, and making interactions among the same networked friends [80]. Therefore, the contents that are posted, shared, and tagged in Facebook are considered to be personal feelings, experience, and opinions that are shared among a specific group of people who are generally known as "friends" unless the user makes those contents "public" (in that case, all Facebook users even who are not connected with the posted user can see the contents).

In the context of FPTs, whether the posted contents are job-related or not is particularly important to the organization and employees since the organization has already crossed the line between job activity and non-job activity by observing employees' private SM profiles. Employees may express concerns if disciplinary measures are taken due to non-job-related content(s) rather than job-related content(s). Because such behaviors that are motivated by non-work-related post(s) are less likely to seem justified or excused [81,82], which may raise concerns among employees. In such a case, employees may well-justifiably perceive that the action of an FPT is unfair. We propose to test the subsequent research hypothesis based on privacy perceptions:

H2: *PNJRPs (as an independent variable) has a negative relationship with employees' PP.*

2.5. PNRPs and TP

The trust between employees and their employers is crucial to the success of any business. Skarlicki and Kulik [32] posited that the behaviors and locus of control of employees concerning the treatment they receive from their organizations are contingent upon their trust and fairness. We argue that employees' views of trust and justice in the workplace are adversely affected when management treats certain employees unfairly because of parameters over which they have no influence.

According to the literature and theories on fairness perceptions, when employees are allowed to participate in the decision-making procedure or are involved in the result, they are more likely to identify it as reliable as well as fair [4,83] than when they are not allowed to. We propose that PNRPs (as an independent variable) has a negative relationship with employees perceived trust, and hence would like to test the subsequent research hypothesis:

H3: *PNJRPs (as an independent variable) has a negative relationship with employees' TP.*

2.6. PIS and FP

Skarlicki and Kulik [32] asserted that employees respect the dismissal decision if they have positive impressions of organizational justice. Since "posted individuals" and "job-relatedness of the post(s)" both are under the heading of employee behaviors, we propose that these two criteria will influence how employees perceive organizational fairness. Employees are anticipated to score the organizational FPT standards from most fair (1) to least fair (4) regarding their SM actions: 1) accused employee's job-related post(s), 2) job-related post(s) by someone else, 3) accused employee's non-job-related post(s); and 4) non-job-related post(s) by someone else.

Therefore, we argue that an employee's intentional sabotage to harm another employee(s) (as perceived by other employees) must be fairly identified, and the real culprit must be punished after a thorough, fair and transparent investigation. Such a punishment, leading to a justified organizational FPT, can have a positive impact on FP of other employees. If other employees believe that the accused employee(s) really tried to harm another employee(s) or damage organizational reputation by intentionally posting false/negative information, they (the survivors) will welcome such an FPT. Besides, if the organizational actions are fair and transparent (based on a fair and thorough investigation), they develop a positive perception of fairness toward their organization. Hence, this study aims to examine the research hypothesis outlined below:

H4: PIS has a positive relationship with employees' FP.

2.7. PIS and PP

Employees may perceive that their organizations should respect their private lives if the post(s) is/are not clearly job-relevant, and thus, they perceive an FPT as less fair. However, if the content was posted by the accused employee intentionally damaged another employee's career or organizational reputation, and if the organizational policies and practices were violated because of that post, other employees may develop a perception that the organization can take the due decision to safeguard its best interest.

We propose that four basic conditions are essential for such a positive privacy perception toward organizational FPTs. First, the post should be related (negatively) to the job or organization. Second, the post should be made by the real guilty employee, not by the accused employee. Third, the guilty employee should know that his/her post(s) would be monitored by the organization. However, finally, the termination procedure needs to be fair, thorough, and transparent. We argue that if the above four conditions are met, the employees form a positive perception of fairness regarding their organizational FPTs. Based on our own arguments, we propose that:

H5: PIS has a positive relationship with employees' PP.

2.8. PIS and TP

Employees must believe that each and all organizational actions are fair, transparent, and trustworthy. Such belief will remove any confusion, anxiety, and insecurity of employees toward their organization. Thus, in any case, trust is an important issue that must be present between two parties (the organization and the employees). We propose that employees trust their organization regarding an FPT if they believe the post was intentionally made by a guilty employee (not the one accused) to damage the career of another employee or tarnish the organizational reputation. We branded employees' perceptions regarding such an action as "perceived internal sabotage (PIS)" where the post was made intentionally by an employee (guilty) to frame another employee (accused),

or to damage/harm organizational reputation even after knowing the organizational rules and policies regarding SM handling. Therefore, employees will have trust in their organizational policies and actions regarding the disciplinary actions (including an FPT) made to the real guilty employee who intentionally tried to frame another employee or damage his/her organizational reputation. Hence, we propose that:

H6: PIS has a positive relationship with employees' TP.

2.9. POJ and FP

POJ, in this empirical study, refers to employees' perceptions regarding their organizational action(s) of FPTs based on damaging Facebook post(s). Omansky [4], in his investigation, anticipated that "transparency of the organization" and "job-relatedness" would affect employees' FP. Particularly, employees will generally perceive that a job/organization-relevant post and organizational subsequent actions against the posted employee as positive, if such a post is detrimental to organizational reputation. They will consider such disciplinary actions as fair and justifiable.

On the other hand, a non-job-related post by an employee or outside the employee base and subsequent actions taken by the organization will be perceived as unfair and unjustifiable by most of the employees. Therefore, we argue that employees' FP is an outcome of POJ, and propose the research hypothesis as follows:

H7: POJ has a positive relationship with employees' FP.

2.10. POJ and PP

While the model developed by Skarlicki and Kulik [32] primarily describes FP as the organizational treatment of employees, this sort of treatment may also affect other employee sentiments including perceived privacy violation. According to Kemp [3]; Omansky [4]; Snyder and Cistulli [76]; and Stone and Stone-Romero [78], technological developments have given modern businesses constant accessibility to employees' SM-based data that violates societal standards for employees' privacy and safety, creating a conflict between work and personal life. In the context of FPTs, organizations have easy and unprecedented data-access to employees' private information through individual SM profiles.

Thus, employees might believe that their employers have a duty to safeguard their personal data with respect and confidentiality that will establish standards of business ethics and employee protection [2,80]. Employees are unlikely to want their private data to be accessed and used by organizations although they are not always able to avoid this practice. This situation may compromise their independence and confidentiality also in non-work environments. The attributes of any incidence related to organizational FPTs thus anticipate that organizations have violated employees' privacy that may subsequently influence employees' PP.

However, if the organizations develop strict policies regarding their employees' SM behaviors and actions, and employees are well informed about such policies and provide their written consents that the organization can monitor their SNS profile(s); any unfavorable post created or shared by an employee that may damage the reputation of concerned organization may not be viewed as an act of individual privacy. Thus, any action (including an FPT) taken by the organization in such a case, after

a fair, proper, and thorough investigation, may be favored and justified by employees. Therefore, we propose to test the subsequent research hypothesis:

H8: POJ has a positive relationship with employees' PP.

2.11. POJ and TP

Employees' trust toward their organization will be positive if they believe that the accused/guilty employee is responsible and the organizational actions i.e., termination based on such accusations are valid, justified, open, and transparent [3,4]. Therefore, we argue that a positive form of employees' trust can be developed toward their organization if they (employees) perceive that the organization's actions are justifiable, transparent, and fair about the accused/guilty employee, after a fair, proper, and thorough investigation. In fact, TP is the ultimate outcome of POJ. Hence, based on scant literature available, we would like to justify the subsequent research hypothesis:

H9: POJ has a positive relationship with employees' TP.

2.12. Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review and the development of preceding research hypotheses, we developed the following conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 below illustrating the study's variables and related hypotheses:

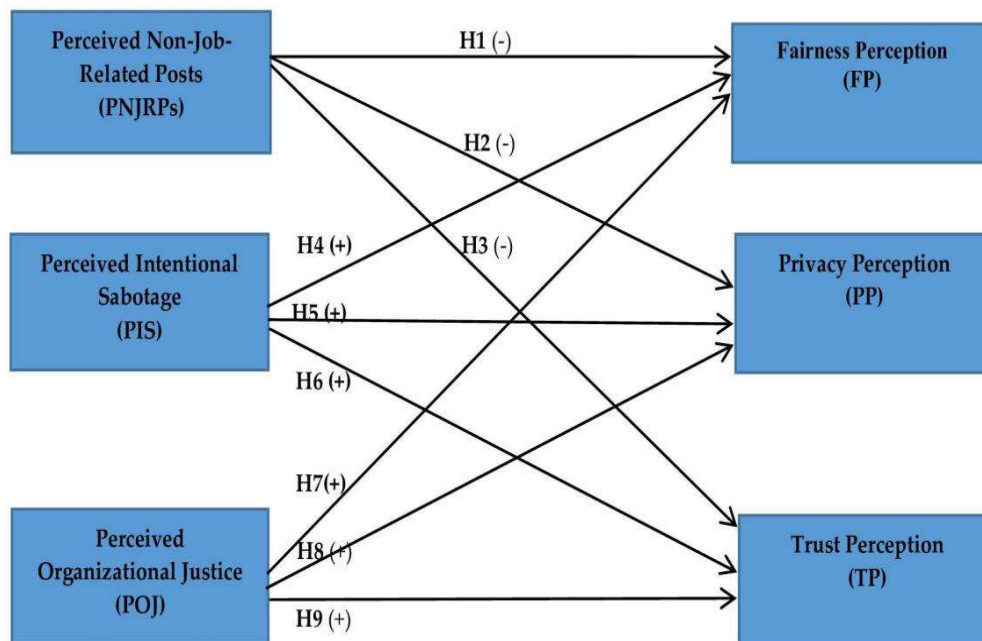


Figure 1. Conceptual framework; Source: Researchers' own elaboration.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Data Collection, Sampling Technique and Sample Size Determination

As the researchers, we preferred primary data over secondary information as this study was based solely on employees' own perceptions. Employees' perceptions can be generally referred to "employees' internal feelings and beliefs regarding an organizational or job-related decision". In this empirical study, we tried to answer the research question "What are the employees' perceptions of

different Facebook post(s)-based terminations (FPTs)?". Secondary information, as we believe, could not be applied to find the answer to this intended research question. The respondents were purposefully recruited from different cities of the United Kingdom (UK) working for different organizations. The UK was selected as the country of data collection due to the popularity of Facebook and the frequency of Facebook-based terminations occurred in this country [3,4].

We employed "purposive sampling", a non-probability sampling technique, for selecting our intended respondents, to achieve the specific objectives of this study. Purposive sampling is a suitable sampling technique when the researchers intend to gather specific types of data they want from a particular group of samples (here, individual respondents). Additionally, since this study's respondents were required to possess exclusive knowledge or required to meet specific criteria established by us, purposive sampling was the best option [84]. According to Blumberg et al. [85], purposive sampling is the right choice when the researchers use the samples to conform to several specific criteria. We opted for purposive sampling to collect data from those employees who could provide us with adequate information regarding the various perceptions of their organizational FPTs.

In addition, Malhotra and Das [86] proposed that while dealing with an unlisted population, where the precise sampling frame or population is uncertain, a non-probability sampling is the most appropriate choice. In this study, we opted for purposive sampling for three obvious reasons. First, the exact sampling frame (i.e., list of population) was unavailable to us. Second, the size of the population (in this case, the total number of employees in the UK) was also approximate, not absolute. Third, we carefully picked those employees as our selected study respondents who had proper ideas about organizational FPTs. In addition, all our respondents' working organizations had SM-based FPT policies.

The sample size was determined using G*Power 4.0 software [87], following the guidelines of Cohen [88] and the recommendations of Westland [89]. With an effect size (f^2) of 0.3, a significance level (alpha) of 0.05, six variables, and 18 questionnaire items, the minimum required sample size (n) was calculated to be 285 to achieve 99% statistical power for the model [90]. However, to make the sample size more robust and representative, we initially distributed 500 survey questionnaires to the selected respondents who were working at different positions of numerous organizations across the UK. The figure of 500 distributed surveys was determined based on several factors that are typically considered in survey-based studies. In large-scale surveys, it is common to anticipate a certain level of non-responses due to various reasons, such as lack of interest, time constraints, or accessibility issues. For this study, a conservative estimate of a 60-70% response rate was assumed, necessitating the distribution of a larger number of surveys to achieve the targeted sample size. To achieve the minimum required sample size of the respondents (as determined using G*Power software), the initial distribution of 500 surveys was aimed at increasing the likelihood of collecting diverse and representative responses from the working individuals. The choice of 500 surveys was also influenced by the availability of resources, access to the organizations, and the study's time frame. We ensured that even with a moderate response rate, the collected data would exceed the minimum sample size needed for a robust statistical analysis. In addition, the decision to initially distribute 500 surveys stemmed from practical considerations to counter non-response and ensure data representativeness, while the use of G*Power 4.0 for determining the minimum required sample size was theoretically and methodologically justified. This dual approach ensured that, as we believe, the study's findings were both robust and generalizable [89,90].

Thus, we selected a sample of 500 employees from various job sectors of the UK using a cross-sectional survey design. All the selected respondents worked at organizations that had their own organizational Facebook pages. On the other hand, all the individual respondents had their own personal Facebook accounts that were active at the time of the survey. After orally agreeing to participate in this study, we collected written “Letter of Consent to Participate” dully signed by each respondent. Moreover, we collected “Letter of Authorization” from all organizations where the participated respondents worked during the time of survey. Respondents were clearly informed regarding the objectives and nature of the study, survey items, and questionnaire filing procedures. After collecting the necessary permissions, we sent 500 survey instruments to those pre-selected respondents. In response, we received back 476 (at a 95.2% response rate) instruments from them. However, we discovered 4 of those completed instruments as incomplete, improperly filled, and/or suspiciously biased. Therefore, those questionnaires were excluded from our consideration, resulting in a final sample size (n) of 472. The data were collected between the period of May 2024 to July 2024.

3.2. Measurement Tools, Pre-Testing and Pilot Testing

As part of measurement tool, we developed a well-designed, 18-item survey instrument based on scant literature available. While most of the survey items were collected (with slight modifications to adapt/adjust with this study) from the studies conducted by Kemp [3] and Omansky [4], some of the items were developed by us through literature review that were intended to be tested for the first time through this empirical study. We conducted exploratory factor analysis (EFA) for every item while reliability and validity tests for each construct were also conducted. A “5-point Likert Scale” was used to get appropriate perception from our respondents where 1 indicated “Strongly Disagree” and 5 indicated “Strongly Agree”.

We included administering the questionnaire to a sample of 12 respondents assessing the adequacy of the survey items' wording and arrangement. Subsequently, a preliminary study was conducted with a sample size of 26 respondents to validate the scales' reliability for the purpose of conducting the comprehensive research project. In previous research studies, academics posited that a sample size of 12 respondents is enough for pre-testing purposes. On the other hand, according to Memon et al. [91], a sample size ranging from 10 to 30 respondents is considered appropriate for conducting a pilot test. Therefore, the selected sample sizes for pre-testing and pilot testing can be deemed sufficient based on the established criteria.

4. Analysis and Interpretation

4.1. Respondents' Demography

Table 1 indicates the respondents' demographic information, such as gender, age level, education, and length of service. The table indicates that the majority (59.53%) of the respondents were male. Most of the respondents had an age level of 30 to 39 years (37.29%), followed by 40 to 49 years (32.20%).

Regarding education, it was identified that majority of the respondents (75.21%) had a bachelor's degree while only 5 of them had PhD. Finally, it was revealed that more than two-third (70.55%) of the respondents had the job experience of 11 to 20 years.

Table 1. Respondents’ demography.

Components	Category	Absolute number	Frequency
Gender	Male	281	59.53
	Female	191	40.47
	Total (n)	472	100
Age level (Year)	20 - 29	96	20.34
	30 - 39	176	37.29
	40 - 49	152	32.20
	50 - 59	45	9.53
	60 +	3	0.64
	Total (n)	472	100
Education	Bachelor	355	75.21
	Master	112	23.73
	PhD	5	1.06
	Total (n)	472	100
Service length (Year)	1 -10	56	11.86
	11 - 20	333	70.55
	21 - 30	83	17.58
	Total (n)	472	100

Source: Survey instruments.

4.2. Data Normality

To validate the normality of gathered data, this study assessed the skewness and kurtosis measures. Concerning skewness, this research indicates that the latent factor indicators had a reasonably normal distribution. Table 2 shows the results from normality test.

Table 2. Normality test.

Items	n	Mean	Std. dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. error	Statistic	Std. error
PNJRPs1	472	2.11	0.88	0.94	0.16	0.70	0.26
PNJRPs2	472	2.16	0.91	0.72	0.16	0.19	0.26
PNJRPs3	472	2.12	0.74	0.91	0.16	1.41	0.26
PIS1	472	2.13	0.83	0.82	0.16	0.62	0.26
PIS2	472	2.67	0.82	0.31	0.16	-0.46	0.26
PIS3	472	2.81	0.88	0.11	0.16	-0.75	0.26
POJ1	472	2.61	0.81	0.33	0.16	-0.36	0.26
POJ2	472	2.05	0.91	-0.21	0.16	-0.71	0.26
POJ3	472	2.61	0.93	0.25	0.16	-0.81	0.26
FP1	472	3.21	0.92	-0.38	0.16	-0.80	0.26
FP2	472	2.51	0.96	0.51	0.16	-0.18	0.26
FP3	472	2.69	1.01	0.30	0.16	-0.81	0.26
PP1	472	3.81	0.77	-0.91	0.16	1.80	0.26
PP2	472	3.11	0.74	-0.60	0.16	-0.99	0.26
PP3	472	3.67	0.76	-0.68	0.16	0.99	0.26
TP1	472	3.71	0.71	-0.77	0.16	1.11	0.26
TP2	472	3.01	0.61	-0.85	0.16	2.01	0.26
TP3	472	3.05	0.65	-0.65	0.16	0.95	0.26

Source: AMOS 29.

Moreover, the kurtosis values were found to vary from -0.99 to 2.01. These data points do not conform to the strict standard for normalcy, but such an outcome is nevertheless acceptable within the more moderate parameters proposed by Sposito et al. [92], who suggested 3.3 as the upper and -

3.3 as the lower normality criterion. Overall, the dataset exhibited signs of a relatively normal distribution, giving the researchers optimism for further proceeding with the investigation.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 indicates the descriptive statistics for the constructs, representing mean, standard deviation, and zero-order correlation values. The table indicates that all the variables in this research were related to the anticipated paths.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics.

Variable	Mean	Std. dev.	Gen.	Age	Edu.	Service length	PNJRPs	PIS	POJ	FP	PP	TP
Gen.	1.00	0.42	1									
Age	2.50	2.09	0.321**	1								
Edu.	1.50	0.96	0.181	0.454**	1							
Service length	1.50	3.11	0.120	0.076	0.152**	1						
PNJRPs	2.55	0.46	0.047	0.066	-0.002	0.081	1					
PIS	2.52	0.66	0.037	0.054	-0.038	0.075**	0.371**	1				
POJ	2.04	0.77	0.035	0.051	-0.085	0.071	0.263**	0.384**	1			
FP	2.09	0.69	0.026	0.038	0.001	0.063**	0.219**	0.329**	0.312**	1		
PP	2.98	0.71	0.017	0.027	0.039	0.058	0.119**	0.178**	0.213**	0.268**	1	
TP	2.88	0.85	0.008	0.019	0.027	0.054	0.111**	0.111**	0.118**	0.211**	0.008**	1

** Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$ level (2-tailed).

Source: AMOS 29.

According to Table 3, all three independent variables, PNJRPs, PIS, and POJ were highly correlated with three dependent variables: FP, PP, and TP indicating that the outcomes were statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ level (two-tailed). Therefore, based on statistical results, significant positive correlation was found between gender and age, as well as between age and academic background of the respondents, at 1% significance level in a two-tailed test. On the other hand, a 1% significance level and a two-tailed test revealed a strong positive association between respondents' academic credentials and their work history.

4.4. Reliability and Validity

As shown in Table 4, this study evaluated the reliability of the data by using the average variance extracted (AVE) values as well as composite reliability (CR) measures. The table indicates that all the values were within the appropriate parameters according to the recommendations of scholars [93–95]. Additionally, to verify discriminant validity, this research employed Fornell and Larcker's [94] approach of evaluating the AVE with comparable correlations associated with other variables. In comparison to the associated correlation with other variables/constructs, the square root of AVE

should be higher valued. Pertinently, Table 4 shows that the latent variables' discriminant validity was appropriate.

Table 4. Model validity measures.

Variable	CR	AVE	PNJRPs	PIS	POJ	PP	FP	TP
PNJRPs	0.91	0.79	0.881					
PIS	0.90	0.72	0.219**	0.863				
POJ	0.87	0.61	0.217**	0.399**	0.856			
PP	0.85	0.59	0.159*	0.378**	0.422**	0.779		
FP	0.83	0.54	0.113	0.271	0.403	0.348	0.756	
TP	0.81	0.50	0.052	0.236	0.368	0.325	0.689	0.734

Note: *p< 0.05, ** p< 0.01; Source: AMOS 29.

4.5. Model Evaluation

4.5.1. Measurement Model

Following the criteria suggested by Hair et al. [96], this study employed four widely accepted assumptions to evaluate EFA. These assumptions include a minimum threshold of 0.5 for the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy; examination of the minimum Eigen value for each factor; ensuring that the factor loading values of each item should be above 0.50; and employing Promax rotation (PR) as it is a commonly recommended technique that represents the interpretation of factors [93].

According to the findings presented in Table 5, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy yielded a value of 0.771. This value can be supported by the KMO cut-off level and the statistical significance of Bartlett's test, which produced a p-value less than 0.001. Specifically, the chi-square value for Bartlett's test was 3116.36, with 180 degrees of freedom (df). While examining the EFA pattern matrix, this study found that all items exhibited factor loading values above 0.50 [93]. A six-factor model, accounting for 61.94% of the total variance in the current dataset, was established by identifying factors with Eigen values above 1.0. Finally, a set of 18 items was classified into six distinct variables using Eigen value as the basis for categorization. The EFA results indicated that the factor loadings ranged from 0.65 to 0.87.

Table 5. EFA outcomes.

Variable	Survey items	Pattern matrix					
		1 (PNRPs)	2 (PIS)	3 (POJ)	4 (FP)	5 (PP)	6 (TP)
PNJRPs	PNJRPs1: A non-job-related Facebook post by an employee has nothing to do with the organization.	0.81					
PNJRPs	PNJRPs2: An organization should not take any action based on a non-job-related Facebook post.	0.77					
PNJRPs	PNJRPs3: I perceive any organizational action based on a	0.84					

	non-job-related Facebook post as an injustice.	
	PIS1: A Facebook post made by an employee that can harm/damage organizational reputation is a sabotage.	0.66
PIS	PIS2: If proved guilty, the accused employee should be brought to justice for sabotage.	0.71
	PIS3: I support my organization if it acts against the guilty employee for posting defaming contents in Facebook.	0.79
	POJ1: Organizations should be transparent regarding their social media policies.	0.69
POJ	POJ2: An organization has the right to take necessary action if an employee is found guilty of breaching its social media policy.	0.71
	POJ3: I perceive my organization's actions as justified if it terminates an employee for posting defaming contents in Facebook.	0.67
	FP1: Organizations should be fair in making employee-related decisions.	0.74
FP	FP2: An organization should be fair and transparent while making investigations regarding an FPT.	0.87
	FP3: Employees' fairness perceptions are important for an organization to remove any confusion and mistrust.	0.67
	PP1: An employee's personal space should be respected.	0.78
PP	PP2: I personally believe employees' Facebook accounts should not be monitored although my organization does that.	0.65
	PP3: If employees already know the organization is monitoring their Facebook posts, they should not be much concerned about social media privacy.	0.76
	TP1: Trust is an important factor that must be present in the relationship between the employer and the employee.	0.75
TP	TP2: Employees trust their organizations if treated with fairness and respect.	0.68
	TP3: Organizations should take termination-based actions only if an employee is proved to be guilty after a thorough and fair investigation trusted by other employees.	0.76

Overall	2.42	2.16	2.07	2.28	2.19	2.19
Percentage (%) of variance	9.37	10.17	9.47	7.58	12.16	13.19
Cumulative percentage (%)	9.37	19.54	29.01	36.59	48.75	61.94
KMO and Bartlett's test= 0.771 at $p < 0.001$ (Chi-square= 3116.36 with 180 df)						

Note: df = Degree of freedom; Source: SPSS 29.

In the EFA, PNJRPs individually explained 9.37% of the total variance with 3 items, PIS individually explained 10.17% of the total variance with 3 items, POJ individually explained 9.47% of the total variance with 3 items, PF individually explained 7.58% of the total variance with 3 items, PP individually explained 12.16% of the total variance with 3 items; and finally, TP individually explained 13.19% of the total variance with 3 items. The outcomes of the factor analysis revealed that all the factors were suitable for further investigation.

4.5.2. Measurement Model Outcomes

After conducting EFA, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). CFA is a statistical technique that can analyze the factor construction of a group of experimental variables. CFA allows the researchers to confirm that all the related items are connected to the specific variable. The affiliated chi-square value for this model was 3.177, less than 5.0 as recommended by Marsh and Hocevar [97], while other fit indices also indicated a decent match for the measurement model (Table 6). The goodness of fit index (GFI) of the model was 0.935, higher than the threshold value of 0.90 as recommended by Joreskog and Sorbom [98]. In our experimental study, the value of adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) was 0.864, satisfying the recommended limit of (>0.85), hence proved to be a proper match as well as satisfactory according to Anderson and Gerbig [99]. Moreover, the non-incremental fit index like comparative fit index (CFI) was 0.967, surpassing the suggested threshold value of 0.90 [100]. Table 6 demonstrates the model fit indices and their recommended thresholds.

Table 6. Model fit indices and their recommended thresholds.

Goodness of fit indices	Value	Acceptance limit	Reference(s)
Chi-square/df	3.177	<5.0	Marsh and Hocevar [97]
CFI	0.967	>0.90	Bentler [100]
RMR	0.059	<0.08	Hu and Bentler [101]
GFI	0.935	>0.90	Joreskog and Sorbom [98]
AGFI	0.864	>0.85	Anderson and Gerbig [99]
RMSEA	0.077	<0.08	Browne and Cudeck [102]
SRMR	0.065	<0.08	

Source: AMOS 29 and literature survey.

In CFA, we identified that the root mean-square residual (RMR) value was 0.059, lower than 0.08 that is normally considered satisfactory according to Hu and Bentler [101]. The root means square error of approximation (RMSEA) value was 0.077, also lower than the recommended fit to the data as per Browne and Cudeck [102]. Finally, the standardized means square residual (SRMR) was identified to be 0.065, also below 0.08 and acceptable according to the suggestion of Browne and Cudeck [102]. Therefore, the fit indices indicated a satisfactory match to the data.

4.6. Multicollinearity

In most cases, the variant inflation factors, also known as VIFs, may have a value between 1 and 10. The VIF explains the excessive proportion of variation across all coefficients. According to Hair et al. [95], for interpreting VIFs, 1 implies uncorrelated, 1-5 entails moderately correlated, and 5-10 refers to a strong correlation. This study estimated the VIFs to determine the effects of multicollinearity among the variables. Table 7 indicates the VIF values identified for the variables of this study.

Table 7. VIF and tolerance in multicollinearity.

Factors	PNJRPs	PIS	POJ	FP	PP	TP
Tolerance	0.69	0.71	0.75	0.67	0.74	0.68
VIF	1.47	1.49	1.41	1.16	1.34	1.46

Source: AMOS 29.

As presented in table 7, it can be observed that the maximum value of VIF was 1.49, highly satisfactory based on the recommendation of Hair et al. [95]. When the value of VIF is more than 3.3, pathological collinearity is suspected to be present in the research, and the model can be at risk from common method bias (CMB). Besides, all VIF values from an extensive collinearity test need to be equal to or less than 3.3 [103] for a model to be considered not affected by CMB.

4.7. Specific Bias Test

We identified that the chi-square test for the zero constrained model was noteworthy, that is, quantifiable bias was found. Thus, this study conducted a test of bias distribution of equivalent constraints as shown in the following table (Table 8).

Table 8. Specific bias tests.

Model	Zero constraints test (Is there specific bias?)				Equal constraints test (Is bias evenly distributed?)			
	X ²	df	Delta	p-value	X ²	df	Delta	p-value
Unconstrained model	131.56	55			131.56	58		
Zero constrained model	228.56	67	X ² = 86.01 Df = 17	0.000	222.28	71	X ² = 76.52 Df = 14	0.000

Note: df = Degree of freedom; Source: AMOS 29.

The chi-square test for zero constraints was found to be noteworthy (Table 8), where the bias was found to be unevenly distributed. Hence, we retained the variables for the succeeding causal analyses.

4.8. Structural Model

To evaluate the relationship between each independent variable (PNJRPs, PIS, and POJ) and each dependent variable (FP, PP, and TP), a multivariate statistical approach was employed entitled covariance-based structural equation modelling, in short, CB-SEM (Table 9 and Figure 2). After applying CB-SEM using AMOS 29, we identified that PNJRPs (as a single independent variable) has significant negative relationship with FP ($\beta = -0.32$, CR = -0.89, $p < 0.05$), and with TP ($\beta = -0.61$, CR = -0.77, $p < 0.05$), while the variable (PNJRPs) has an insignificant relationship with PP ($\beta = -0.44$, CR = -1.13, $p > 0.05$). On the other hand, we revealed that PIS has significant positive relationships [($\beta = 0.82$, CR = 2.17, $p < 0.05$), ($\beta = 0.69$, CR = 3.19, $p < 0.05$), and ($\beta = 0.13$, CR = 1.12, $p < 0.05$)] with all three

dependent variables. Finally, it was discovered that POJ has significant positive relationships [($\beta=0.21$, CR= 0.88, $p<0.05$), ($\beta=1.90$, CR= 3.06, $p<0.05$), and ($\beta=0.87$, CR= 2.45, $p<0.05$)] with all three dependent variables. Therefore, all the hypotheses, except H2, were supported according to our statistical analysis. Table 9 represents the results from hypotheses testing.

Table 9. Hypotheses testing outcomes.

Hypotheses	Relationships	Estimate	Std. error	Critical ratio	p value	Comment
H1	PNJRPs---> FP	-0.32	0.41	-0.89	0.04	Supported
H2	PNJRPs---> PP	-0.44	0.62	-1.13	0.07	Not Supported
H3	PNJRPs---> TP	-0.61	0.44	-0.77	0.03	Supported
H4	PIS---> FP	0.82	0.91	2.17	0.01	Supported
H5	PIS---> PP	0.69	0.99	3.19	0.02	Supported
H6	PIS---> TP	0.13	0.22	1.12	0.04	Supported
H7	POJ---> FP	0.21	0.33	0.88	0.01	Supported
H8	POJ---> PP	1.90	1.29	3.06	0.03	Supported
H9	POJ---> TP	0.87	1.11	2.45	0.04	Supported
R ² value				0.52		

Source: AMOS 29.

Additionally, the following figure (Figure 2) shows the hypotheses testing outcomes including the path values.

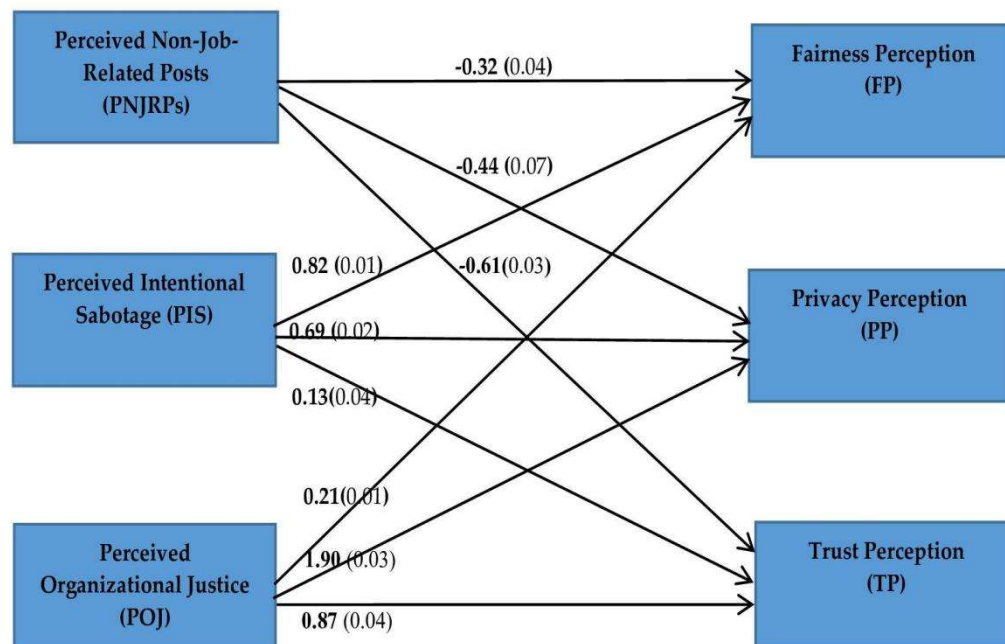


Figure 2. Conceptual framework with hypotheses testing outcomes. Source: AMOS 29.

In any empirical quantitative research, the values of R2 for endogenous latent variables should be 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25, to be considered strong, moderate, and weak, respectively, based on the DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54560/jracr.v15i2.553>

suggestions of scholars [93,96,104]. Pertinently, R2 values between 0.02 and 0.12 to be considered weak, 0.13 and 0.25 to be deemed moderate, and a value of 0.26 or above can be determined to have a greater effect size, according to Cohen [105]. On the other hand, Chin [106] recommended an R2 value of 0.19 for endogenous variables as weak, 0.26 as moderate, and 0.33 as substantial. Moreover, Falk and Miller [107] proposed that the R2 value is required to cross 0.10 to be considered for the variance explained by a specific endogenous latent variable. This study's path diagram revealed that three exogenous variables: PNJRPs, PIS, and POJ, together can explain 52% variance on three endogenous variables: FP, PP, and TP. Such a superior R2 value is well-supported as considerably strong by Hair et al. [96]; Hair et al. [104]; Henseler et al. [93]; Cohen [105]; Chin [106]; and Falk and Miller [107].

5. Discussions

Based on survey responses and the application of appropriate statistical tools, we identified that all three independent variables have significant relationships (both positive and negative as we hypothesized) with three dependent variables except the relationship between PNJRPs and PP. The outcomes may be attributed to the unique cultural setting or organizational policies followed by the respondents in the UK. Although there are not adequately published papers on the issue of FPTs, such outcomes are largely consistent with the limited literature already available. For instance, the results found by us are consistent with the results of earlier studies [3,4,6,9,10,11,28]. It is important to note that existing published SM-based research papers have particularly concentrated on a few areas, such as SM-based talent search [54,80]; SM-based recruitment and selection [54,55,80]; and SM-based pre-employment background check [1,2,80], while empirical papers focusing solely on SM-based FPTs are quite rare in academia.

Thus, the scarcity of published articles focusing on FPTs are very rare so far in academia, which justifies the necessity for conducting additional research experiments to cope with increasing utilization of employees' SM information by numerous organizations, at least in western countries. Thus, we firmly believe that this wider empirical investigation will help in reducing this severe gap. We believe that the justification of our used model was proper, and the statistical results appropriately answered the research question of this study.

6. Implications

6.1. Academic Implications

This study is one of the initial attempts examining a distinct category of dismissal, i.e., FPT, indicating further requirements for conducting research on an increasingly workforce-based application of SM [3,4]. Most of the independent and dependent variables, as well as survey items involved in this study have not been studied so far. Accordingly, future research studies may benefit by developing their own theories from this particular study by defining unique concepts, highlighted aspects, and survivor responses.

According to Skarlicki and Kulik's [32] model, this empirical study examined how employees comprehend Facebook-based layoffs by putting much-needed inward attention on the Facebook contents. Besides, this study offers a preliminary evaluation of variables by analyzing the consequences of the attributes mentioned above for employee equity, confidentiality, and assurance

views. It is worthwhile noting that eight hypotheses proved valid except one. Thus, we found consistent evidence regarding conventional connections among variables and theoretical concepts on how employees perceive fairness/justice, violation of privacy, and trust regarding any organizational FPT connected to Facebook-related post(s) [10]. Despite having various methodological constraints because of the intricate nature of the phenomena and attributes under investigation, this initial research represents the first to evaluate these variables' associations experimentally. Nevertheless, further investigations need to be conducted to formulate a robust theory about Facebook-related dismissal in addition to better characterizing the aspects and generalizing the research on the conventional cessation of jobs.

This research can also contribute by identifying a potentially broadened definition of work relevance concerning SM usage. According to our findings, the relevance of employees' Facebook-based activities to their jobs might differ based on whether or not their uploaded contents are directly related to their jobs. While a negative post can harm organizational reputation, a proper positive post can, on the contrary, help boost the organizational reputation among friends/associates of the posted employee. On the other hand, a positive achievement of the organization can be posted that can increase organizational image among the netizens [60]. Overall, we believe that the tested variables and related items can be the initial guidelines for interested researchers who want to conduct more empirical research studies focusing on Facebook-based terminations. That is why we firmly believe that upcoming researchers would adequately identify the gaps in this study in their research endeavors.

6.2. Managerial Implications

In a practical sense, there are currently no available scholarly guidelines for managers on terminating employees based on their Facebook post(s). This research might present the HR managers with some preliminary recommendations on how to use FPTs in an ethical manner. Besides, they can effectively prevail over their workforce's commitment and educate employees proactively on constructive SM usage. This research also suggests improving impressions about how the organization addresses employees throughout the termination procedure to be transparent, accountable, and proactive in revealing organizational strategies. Additionally, the strategies taken by the managers to monitor employees' SM activities should be transparent and properly communicated with employees. In this regard, developing a robust social media policy (SMP) and effectively conveying this policy to the staffs will benefit the organization as the termination decision, in general, is lawfully contested.

This research can provide different implications for employees as well. The findings of this study may be used as the recommendations that clarify who is particularly in a vulnerable position to be the victim of FPTs. Additionally, it highlights/addresses the varieties of SM statement(s) that can lead to dismissal decisions by an organization; for example, inflammatory remarks, slander, disclosure of confidential information, and failure to represent the organization following its basic principles. It may further assist employees in better understanding of social values and their expected behaviors while using an SNS for work purposes. For example, they (employees) need to be convinced that the public nature of Facebook implies that whatever content(s) or information they place there might have severe repercussions [2,80]. Such understanding may be useful for stimulating productive discussions about Facebook-related dismissals amongst employees, managers, and business leaders.

Furthermore, this research can contribute to creating an entirely novel social agreement between organizations and their employees.

7. Limitations and Further Scope

Although we strongly anticipate that our empirical study may result in various distinct insights, including validated hypotheses and answers to the research question, the current study has several obvious limitations that we want to admit drawing upon for upcoming researchers as research gap. First, we adopted a quantitative approach where the survey items had scales that confined/restricted the respondents' ability to express their opinions in detail. Perhaps, a mixed-method study using both qualitative and quantitative methods would better explain the employee reactions. It is anticipated that future studies will substantiate the "construct" aspect of Facebook-related dismissal, render insights into the attributes investigated, make scientific analyses, and justify the connection to potential consequences. We suggest that future scholars may conduct their research studies using both quantitative and qualitative methods to better understand the range of job-related issues, the confidentiality extent of a post, and the subsequent effect(s) of the discrepancy on perceptions.

Second, we believe that only 472 employees from the UK is not the proper sample size to draw a generalized conclusion. Future studies are expected to engage larger sample sizes in their empirical investigations. Third, considering the scant research in Facebook-related dismissals and conventional employee layoffs, we tried to include literature on related issues, such as how organizations make decisions based on the use of technology and social media, how employees might respond; and how individuals perceive privacy invasion. These postponements may be inaccurate since both recruitment and dismissal procedures are basically different from one another. In the upcoming studies, researchers may also differentiate the perceptions of managers and non-managers regarding FPTs that has not been done in the current study. It may be interesting in future to investigate whether there are differences of perceptions between the two groups regarding FPTs. However, the most significant contribution of this paper is the investigation of such an unusual phenomenon (FPT) that can facilitate further studies to avoid similar constraints in future endeavors.

8. Conclusion

Facebook-based termination is quite an innovative strategy that is obtaining attention both from academics and practitioners. It indicates a distinct termination method compared to other regular forms of termination. It is crucial to bridge the gap between academics and practitioners regarding this growing issue to curb the possible expenditure from both the organizations' and employees' standpoints, to offer legal or academic insights into this activity; and to prepare a unified policy framework both for the organizational and national levels. The results of this research are expected to offer an exploratory understanding of practices and their implications for the relationship between an organization and its employees. Industrial and organizational psychologists are uniquely positioned to provide businesses and employees with empirically proved guidelines on how to successfully deal with an always-changing work atmosphere to reduce unfavorable workplace manifestations (such as deviant workplace behaviors). Therefore, this empirical study presents a preliminary framework for future research studies on this attention-seeking topic and provides first-hand knowledge to help businesses and employees in order to adapt to this new dilemma.

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