

Consent Form

Project Title	Unveiling Vulnerabilities: Exploring Human Factors in Parcel-Mule Scams and Mitigating the damages, with a Focus on Germany
Principle Investigator and Contact Person	Prof. Dr. Yasemin Acar, Paderborn University, Department of Computer Science
Student Researchers	Derik Roby, Joshwa Vettickal Sunny
Project Description	<p>In the last two decades, the parcel-mule scam, also known as the package reshipping scam, has emerged as a common method of fraudulent activity. These scammers buy items with stolen payment information and then hire others online to help ship the items. People who are hired usually believe it is a legitimate job and are unaware that they are a victim of a scam. The job ads and recruitment appear genuine, making it difficult for people to detect a scam. Previous research has looked into the operational aspects of this scam. Our research will look into the human factors that make people vulnerable to this scam, the challenges they face, and strategies to mitigate the damage.</p>
Eligibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You must be at least 18 years old.</li> <li>2. You must have a device (a smartphone, tablet or computer/laptop) with internet connection.</li> <li>3. You must be familiar with using a web browser and navigating through it.</li> <li>4. You must be a resident in Germany.</li> <li>5. You agree to disclose correct information about any interaction you had with parcel-mule scam.</li> </ol>
Procedure	<p>You will use LimeSurvey to fill out a questionnaire which helps to explore and identify the human factors associated with parcel mule scams in Germany. In the first part of the survey, you will fill out questions about your demographic information. The second part of the survey aims to capture your awareness level about the parcel mule scam. The third part of the survey is exclusively accessible only if you are a victim of the parcel-mule scam, here some questions regarding your victim experience are asked. In the fourth and last part of the survey, we ask you about your preference for awareness strategies. Finally, we will analyze the data to derive insights into the awareness level of people about the parcel mule scam, the problems faced by victims and how they are alleviated and the preferred awareness strategy among the general population. You are free to participate in the survey at any time of the day you please and it will take you about 10 minutes to complete.</p> <p>You can use either your smartphone, tablet or computer/laptop with internet connection to participate in the survey. Your participation is voluntary, and your responses are kept confidential.</p> <p>The data that you have provided is only accessible to authorized</p>

	<p>members of the study team, and your anonymity and data privacy is ensured throughout the study.</p> <p>The data obtained from this survey will be analyzed (quantitative and qualitative) to derive meaningful insights, which will then be included in our final submission, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of the demographics of victims, awareness level among people, problems faced by victims and potential strategies for mitigation.</p>
Risks & Benefits	<p>There are benefits and drawbacks to the study. The drawbacks include the potential for privacy violations when interviewees share their personal Parcel-Mule scam stories and the potential emotional distress from thinking back on such incidents. To tackle this, we employ various mitigation strategies; We ensure data security and anonymity. We take measures to de-identify the data and eliminate any personal identifiers. Additionally, the access to the information you have supplied is restricted exclusively to authorized members of the research team. Conversely, there are significant benefits. The study will help create better preventative measures, provide trends and scammers' plans, and raise public awareness of parcel-mule frauds. The results of the study can influence laws and regulations, empowering individuals and facilitating the creation of stronger barriers against Parcel-Mule scams. Throughout the study, safeguarding participant safety, informed consent, and data confidentiality will be essential to maximizing benefits while lowering risks.</p>
Duration	<p>The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete.</p>
Compensation	<p>There is no monetary compensation for participation in this study.</p>
Confidentiality	<p>We take several steps to protect the data privacy of the subjects. We thoroughly remove all the participants' Personally Identifying Information (PII) and focus on eliminating the presence of multiple quasi-identifiers. To de-identify the data, we first remove any personal identifiers from survey responses. The obtained data are only accessible to authorized members of the study team. After a predetermined amount of time, we securely destroy the data in compliance with ethical guidelines and data protection laws. Once participants have been fully informed about how their data is handled, they can choose to grant informed consent. The information of study participants is guaranteed to remain private and confidential, thanks to these precautions.</p>
Subjects' Rights	<p>Your participation is voluntary.</p> <p>You may terminate your participation at any time by leaving the study environment or notifying the investigator. Partial results may be stored de-identified. You may withdraw your consent to the use of your personal data at any time by emailing <a href="mailto:droby@mail.uni-paderborn.de">droby@mail.uni-paderborn.de</a> or <a href="mailto:joshwavs@mail.uni-paderborn.de">joshwavs@mail.uni-paderborn.de</a> or sending an email to <a href="mailto:humanfactors@lists.upb.de">humanfactors@lists.upb.de</a>. Please note that while we will delete</p>

	all personal data at your request, once we have de-identified the data and can no longer associate it with your request, it may still be used for our research.
Future use of research data	To maximize the benefits of your participation in this project, by further contributing to science and our community, your de-identified information may be stored for future research. Research data at Paderborn University are typically stored for 10 years in order to be available for questions and concerns with the research.
Contact	For additional questions about this research, you may contact Derik Roby or Joshwa Vettickal Sunny Email: <a href="mailto:droby@mail.uni-paderborn.de">droby@mail.uni-paderborn.de</a> or <a href="mailto:joshwavs@mail.uni-paderborn.de">joshwavs@mail.uni-paderborn.de</a>

By signing this consent form, I am affirming that...

- I am age 18 or older.
- I am comfortable using the English language to participate in this study.
- I meet the requirements to participate in this study.
- I have read and understood the above information. All of the questions that I had about this research have been answered.
- I have chosen to participate in and continue this study with the understanding that I may stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.
- I am aware that I may revoke my consent at any time.

I hereby consent (Art. 6 para. 1 lit. a GDPR) that my submitted personal data may be stored and processed. I have read the privacy policy for the form. I am aware of the right of withdrawal.