

## An analysis on the dimensions of information security culture concept: A review

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### ABSTRACT

The cultivation of positive *Information Security Culture* (ISC) is an effective way to promote security behavior and practices among employees in the organization. However, there is yet a consensus on a standard set of dimensions for the ISC concept. ISC has been associated with many facets, with some overlapping dimensions found in the literature. There is little explanation, if any, as to why this happens or to what extent do variances of dimensions affects ISC concept and findings. This paper presents an analysis of the different dimensions in conceptualizing the ISC. Eight major databases including *Web of Science*, *Scopus* and *Google Scholar* were systematically exhausted using PRISMA and a total of 79 studies from 2000 to 2017 was selected for analysis. While different approaches such as adopted theories affect the dimensions of ISC, our analysis also covered other contributing factors such as the objective of the study, type of organization under study and the information security maturity level. In addition, we found no evidence of a set of widely accepted concepts and dimensions for ISC. This review provides substantial evidence on the numerous dimensions used in ISC and could be utilized by academicians as a reference in ISC-related studies.

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### 1. Introduction

*Information Security Culture* (ISC) is accepted as an effective way to promote secure behavior and to manage security risks in the organization (Baggett [15]; Dervin, Kruger and Steyn [27]; Martins and Eloff [63]; Ruighaver and Maynard [95]; Schlienger and Teufel [103]; Von Solms [123]; Zakaria [126]). Although there are numerous studies in this area, there is a lack of widely accepted dimensions for ISC as different perspectives and concepts are used. This causes problems for academicians in identifying the actual concept of ISC as well as for the practitioners to cultivate and assess a positive ISC in the organization, thus limiting its full potential.

There are different dimensions of ISC found in the *Information Security Policy* (ISP) compliance behavior literature. For example, D'Arcy and Greene [25] used *Top Management Commitment*, *Security Communications* and *Computer Monitoring* whilst Alkalbani, Deng, and Kam [9] used *Top Management Commitment*, *Accountability* and *Information Security Awareness* as dimensions in ISC. Although they share a similar dimension (*Top Management Commit-*

*ment*), they did not agree on other dimensions and incorporated different dimensions in their respective studies. As such, the effect of ISC towards ISP could not be significantly attributed to the specific dimensions.

There are also a number of ISC models and frameworks developed based on specific dimensions and research objectives. Alhogail and Mirza [8] in their Systematic Literature Review of ISC-related studies for the period of 2003–2013 discovered 12 out of 62 studies discussing ISC models and frameworks. Interestingly, these models used different dimensions from one and another.

Despite several recent views on ISC including Karlsson, Astrom and Karlsson [52]; Karwowski, Glaspie and Karwowski [37]; and Mahfuth, Yussof, Baker and Ali [62]; there is little interest in the identification of ISC dimensions. Mahfuth et al. [62] conducted a review to identify ISC based on definitions and frameworks in studies between 2003 and 2016. Although they managed to identify ISC dimensions in their review, there was no further analysis on these dimensions. Karlsson et al. [52] conducted an extensive review ranging from 2000 to 2013 by classifying ISC studies based on four main categories: *Research Topic*, *Underlying Theory(ies)*, *Research Purpose* and *Research Method*. Although this study provided a significant findings by providing a clear summary on the particular themes investigated, including the theories and concepts that in-

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fluence the concept of ISC, however it did not focus on how these underlying theories influence the dimensions of ISC.

Although we agree with Karlsson et al. [52], that there are various concepts that have been adopted for ISC, which would explain why there are different concepts of ISC. However, we strongly feel that the variances go much further than the general concepts of ISC, i.e. there are also differences in the dimensions of ISC. As such, this review is crucial in painting a clearer picture of ISC. In addition to putting forth the notion that the variances in ISC are based on dimensions, this work also report the factors contributing to these variances. This review would benefit academicians in conducting future ISC-related studies as well as practitioners for identifying the various dimensions of ISC. A thorough analysis of concepts, models and frameworks was carried out to investigate the different dimensions of ISC, exhausting publications for the period of 2000 to 2017.

Section 2 presents the methodology adopted in this study. Section 3 discusses the variances of ISC dimensions while the implications of these variances are discussed in Section 4. Section 5 lists the limitations of this work. Conclusion and future work are presented in Section 6.

## 2. Methodology

This work utilizes the *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses* (PRISMA) method [72]. It has two main parts, namely meta-analysis and systematic review. A systematic review provides objective summary of what has been written on the research topic. It is valuable in wide research areas, where many publications exist, each focusing on a narrow aspect of the field [17]. Meta-analysis refers to the use of statistical technique in a systematic review to integrate the results of selected studies [72]. The main objective of PRISMA is the reporting of a transparent literature review [58]. This methodology has been used for a comprehensive literature review in numerous fields [24,51,58]. There are three stages in the implementation of PRISMA in this study: literature search; selection of eligible papers; and data extraction and summary.

### 2.1. Literature search

Eight leading electronic databases were selected for identifying potential articles: *Scopus*, *Web of Science*, *Google scholar*, *IEEE/IEE Electronic Library*, *EBSCOhost*, *ACM Digital Library*, *Elsevier Science Direct*, and *Emerald Library*. Search was conducted using the keywords “*information security culture*” and “*security culture*”. The search included journals and conference articles as well as Masters and PhD thesis published during the period of 2000 to 2017. A total of 405 articles was extracted based on the search strategy. After the removal of duplicated papers with redundant information, 239 potential articles remained. The titles and abstracts were then screened and irrelevant studies were removed, cutting the potential articles to 205.

### 2.2. Study selection and eligible papers

Full-text articles were reviewed and analyzed for eligibility. These articles consist of studies on ISC models and concepts in the organizational settings. The dimensions used in ISC were carefully identified as some articles did not explicitly mention the dimensions used. We refer to dimensions as “*a distinct aspect that contributes in forming the concept of ISC*”. In some articles, dimensions were referred to as “*factor*”. Some papers used these dimensions in discussing ISC cultivation and some papers refer them for improving the current ISC in the organization. Interestingly, we also

discovered that some papers such as Da Veiga and Eloff [117]; Martins and Eloff [63]; and Tolah, Furnell, and Papadaki [114] used both terms of cultivating (e.g. create, implement) and managing (e.g. assess, improve) in discussing the ISC concept in their papers. Therefore, as long as the factors fit our definition of dimensions, the articles were selected for further analysis.

Articles that did not discuss the dimensions of ISC were excluded. In addition, articles that discussed ISC in other settings such as smart living environment were also excluded from this review. Articles that discussed *Information Security Climate*, *Information Security Obedience* or *Information Security Management* without focussing on any ISC model or concepts were excluded as well. Two studies by Nenad [74] and Cárdenas-Solano, Martínez-Ardila, and Becerra-Ardila [18] were excluded since the English version of the paper were not available. A study by McIntosh [71] too was excluded because the full version of the article could not be downloaded. We also included two more papers that met our criteria from the references of the selected papers. The final number of eligible articles was 79 (see Fig. 1).

### 2.3. Data extraction and summary

Data were gathered and any disagreement between the authors was discussed and solved. Each article was categorized based on the ISC concept and its dimensions. All dimensions were recorded in a single column (see Table 1). Some articles also discussed the sub-dimensions of ISC and were recorded in the same column. The concepts, theories and approaches adopted in conceptualizing ISC were recorded in the last column.

We found that it is a common practice to use more than a single theory in the conceptualization of ISC. For example, the ISC concept by Schlienger and Teufel [102] is based on concept of *Organization Culture* by Schein [97] and *Corporate Culture* by Rühl [94]. We also discovered a number of articles that solely use literature review to identify the dimensions of ISC. Some articles used both literature review and theory to model ISC. All these approaches were recorded for further analysis.

## 3. ISC concepts based on dimensions

Table 1 reveals that there are various concepts of ISC based on different set of dimensions. There are at least 48 variances of ISC dimensions found in the literature. Consistent with the findings of Mazhelis and Isomäki [70], our analysis reveals that various theories, concepts and approaches contributed to the variances in ISC dimensions. There were also other factors that contribute to these variances. The following sub-sections discuss this issue by classifying the concepts or theories as well as other factors that contributing to the differences in ISC dimensions in literature.

### 3.1. ISC based on organizational culture

Earlier ISC studies adopted the concepts of *Organizational Culture* (OC), *Corporate Culture*, and *Organizational Behavior* in conceptualizing ISC. This is not new since Alhogail and Mirza [8], and Pevchikh [85] have acknowledged this fact in their reviews. In addition to the popular concepts of OC by Schein [97–99]; the OC concepts by Detert et al. [28] are also used as reference in the development of ISC models. Since these two concepts are distinct in nature, the ISC dimensions derived from them are apparently different.

As evident in Table 1, majority of the studies used the Schein's OC concepts to conceptualize ISC compared to other concepts. The ISC developed based on this concept have three dimensions representing the three levels of OC, namely *Artifacts and Creations*; *Col-*

**Table 1**  
Concepts and Dimensions of Information Security Culture.

No.	Author	Dimensions and Sub-Dimensions/Factors (if any)	Adopted Theories, Concepts and/ or Approaches
1.	Schlienger and Teufel [102]	<b>3 Dimensions:</b> Corporate Politics, Management, Individuals <b>11 Sub-dimensions:</b> Security Policy, Organizational Structure, Resources, Implementation of Security Policy, Definition of Responsibilities, Qualification and Training, Awards and Prosecutions, Audit and benchmarks, Critical Attitude, Act carefully and with due diligence, Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Organizational Culture [97,99]</li> <li>■ Corporate Culture [94]</li> </ul>
2.	Van Niekerk and Von Solms [75]; Van Niekerk and Von Solms [77]; Van Niekerk and Von Solms [78]; Niekerk [36], Reid and Niekerk [91], Reid et al. [92]; Van Niekerk and Von Solms [76]	<b>4 Dimensions:</b> Artefacts, espoused values, shared tacit assumptions, information security knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Organizational Culture [97,99]</li> </ul>
3.	Da Veiga and Eloff [117]	<b>4 Sub-dimensions/Factors:</b> ISP, Security Knowledge, Belief, Security Behavior <b>7 Dimensions:</b> Leadership and Governance, Security Management and Operations, Security Policies, Security Program Management, User Security Management, Technology Protection and Operations, Change Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Organizational Culture [97,99]</li> <li>■ Organizational Behavior [93]</li> <li>■ Information Security Components (Da Veiga &amp; Eloff [118])</li> <li>■ Organizational Culture [97,99]</li> </ul>
4.	Da Veiga and Martins [120]; Martins and Da Veiga [66], Da Veiga [116]	<b>9 Dimensions:</b> Information Asset Management, Information Security Management, Change Management, User Management, Information Security Policies, Information Security Program, Trust, Information Security Leadership, Training and Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Organizational Behavior [93]</li> <li>■ Information Security Components by Da Veiga and Eloff [118], using dimensions similar to Da Veiga, Martins, and Eloff [122]</li> <li>■ Organizational Culture [97,99]</li> <li>■ Organizational Behavior [93]</li> </ul>
5.	Martins and Da Veiga [116]	<b>4 Dimensions:</b> Management, Policies, Awareness, Compliance <b>9 Sub-dimensions:</b> Information Security Commitment, Information Security Importance, Information Security Policy Effectiveness, Information Security Directives, Information Security Responsibility, Information Security Necessity, Information Security Assets, Information Security Monitoring Perception, Information Security Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Information Security Components by Da Veiga and Eloff [118]</li> <li>■ Literature Review</li> <li>■ Organizational Culture [97,99]</li> </ul>
6.	Chen et al. [19]	<b>3 Dimensions:</b> Artifacts and creations, Collective Values, Norms and Knowledge, Basic assumptions and beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ISC Conceptual Model [77,78]</li> <li>■ Organizational Culture [97,99]</li> <li>■ Organizational climate, rewards and punishments</li> <li>■ Organizational Culture [97,99]</li> </ul>
7.	Parsons et al. [84]	<b>3 Sub-dimensions:</b> Security Policy, SETA, Computer Monitoring <b>4 Dimensions:</b> Sanctions, Rewards, Job Roles, No. of Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Organizational Culture [97,99]</li> </ul>
8.	Kraemer and Carayon [56]	<b>6 Dimensions:</b> Employee Participation, Training, Hiring Practices, Reward System, Management Commitment, Communication and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Organizational Culture by Guldenmund [39]</li> <li>■ Organizational Culture [97,99]</li> </ul>
9.	Hassan et al. [44]	<b>12 Dimensions:</b> Security Knowledge (SK); Security Awareness (SA); Security Behaviour (SB); Security Policy Enforcement; Security Decision Making Should Rely On Facts And Rationality That Security Is Important (SD); Improving Information Security Requires A Long-Term Commitment (SLT); Proper Security Systems And Process Motivate Employee To Adhere To Security Policies And Procedure (SESP); Organizations Must Make Continuous Changes To Improve Information Security (SCH); Employee Should Be Involved In Improving The Overall Organization's Information Security (SBI); Collaboration And Cooperation Are Necessary For Effective Information Security (SCC); A Shared Security Vision And Shared Security Goals Are Critical For Effective Information Security (SCV); Information Security Needs Should Be Determined By External And Internal Requirements (SEI); Top Management Commitment (TMC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Health Belief Model (HBM)</li> <li>■ Literature review</li> <li>■ Organizational Culture [28]</li> </ul>
10.	Chia et al. (2003a), Ruighaver et al. [96], Chia et al. [20], 2002b), Parsons et al. [83], Koh et al. [54]	<b>8 Dimensions:</b> The Basis of Truth and Rationality; The Nature of Time and Time Horizon; Motivation; Stability versus Change/Innovation/Personal Growth; Orientation to Work, Task, Co-Workers; Isolation versus Collaboration/Cooperation; Control, Coordination and Responsibility; Orientation and Focus – Internal and/or External <b>11 Sub-dimensions:</b> Belief of The Importance of Security, Trust, Security Goals, Security Strategies, Social Participation, Change Management, Responsible for Security, Employee's Involvement in Security and Collaboration, Top Management Commitment, Security Governance, External Factors and Internal Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Health Belief Model (HBM)</li> <li>■ Literature review</li> <li>■ Organizational Culture [28]</li> </ul>

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Table 1 (continued)

No.	Author	Dimensions and Sub-Dimensions/Factors (if any)	Adopted Theories, Concepts and/ or Approaches
11.	Lim et al. [59], Lim et al. [60]	<b>8 Dimensions:</b> The Basis of Truth and Rationality; The Nature of Time and Time Horizon; Motivation; Stability versus Change/Innovation/Personal Growth; Orientation to Work, Task, Co-Workers; Isolation versus Collaboration/Cooperation; Control, Coordination and Responsibility; Orientation and Focus – Internal and/or External <b>5 Sub-dimensions:</b> Management involvement, locus of responsibility, information security policy, education/training, budget practice	■ Organizational Culture [28]
12.	Ramachandran et al. [90], Ramachandran et al. [88]	<b>3 Dimensions:</b> Beliefs about identity, Beliefs about rule compliance, and Beliefs about security	■ Organizational Culture [28]
13.	Tang et al. [111]	<b>4 Dimensions:</b> Compliance, Communication, Accountability, Governance	■ ISC Framework by Tejay and Dhillon [112], Chia et al. [20] ■ Hofstede's organizational culture framework [48] ■ Information Technology Security Management [124] ■ ISC Conceptual Model [77,78]
14.	Alhogail [6], Alhogail and Mirza [7], Alhogail [5], Alhogail and Mirza [50], Alhogail and Mirza [7]	<b>9 Dimensions:</b> Strategy, Technology, Organizational, People, Environment, Preparedness, Responsibility, Management, Society and Regulations <b>10 Sub-dimensions:</b> Training, Focus groups, Change agents, Motivation, Milestones and measures, Involvement, Management support, Resources, Communications, Culture analysis	■ STOPE [16], Human Diamond Dimension and Change Management
15.	Da Veiga et al. [122], Da Veiga [115]	<b>8 Dimensions:</b> Information Asset Management, Information Security Management, Change Management, User Management, Information Security Policies, Information Security Program, Trust, Information Security Leadership <b>*6 Dimensions after factor and reliability analysis:</b> Management of Information Security, Performance Management, Performance Accountability, Communication, Governance, Capability Development	■ Organizational Behavior [93]
16.	Martins and Eloff [63,64]	<b>9 Dimensions:</b> Policy and Procedures, Risk analysis, Benchmarking, Budget, Management, Trust, Awareness, Ethical Conduct, Change	■ Organizational Behavior [93]
17.	Martins and Da Veiga [67]	<b>8 Dimensions:</b> Information Asset Management, Information Security Management, Change Management, User Management, Information Security Policies, Information Security Program, Trust, Information Security Leadership	■ Organizational Culture ■ Organizational Behavior [93]
18.	Da Veiga and Martins [119,121], Martins and Da Veiga [68]	<b>10 Dimensions:</b> Information Asset Management, Information Security Management, Change Management, User Management, Information Security Policies, Information Security Program, Trust, Information Security Leadership, Training and Awareness, Privacy Perception <b>*6 Dimensions after factor and reliability analysis:</b> Information Security Commitment, Management Buy-in, Information Security Necessity and Importance, Information Security Policy Effectiveness, Information Security Accountability, Information Usage Perception	■ Organizational Behavior [93]  *Same dimension with Nico Martins and Da Veiga [67] but with two added dimensions of Training and Awareness, Privacy Perception
19.	Helokunnas and Kuusisto [47]	<b>3 Dimensions:</b> Technical, Management and Institutional Wave	■ Information Security Awareness by Siponen [107]
20.	Kuusisto et al. [57]	<b>5 Dimensions:</b> Resources, Security policy, Commonly accepted norms, The unity of values of all parties involved to security culture forming process, The communication distance.	■ Habermas' theory of communicative action [40,41]
21.	Knapp et al. [53]	<b>1 Dimension:</b> Top management	■ Analyze open-ended questions ■ Literature review
22.	Alfawaz et al. [2]	<b>3 Dimensions:</b> Knowledge, Skills, and Individual Preferences Work	■ Literature review ■ Utilizing "knowing-doing gap" concept by Pfeffer and Sutton [86], Classification Theory by Smith and Medin [108] and Parsons [82]
23.	Alfawaz [3]	<b>3 Dimensions:</b> Organizational culture, National culture, Technological <b>12 Sub-dimensions:</b> Top management commitment, IS structure, Skills and training, Awareness, Motivation, Information and knowledge sharing, Information security technology, Change management, Power distance, Individualism vs. collectivism, Uncertainty avoidance, Context	■ National Culture by Hofstede [49] ■ Context Culture Value by Hall [42]
24.	Baggett [15], Press [87]	<b>9 Dimensions:</b> Awareness, Responsibility, Response, Ethics, Democracy, Risk Assessment, Security Design and Implementation, Security Management, Reassessment	■ ISC Framework by Chia et al. [20] ■ Guidelines for Security of Information Systems and Networks.
25.	Al-Mayahi and Mansoor [1]	<b>3 Dimensions:</b> ISP, ISP Awareness, Compliance	■ [80] of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ■ The process of full adoption of ISC in an organization by Chia, Maynard, and Ruighaver [20]
26.	Lopes and Oliveira [61]	<b>11 Dimensions:</b> Security Policy; Organization of Information Security; Asset Management; Human Resources Security; Physical and Environmental Security; Communications and Operations Management; Access Control; Information Systems Acquisition, Development and Maintenance; Information Security Incident Management; Business Continuity Management; and Compliance	■ ISO IEC 27002:2005 [109]

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Table 1 (continued)

No.	Author	Dimensions and Sub-Dimensions/Factors (if any)	Adopted Theories, Concepts and/ or Approaches
27.	Dhillon et al. [29]	<b>10 Dimensions:</b> Interaction, Association, Subsistence, Bisexuality, Territoriality, Temporality, Learning, Recreation and Humor, Defense, Exploitation	■ Hall's theory of cultural messages [43]
28.	Sherif and Furnell [105], Sherif, Furnell, and Clarke [106]	<b>5 Dimensions:</b> Security behavior, Top Management, Security Awareness and Education, Security Policy, Security Acceptance	■ Literature review on information security compliance and ISC
29.	Ramachandran and Rao [89]	<b>4 Dimensions:</b> Security-related Belief, Management Actions Emphasizing IS Security, Management Actions Emphasizing Productivity, Top Management Teams' Belief	■ Literature review
30.	Williams [125]	<b>4 Dimensions:</b> Response not Reaction, Responsibility, Community of Practice, Awareness <b>23 Sub-dimensions:</b> What is being protected; Value versus cost; Risk assessment; Balanced/suitable response to threats; Internal policy and procedure; Legal; Policy: Standards and best practice; Internal and external obligations and perceptions of data privacy, rights of patients, rights of staff; Governance; Ethics, beliefs and trust; Socialization of the group; Capability; Adaptability to change; Management of security in organization; Information system used; Workflow integration; Risk perception; Security issues; Impact; Objectives of security; Breach identification and consequences; Personal motivation	■ Literature review
31.	Alnatheer and Nelson [14]	<b>4 Dimensions:</b> Corporate Citizenship, Legal Regulatory Environment, Corporate Governance, Cultural Factors	■ Literature review
32.	M. Shahibi et al. [104]	<b>4 Dimensions:</b> Principles, Organizational Behavior Tier, Culture Level, Security Control	■ Literature review
33.	Hassan and Ismail [45]	<b>6 Dimensions:</b> Behavioral, Change Management, Information Security Awareness, Organizational System, Security Requirements, Knowledge	■ Literature review
34.	Alnatheer [12], Alnatheer et al. [13]	<b>3 Dimensions:</b> Top Management Involvement, Training, Policy Enforcement	■ Literature review
35.	Alnatheer [10]	<b>7 Dimensions:</b> Top Management Support, Security Policy and Policy Enforcement, Security Awareness, Security Training and Education, Security Risk Assessment, Security Compliance, Ethical Conduct	■ Literature review
36.	Temesgen et al. [113]	<b>5 Dimensions:</b> Knowledge to information security, Management of Information Security, Communication, Governance, Performance Accountability	■ Literature review
37.	Dojkovski et al. [32], Dojkovski et al. [30], Dojkovski et al. [34]	<b>5 Dimensions:</b> Individual and Organizational Learning, E-learning, Managerial, Behavioral, Ethical, National and Organizational Culture  <b>Sub-dimensions:</b> Policy and Procedures, Benchmarking, Risk Analysis, Budget, Management, Response, Training, Education, Awareness, Change Management, Responsibility, Integrity, Trust, Ethicality, Values, Motivation, Orientation, Personal Growth	■ Literature review
38.	Dojkovski et al. [31], Dojkovski, Lichtenstein and Warren [33]	<b>9 Dimensions:</b> Leadership/Corporate Governance, Organizational Culture, Managerial, Individual and Organizational Learning, Organizational Security Awareness, National and Ethical Culture, Government Initiatives, IT Vendors, Behavioral Issues  <b>18 Sub-dimensions:</b> Risk Analysis, Budget, Policy and Procedures, Response, Self-Assessment, Employment contract/Handbook, E-learning, Training, Education, Informal Awareness, Marketing, Responsibility, Integrity, Trust, Ethicality, Values, Motivation, Orientation, Personal Growth	■ Literature review
39.	D'Arcy and Greene [26]	<b>2 Dimensions:</b> Top Management Commitment, Security Communication	■ Literature review
40.	D'Arcy and Greene [25,4]	<b>3 Dimensions:</b> Top Management Commitment, Security Communication, Computer Monitoring	■ Literature review
41.	Alkalbani et al. [9]	<b>3 Dimensions:</b> Top Management Commitment, Accountability, Information Security Awareness	■ Literature review
42.	Greig et al. [38]	<b>3 Dimensions:</b> ISP Awareness, Security Behavior, Information Security Knowledge	■ Literature review
43.	Alnatheer [11]	<b>8 Dimensions:</b> Top Management Support, ISP, Information Security Awareness, SETA, Information Security Risk Analysis and Assessment, Information Security Compliance, Ethical Conduct Policies, Organization Culture	■ Literature review
44.	Hassan and Ismail [46]	<b>4 Dimensions:</b> Security Behaviour, Security Value, Security Awareness, Enforcement of Security Policy	■ Literature review
45.	Tolah et al. [114]	<b>7 Dimensions:</b> Top Management Support, ISP, Education and Training, Information Security Risk Assessment, Ethical Conduct, Job Satisfaction, Personality Traits	■ Literature review
46.	Masrek [69], Masrek, Nazrin Harun, and Khairulnizan Zaini [79]	<b>6 Dimensions:</b> Management Support, Policy and Procedures, Compliance, Awareness, Budget and Technology	■ Literature review
47.	Fagade and Tryfonas [35]	<b>6 Dimensions:</b> Leadership and Governance, Security Management and Organizations, Security Policies, Security Program Management, User Security Management, Technology Protection and Operations	■ Information Security Components (Da Veiga & Eloff [118])
48.	Nasir, Arshah, and Hamid [73]	<b>7 Dimensions:</b> ISP, Risk Management, SETA, Top Management, Monitoring, Information Security Knowledge, Information Security Knowledge Sharing	■ Organizational Culture [97,99] ■ ISC Conceptual Model [77,78]

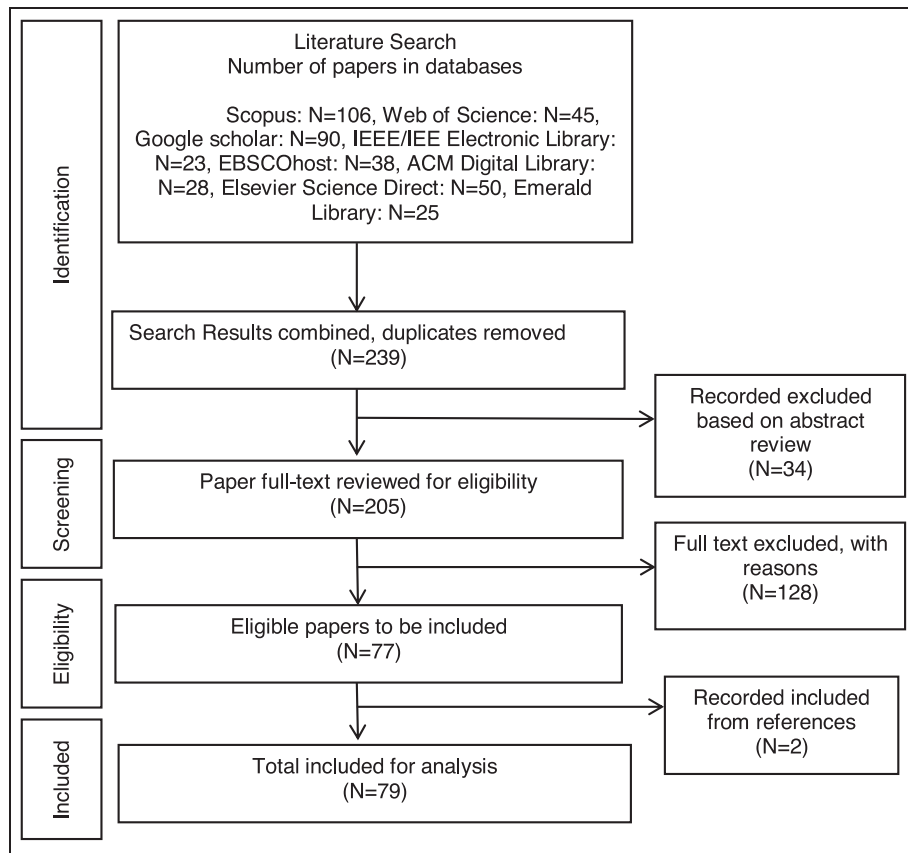


Fig. 1. Flow diagram regarding the systematic search, inclusion and exclusion of studies in our review.

lective Values, Norms and Knowledge; and Basic Assumptions and Beliefs.

Interestingly, there is no similar sub-dimensions used in the ISC models. For example, Schlienger and Teufel [102] used three dimensions, which are *Corporate Politics; Management; and Individuals*; with 11 sub-dimensions whilst Chen et al. [19] used *Security Policy; Security Education; Training and Awareness (SETA), and Computer Monitoring* to represent the three levels of OC. This distinction is also noticed in other ISC models derived from Schein's OC.

One possible explanation for this observation is the use of other concepts in addition to Schein's OC for example the *Organizational Behavior and Information Security Components*, as found in Martins and Da Veiga [65], Da Veiga and Martins [120], and Da Veiga and Eloff [117]; and *Organizational Climate, Rewards and Punishments* as found in Parsons et al. [84].

There are also ISC models which were derived solely from Schein's OC without the inclusion of other concepts such as in a series of studies by Van Niekerk and Von Solms [75,77,78]. However, another level was added to the initial three levels of OC, namely *Information Security Knowledge*. In this model, the levels are associated with specific dimensions in each level. For example, they assumed the ISP as a dimension in the *Espoused Value* level of OC. Other dimensions that evolved from these studies are *Belief, Information Security Knowledge, Trust, and Top Management Commitment*. This model has been referred in several ISC-related studies. Other recent models derived from Schein's OC include Da Veiga and Martins [120]; Martins and Da Veiga [66]; and Da Veiga [116].

The second group of ISC models is derived from the OC concepts by Detert et al. [28]. These models have more dimensions compared to the models based on Schein's OC. These ISC models consist of eight dimensions [21,54,96] and developed with the

view that these dimensions would fit into all types of organization. Differences are present in terms of strength or level, but not the type of organizations. The authors of these studies believed that OC by Detert et al. [28] is useful and essential in explaining and understanding the ISC concept. They believed and justified the fact that ISC in every organization consisted of these eight dimensions and the differences are only in terms of strength or level of these dimensions but not according to the type of each organization. They promote *Belief, Trust, Security Goals, Security Strategies, Social Participation, Change Management, Responsible for Security, Employee's Involvement in Security and Collaboration; Top Management Commitment; Security Governance; External Factors; and Internal Needs* as sub-dimensions in ISC. Although there is a slight variance in terms of sub-dimensions used, the overall ISC dimensions remain the same.

Although the majority of the studies adopted these two popular concepts of OC, the use of other OC concepts were also found in the literature, for example Hofstede et al. [48] and Guldenmund [39].

### 3.2. ISC model by Van Niekerk and Von Solms [77,78]

The ISC model by Van Niekerk and Von Solms [77,78] is one of the popular models employing Schein's OC and one of the most referred to. Chen et al. [19] referred to this model in investigating the dimensions of ISC based on information security programs and proposed three dimensions: *Security Policy, SETA, and Computer Monitoring*. Nasir et al. [73] used the same approach that produced different dimensions. One possible explanation for this is that Chen et al. [19] focused on information security program whereas Nasir et al. [73] focused on the four levels of ISC model in Van Niekerk and Von Solms [77,78] in developing the ISC dimensions. Other

recent models influenced by Van Niekerk and Von Solms [77] include Alhogail [5]; Alhogail [6]; and Alhogail and Mirza [50]. In these studies, the dimensions of ISC are different from Chen et al. [19] and Nasir et al. [73] as they adopted other concepts in addition to Van Niekerk and Von Solms [77], which are *STOPE* (*Strategy, Technology, Organization, People, and Environment*) [16], *Human Factor Diamond*, and *Change Management*. We found that Security Policy is the sole common dimension across all studies.

### 3.3. ISC based on organizational behavior

Apart from the OC concepts by Schein for ISC modeling, some studies adopted the *Organizational Behavior* (OB) concepts by Robbins [110]. This concept is widely used in the development of *Information Security Culture Assessment* (ISCA). ISCA is a set of a questionnaire used to evaluate the level and strength of ISC in the organization. The questionnaire items were originally developed by Martins and Eloff [63] based on Robbin's OB. These ISC models consist of three dimensions, namely *Organizational*; *Group*; and *Individual*. Each level has its own sub-dimensions, namely *Policy and Procedures*; *Risk Analysis*; *Benchmarking*; *Budget*; *Management*; *Trust*; *Awareness*; *Ethical Conduct*; and *Change* [63,64].

Da Veiga, Martins, and Eloff [122] further validated this questionnaire, customizing it based on a case study and introduced eight new dimensions: *ISP*; *Information Security Management*; *Information Security Program*; *Information Security Leadership*; *Information Asset Management*; *User Management*; *Change Management*; and *Trust*. Further validation of ISCA includes the development of information security governance framework (Da Veiga and Eloff [118]). This framework comprised of seven dimensions: *Leadership and Governance*; *Security Policies*; *Security Management and Organization*; *Security Program Management*; *User Security Management*; *Technology Protection and Operations*; and *Change Management*. These dimensions were used to develop an ISC framework by integrating Schein's OC [98] and Robbins's OB [110] in Da Veiga and Eloff [117]. The term *Information Security Culture Framework* (ISCF) was first coined in this study. ISCF is widely used in ISCA studies. The ISCA instruments of ISC concept based on Da Veiga and Eloff [117] and Da Veiga et al. [122] were used widely in subsequent studies by Da Veiga and Martins ([120,121]; and Martins and Da Veiga [65,67,68]). However, these studies did not use the same number and formation of dimension in their ISC conceptualization. Again, as shown in Table 1, the reason is due to the different additional concept used instead of the OB concept.

While the specific objective of a study has some influences towards the differences in dimensions used, interestingly, in regards to the ISCA-related studies, the authors explicitly mentioned that they customized the dimensions (constructs) used from one study to another in order to meet the specific type of organization under study [67,120,121]. Apparently, these authors suggested that the ISC concept based on dimensions is depends on the type of organization. This concept is not consistent with other authors, such as Chen et al. [19] and Parsons et al. [84] who used the same dimensions of ISC for all types of organizations in their studies.

In some ISCA studies, there is a lack of consistency in applying the dimensions of ISC concept for the organizations under study. In Da Veiga and Martins [120], the authors states that the differences of ISC dimensions are due to the maturity level of information security of each organization under study such as ISP implementation and other information security programs. On the other hand, the same authors in Martins and Da Veiga [66] have statistically proved that similar dimensions can be applied to international organizations operating in different countries, with different level of data protection maturity level. This suggests that similar ISC dimensions are applicable to the same type of organization but with varying levels of information security maturity.

However, common ISC dimensions for organizations with different information security maturity levels were not listed. This scenario suggests that despite the numerous ISCA-related studies, which have produced validated assessment tools to measure and improve ISC of the organization under study, there is yet a consensus on the appropriate dimensions for ISC.

### 3.4. ISC model based on information security culture framework (ISCF)

ISCA has promoted the development of *Information Security Culture Framework* (ISCF). The first ISCF was discussed in Da Veiga and Eloff [117], based on the dimensions of *Information Security Governance* (Da Veiga and Eloff [118], *Organizational Culture* [98] and *Organizational Behavior* [110]). Recent studies by Alhogail [6], Alhogail [5], and Alhogail and Mirza [50] have developed and validated a comprehensive ISCF comprising of five dimensions: *Strategy, Technology, Organization, People, and Environment* (*STOPE*); and integrated with the *Change Management* and *Human Factor* in information security. This framework also utilized all levels of ISC (*Artifacts, Value, Belief* and *Information Security Knowledge*) based on the ISC model by Van Niekerk and Von Solms [77]. The adoption of different concepts and approaches in these studies has produced different dimensions of ISCF. This proves that although these studies have progressed from ISCA to ISCF, the dimensions of ISC still vary.

### 3.5. Other models

There are also other ISC models that were not developed based on certain theories or concepts, such as in Knapp et al. [53]; Alnatheer, Chan, and Nelson [13]; Shahibi et al. [104]; Alnatheer and Nelson [14]; Alnatheer [10]; Hassan and Ismail [45]; Dojkovski et al. [33]; and Dojkovski et al. [31]. These ISC models were developed based on literature analysis. Since most of the studies did not review the same articles, therefore the dimensions produced were also different. For examples, Sherif et al. [106] identified five dimensions from 25 selected articles whilst Tolah et al. [114] have identified 7 dimensions from 13 selected articles. Some studies combined both approaches of literature review and adopting a particular concept in ISC for example Knapp et al. [53]; Hassan et al. [44]; Martins and Da Veiga [65]; and Alfawaz et al. [2]. These studies also produced varied ISC dimensions as different concepts were used.

### 3.6. Extent of variances in ISC dimensions

The aforementioned discussion revealed that there are various formations of dimensions for modeling ISC. While the concepts adopted contribute to these variances, other factors such as objectives of the study; approach taken; type of organization under study; and the maturity level of the organization information security also play a role in ISC dimensions. Although some dimensions are consistently used such as *Policy and Top Management Commitment*, there are still a great number of variances in terms of the formations used.

Analyzing this matter in greater detail, we compare articles from one of the main research areas in ISC: the development and the application of ISCA. Table 2 illustrates the studies related to ISCA, extracted from Table 1. The left-most column is the dimensions used in these studies. Ticked cells indicate a particular dimension used in a particular study. It is apparent that some dimensions that consistently used based on the number of occurrences such as *Security Policy*, *Change Management*, *Leaderships and Governance*, and *Trust*. However, there are also 26 different dimen-

**Table 2**  
ISC Dimensions in ISCA-related Studies.

No.	Dimensions	Studies							No. of Occurrences
		1	2	3	4	5,8	6	7	
1	Leadership and Governance		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
2	Security Management and Operations		✓						1
3	Security Policies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7
4	Security Program Management		✓	✓					2
5	Information Security Program				✓	✓	✓		3
6	User Security Management		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
7	Technology Protection and Operations		✓						1
8	Change Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		6
9	Information Asset Management			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
10	Information Security Management			✓	✓	✓	✓		4
11	Trust	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		5
12	Awareness	✓							1
13	Training and Awareness				✓	✓			2
14	Privacy Perception				✓				1
15	Risk Analysis	✓							1
16	Benchmarking	✓							1
17	Budget	✓							1
18	Management	✓							1
19	Ethical Conduct	✓							1
20	Information Security Commitment							✓	1
21	Information Security Importance							✓	1
22	Information Security Directives							✓	1
23	Information Security Responsibility							✓	1
24	Information Security Monitoring Perception							✓	1
25	Information Security Consequences							✓	1
26	Information Security Necessity							✓	1
<b>NUMBER OF DIMENSIONS IN A STUDY</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	

**Study** 1 =Martins and Eloff [63,64], 2=Da Veiga and Eloff [117], 3=Da Veiga et al. [122], 4=Da Veiga and Martins [121]; Martins and Da Veiga [68], 5=Da Veiga and Martins [120], 6=Martins and Da Veiga [68], 7=Martins and Da Veiga [116], 8=Martins and Veiga [116].

sions with different formations used, which is a far too greater number to be used in the conceptualization of a construct.

There is also the issue of consistency (of dimensions) used throughout these studies. Some dimensions have different meanings although similar terms were used for example the dimension of *Trust*. In Martins and Eloff [64] and Da Veiga et al. [122], Trust is defined as the “level of trust between employees and managers”, whereas, in Da Veiga and Martins [121] and Martins and Da Veiga [68], it is defined as the “perceptions of users regarding the safe-keeping of private information and their trust in the communications of the organization”. In addition, consistency of the term used for dimensions are lacking for example *Security Management and Operations* in Da Veiga and Eloff [117], *Security Management and Organization* in Da Veiga and Eloff [118], although both are referring to the same dimension. Tang et al. [111] highlighted the issue of consistency by arguing the definition of ISC used.

There were also instances where the dimensions were changed after the process of factor and reliability analysis were performed as a method to validate the dimensions for the ISC construct in a particular study. For example the initial eight dimensions in Da Veiga et al. [122] became six new dimensions; and ten initial dimensions in Martins and Da Veiga [68] became six. This contributes to variances in ISC dimensions as well as highlighting the lack of common dimensions for ISC.

Martins and Da Veiga [116] formulated and validated new dimensions for ISC using a complex statistical technique, the *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM), resulting in *Management, Policies, Awareness, and Compliance*. Although these new dimensions are similar to the dimensions used in ISCA, they actually are using a whole new set of sub-dimensions that totally different from the previous sub-dimensions in ISCA studies as shown in Table 2. This would suggest that despite the capability of the assessment tools in ISCA to evaluate and improve ISC, there is still a lack of common dimensions for ISC concept in the literature.

#### 4. Discussion and implication

This work highlights the variances of dimensions used to conceptualize ISC found in literature. It has also categorized major dimensions for ISC based on the underlying concepts. While different concepts contribute to variances in ISC dimensions, other contributing factors were also identified in this work including objective of the study; approach of the study; type of organization under study; and the organization’s information security maturity level. As the ISC concepts and dimensions are still evolving, the findings of this work would pave the way for future studies in this area.

Our analysis revealed that the concepts of *Organizational Culture* (OC) dominated the conceptualization of ISC, concurring with previous findings by Alnatheer and Nelson [14]; Reid et al., [92]; and Schlienger and Teufel [101] that promotes ISC is a sub-culture of OC. Of the two main concepts of OC, which are Schein [99] and Detert et al. [28], the former was found to be widely adopted [19,66,73,100,102,120]. This is consistent with Pevchikh [85] that found most of the ISC concepts or model are influenced by Schein’s OC in one way or another; and Kolkowska [55] who argued OC has been successfully used to conceptualize ISC in many ISC-related studies. In addition, the level approach in the Schein’s model has made the conceptualization and assessment of ISC more transparent and comprehensive [77,78,81,100].

This review also reveals at least 26 major ISC dimensions from ISCA-related studies. These dimensions are different in terms of number, formation, and definition in conceptualizing ISC. We also found different terms were used to refer to the same dimension and the indication that dimensions were changed after factor and reliability analysis were carried out. This suggests that there is no widely accepted dimensions for ISC and it is still an evolving area as argued by Kolkowska [55], that the differences in dimensions is an indication that the understanding of security culture is still



evolving. As such, there is yet a comprehensive ISC dimensions that is applicable to all types of organization.

The lack of common dimensions is a big gap in ISC research since academicians and practitioners alike do not have access to a standard ISC reference model. This, in turn, would restrict the findings of ISC-related studies for further generalization and application. For example, Tang et al. [111] found a causal relationship between the dimensions in OC and the dimensions in ISC. However, due to the issue of consistency in dimensions, these findings are restricted as there might be some additional ISC dimensions that could be considered.

The inconsistency of dimensions in ISC concept also affects the applicability of ISC findings. For example, D'Arcy and Greene [25] found that security culture has a significant impact on employees ISP compliance intention, but this findings could not be applied to the whole ISC concept since only three dimensions were used: *Top Management Commitment, Security Communications and Computer Monitoring*. This is similar to Alkalbani et al. [9] who found that ISC has a significant impact towards employee's compliance using a different set of ISC dimensions. Since different dimensions were used, the findings could not be generalized to the whole ISC concept. Although the findings could complement each other in identifying applicable ISC dimensions, a more comprehensive study is needed for a wider generalization and application.

#### 4.1. Practical implication

Despite the recommendations made by scholars that a positive ISC would guide and improve information security behavior, there is still a lack of solid guideline that could be used by practitioners to cultivate and assess ISC in their organization. Although there are various ISC models that can be utilized for an effective ISC, practitioners face the uphill task of identifying and selecting suitable ISC aspects for their organization. In deciding the most suitable dimensions of ISC for an organization, practitioners should take into account the cultural aspects of the organization. This is due to the fact that the concepts of organizational culture (OC) are widely used to conceptualize ISC, as reflected in this review. OC directly influences ISC and ISC is a subculture of OC [14,92,101]. For example, the enforcement and development of information security policy require support from OC [20]. In addition, the organizations should have a culture that makes it clear that security is important [23]. A recent study by Connolly et al. [22] found that OC would influence employees' security behavior. As such, the cultivation of positive ISC should coexist with the OC.

#### 5. Limitations

Being a review, this work bears the limitations of rigorosity of the literature search. We have adhered to the PRISMA method, in terms of literature search and documentation. After systematically conducting the literature search twice, we strongly believe that even if any articles were left out, our findings would hold the same. This is due to the great number of ISC dimensions found in the literature.

#### 6. Conclusion and future work

This work has revealed that various concepts are used to conceptualize ISC with organizational culture [97,99] being the most adopted concept. The use of different concepts and approaches led to the variances in ISC dimensions. There are numerous dimensions found in literature causing issues in the generalization and application of ISC-related studies. This study proved that while there is still no mutual agreement in conceptualizing the ISC, there

is also no common agreement on the most comprehensive dimensions of ISC concept that could be referred by academicians and practitioners. The concepts used in a particular study would hold true only to the study itself and could not be generalized to ISC as a whole. We firmly believe that future directions in ISC-related studies should attempt to address this issue for formulating and validating a standard ISC concept that is applicable to every organization. As each organization has a different level of ISC, a common set of dimensions would enable a more comprehensive and meaningful comparison to be made. This will lead to better ISC planning and strategies.

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#### Supplementary materials

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