

Effectiveness of Social Media as a Marketing Tool for Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of digital communications technologies and the World Wide Web as a connection medium, the way we live and do business has been tremendously changed, leading to the emergence of connected communities where people spent a significant amount of their time online. The traditional means of receiving news about the world we live in has also drifted from the Conventional Media (CM) towards the Social Media (SM). Hence, to let people know about the commercial products and services, social media must be integrated in the advertising and promotion campaigns. Many companies including Higher Education Institutes (HEI) complied with this general trend and moved major parts of their advertising and promotion campaigns to the SM. Universities have allocated a significant amount of their resources to advertising and promotion in the SM, creating a strong SM presence. However, the effectiveness of SM in reaching out to people from all around the globe to create university brand trust and brand identity that leads to student recruitment is still being questioned by higher education institutions.

The widespread of messages bearing the HEI qualities and assets of attraction in SM could create an adverse effect on the potential students such that the students in far geographies who do not have the capacity to be genuine academic students to the target HEI could also be attracted by SM to make online applications to the available programs. This thesis focused on the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool in student recruitment to universities. As a result of our measurements, we have shown that social media could influence student's subjective norms and attitudes but could not change student's intention to register to the university.

Keywords: Social media, brand, trust, identification, student recruitment, international university, subjective norms, attitudes.

ÖZ

Dijital iletişim teknolojilerinin ve World Wide Web'in bir bağlantı aracı olarak ortaya çıkmasıyla birlikte, yaşama ve iş yapma şeklimiz büyük ölçüde değişti ve insanların topluluk içinde önemli miktarda zaman geçirdiği bağlantılı toplulukların ortaya çıkmasına neden oldu. Yaşadığımız dünyada geleneksel haber alma araçları da geleneksel medyadan sosyal medyaya (SM) doğru sürüklenmiştir. Bu nedenle, insanların ticari ürünler ve hizmetler hakkında bilgi sahibi olmaları için sosyal medya teknolojisi reklam ve tanıtım kampanyalarına entegre edilmelidir. Yükseköğretim kurumları dahil birçok kuruluş bu genel eğilime uymuş ve reklam ve tanıtım kampanyalarının önemli bir bölümünü SM'ye taşımıştır. Özellikle üniversiteler, SM'da reklam ve tanıtıma önemli miktarda kaynak ayırmışlardır. Bununla birlikte, üniversitenin marka kimliğini yaratmada daha geniş coğrafyalarda insanlara ulaşmanın ve öğrenci alımına yol açan marka kimliğinin sorgulanması halen tartışılmaktadır. Yüksek öğretim kurumları (YÖK) mesajların ve SM'deki çekim yaratan niteliklerini yaygınlaşması, potansiyel öğrenciler üzerinde olumsuz etki yaratabilecektir. Bu sayede, uzak coğrafyalarda bulunan öğrenciler, sosyal medya erişimi sayesinde, hedef üniversiteye gerçekte kayıt yapabilme kapasitesine sahip olmadıkları halde üniversiteye başvuru aşamasına kadar ilerleyebiliyorlar.

Bu tez, üniversitelere öğrenci alımında uluslararası bir bakış açısıyla bir pazarlama aracı olarak sosyal medyanın etkinliği üzerine odaklanmaktadır. Bu tezde, üniversiteye yeni kayıt yapan öğrenciler tarafından özel olarak doldurulmuş olan son anketlerin verileri değerlendirilmiştir. Üniversitenin sosyal medya araçlarının medyanın diğer geleneksel reklam ve tanıtım araçlarına göre kullanımının etkinliği de

karşılaştırılmıştır. Araştırma ayrıca, yerel öğrencileri ve Türkiye'den gelen öğrencileri, medyanın sosyal medya ve geleneksel medya araçlarının karşılaştırılmasına da odaklanmaktadır. Buna ek olarak, yapılan bu çalışmada, farklı kültürlerden ve ülkelerden öğrencilerin üniversite seçimini etkilemede sosyal medyayı en iyi kullanmanın yöntemini belirlerken, bu bölgelerden gelecekteki öğrencilerin üniversite seçimini etkileyen ana faktörlerin altı da çizilmektedir. Son olarak, Yüksek Öğretim Kurumları için öğrenci alımının farklı yönlerine baktıktan sonra, ister sosyal medyada olsun, isterse geleneksel medyada olsun, farklı özel durumlar için en iyi reklam yöntemi belirleyen ve bu bulguların ışığında üniversite, reklam ve tanıtım kampanyalarının etkinliğini artıran ve gelecekte yeni öğrenci alımı için kaynaklarının kullanımını optimize eden çözümler üzerinde durulmuştur. Sosyal medyada yapılan ölçümlerle öğrencinin öznel normlarının ve tutumunun tahmin edilebileceği ancak bir öğrencinin bir üniversite seçme niyetinin önceden tahmin edilemeyeceği sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal medya, marka, güven, aidiyet, öğrenci alımı, uluslararası üniversite.

DEDICATION

To my mother Senal Amca, for being such a nice and supportive mom...

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Many thanks to all my family members, Asu Lara Amca, Senal Amca and Prof. Dr. Hasan Amca, for the encouragement and endless support they provided during the preparation, progress and completion of this research...

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

There is a significant increase in the number of global students who prefer to enroll in higher education institutions abroad; this trend has shown significant increase between years 2000-2009 reaching a peak average of 96.75%. In 2008 the combinations of students from 13 countries that are studying abroad in global higher education institutes reached over one million. This number is accelerating rapidly and became a global trend. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2005 the international student number was over 2.8 Million and in 2013 this number reached 4.1 Million, this number is predicted to be 4.9 Million by 2025. By looking at these trend and growing need for international higher education institutions, investment for opening and increasing the number of higher education institutions become top priority for some countries where others continue to send their citizens abroad for a better education. This trend also caused the number of higher education institutions to increase very rapidly. Nowadays in Cyprus it feels like everyone wants to have a piece of this pie, which is higher education. The number of higher education institutions increased from 1 in 1988 to 17 in 2018. In the global scale as of January 2017 there are 26368 universities in the world in 2016 this number was 23729 so in 1 year the number of universities increased by 2639, which suggest that there was an 11.12% increase in the number of universities in one year. This growth of internationalization and increase in the number of higher education institutes pushed their administrators to find more exceptional ways to differentiate

themselves from similar institutes and produce more unique traits to show for their present and future students, alumni members and other stakeholders. This new era of higher education marketing now also increases the competition both locally and internationally for a higher education institute and if they were to fail or ignore this trend its consequences will be more dire as with every day the room for error gets smaller and smaller as every day new institutions take their seats on the table to get a piece of the higher education pie.

As new players enter the market the competition also gets more fierce and new ways or advertisements need to be developed to reach out to future students faster and more effective ways compared to the other institutions, which in nowadays is done through Social Media channels. Higher education institutions are brands and education are their product to sell its customers which are the students. According to student experience survey published by Times Higher Education university is not just a place of education, societal experience is also an important factor for students while choosing a university (timeshighereducation). The most efficient way to reflect the social life of a higher education institution is through the use of social media tools like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter etc. The student experience survey was based on 8 main categories including societal experience. Under the social experience the sub categories were; Good social life, Good community atmosphere, Good extra-curricular activities / societies, Good environment on campus / around the university (See Table 1).

Table 1: Societal experiences of students

Societal experience	Good social life
	Good community atmosphere
	Good extra-curricular activities / societies
	Good environment on campus / around university

Another significant impact to the higher education institutions is the new generation of humanity coming of age to attend these institutions. The most significant are the digital natives, which are internet users between the ages of 18 to 29 years old who were born in the internet age of the world (Jones, Ramanau, Cross, & Healing, 2010). There generation before the digital natives were referred as the digital immigrants, digital immigrants as their name states immigrated to the internet age so they will require less connectivity to internet to sustain their daily lives where digital natives requires internet connection in all the aspects of their life (Prensky, 2001).

The time digital natives spend online increases with every passing year; in 2008 they spend an average of 8 hours a day online, this number increased to 12 hours a day in 2015 (J. J. Arnett, 2015; Lin, 2008). As the current and future students of higher education institutions are digitals natives and they spend half or even more of their day online social media seems like a good way to reach them while choosing their higher education institutions.

Chapter 2

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Due to their cultural background, changing needs and capabilities, distinct age groups have a differing use of social media. As we can see from Figure 1, most of the potential students which are 17 or lower mainly use Facebook with 46.5%, which is followed by 18.6% YouTube users. Then google plus and twitter user which are 11.6% and finally LinkedIn with 2.3%.

Current students which are between ages 18 to 21 show a similar trend with Facebook leading with 40.1%, then followed by YouTube users 15.3%, then LinkedIn users with 12.9%, then twitter with 10.1% and finally google plus with 9.8%.

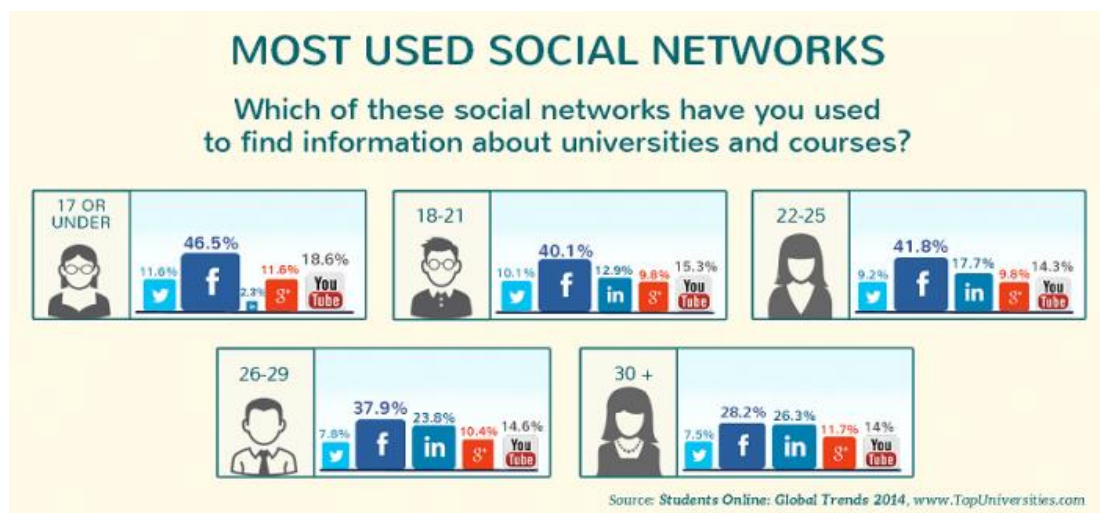


Figure 1: Most Used Social Networks (Student Online: Global Trend 2014)

For age group 22 to 25 which could be M.A./M.Sc. or PhD students Facebook leads with 41.8%, then followed by LinkedIn users with 17.7%. YouTube users follow with 14.3% then Google Plus users with 9.8% and finally Twitter with 9.2%.

According to Bagozzi's Attitude Theory (1992) first there is the appraisal process, followed by an emotional reaction and then the behavioral response. In other words, the individual evaluates the past, present and future outcomes (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999), by making an evaluative judgment about an event or an incident that they are involved in some object, person or entity that has personal meaning for them. The focus is the subjective interpretation not the objective event or the circumstance because different individuals may appraise the same outcome differently. Based on the appraisal, the next stage is the emotional reaction. Particular emotions result from the appraisal. As stated by Nevzat, Amca, Tanova, Amca (2017)

an individual may be pleased with the performance of a product or the experience of a service or conversely may get angry due to a promise that is not kept. A fan may feel pride in their team's achievement. Thus, this excitement and passion can be shared on Facebook and observed by future students who hold a passion about the same sport or activity.

The high school students will appraise or evaluate the social media presence of the universities; this will lead to an appraisal which will be followed by an emotion. This may be a positive or negative emotion based on the appraisal or interpretation. Consequently, there is an attitude that is formed and an intention to behave in a certain way emerges. We believe that this process influences the individual high school students in their choice or intention to attend a university. They will be exposed to the social media presence of several universities. Based on their preexisting norms and experiences about social media and about the universities, they will make an appraisal.

This appraisal will help form some attitudes which will lead to their intention of attending a certain university.

2.1 The Relationship between Facebook Community Membership and Identification within the Higher Education Community

When we look at identification from the social identity theory aspect identification becomes awareness of oneness with a group of persons (Ashforth & Mael, 1989a). Individuals need to set aside their character as one with their personal identity and grow their social identity with the whole group of individuals as one. If we were to look at it from a marketing perspective, consumers look and embrace products or brands which improve and reflect on their self-identities (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005; Ashforth & Mael, 1989b). Each consumer (individual) is likely to have several identities which all come together and give a visual representation of self to this individual. But, identity theory states these identities are organized according to a hierarchical directive causing the leading or bulging identities to have more influence on one`s behaviors (D. B. Arnett, German, & Hunt, 2003).

Social identity has both, a cognitive and an emotional element (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). Social media community members of a brand can identify themselves with this group according to their common interests and similarities to group members, also they can differentiate themselves from non-group members according to their differences. This process of comparing and judging according to differences is identifications cognitive component. The emotional aspect of the identification where a group shares the sorrow, grief or pride is thought as the affective component (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005).

A community that connects the users or consumers of a product or service to its brand and other customers of that brand forms a brand community. Brand community as a concept is highly relatable with universities and other higher education institutions since these types of facilities tends to provide a variety of products and services in one brand. According to a university study conducted in the USA using social media tools on subjects related to their universities makes them feel more connected to their university brand (CCCSE, 2009). According to the same study, using social media tools in academic commitments enhances students level of engagement.

Form students point of view using social media networking products is a very convenient way to stay in touch with the university. As stated by Nevzat, Amca, Tanova, Amca (2017)

Eastern Mediterranean University uses social media technology including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Periscope in order to increase the engagement of the students with the university. Students often prefer to communicate their concerns or questions via Facebook Messenger since they have a perception that responses to e-mail queries are slower where shorter messages receive an almost instant response. In order to strengthen the university community, the university maintains a variety of branded Facebook pages in order to link the faculty, current students, alumni, prospective students and others who wish to be kept in touch with the institution.

On the other hand, it is possible for an organization or community to have people identified with them without being a member. So, using social media a university can also create a community which could possibly reach outside the borders of that university and its present or past members. Furthermore, it could also reach to the future members of the university which are the potential future students.

2.2 The Relationship between University Community and University Brand Identification and University Brand Trust

The connection between students and the university may be identified by means of several different metaphors as customers, employees, co-producers or junior partners (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2009). In the first alternative, under the influence of the Total-Quality-Management (TQM) movement, the universities are transforming into more student-centered institutions with an increasing sensitivity to student's needs. Hence, the notion of regarding students as customers becomes more acceptable. In the second alternative where students may be regarded as employees who are expected to carry out the given tasks just as subordinates and the academic staff as their managers assigning them their duties. In the third alternative, rather than customers, the students may be regarded as co-producers where the universities supply them with the necessary environment and resources under the responsibility of the academic and administrative staff, in order to produce the projected learning as the end-product. In the final alternative, the students may be regarded as junior partners with the faculty in a hierarchical manner where students occupy the lowest level of the hierarchy and perform the tasks assigned them by the managers at the highest level of the hierarchy (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2009).

Students are more voluntary to contribute to the university when they identify with the university as co-producers rather than identifying as customers. In such cases, in harmony with the level of satisfaction, the financial contribution and moral contribution (such as promoting it in social media) of students to the university is more likely to continue even after graduation. Student's identification with the university as co-producers rather than just customers becomes even stronger with the level of

interaction of the university with the students in social media. Students' contribution to the university by sharing positive influence containing information is common-ground due to the very nature of social media which allows the users to be active contributors rather than peer readers. The amount and impact of their contribution will increase with the level of identification as co-producers and strengthen their trust and loyalty which in turn will enhance the level of contribution.

Customers' level of support and their level of positive brand recommendation to the people they are connected as friends in social media will increase with the level of identification with the brand community (Algesheimer et al., 2005). When customers identify themselves with a well acknowledged brand, they form positive attitudes for that brand which results in their behavior in accordance with their positive attitude, since identification leads to positive brand recommendations (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). Hence, students will develop higher level of trust towards the university as a brand when they identify themselves with the university brand.

Identification can also be explained in a different way such as; since customers cannot thoroughly understand the characteristic features that distinguish a particular brand in terms of quality and make it more acceptable, they simply rely on the brand quality to explain the trust relationship based on the information asymmetry. In higher education institutes, to help stakeholders such as students, families and academics in decision making about a particular institution, the universities have a rather imperceptible and multifaceted offerings about their brand (Judson et al., 2008). The brand of a university should be describing its values and use a clear and convincing description to make stakeholders perceive its values with a minimum amount of information in a time

efficient manner (Judson et al., 2008). The presence in social media and identification with its brand community is required to help in connecting and establishing relationships between the stakeholders in an effective manner, leading to reduction in information asymmetry and uncertainty for both sides and enhancing predictability towards a higher brand trust through a wider information sharing.

2.3 The Relationship between Strength of Online Brand Community, University Brand Trust and University Loyalty

A major precursor of loyalty is trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Laroche et al., 2013). Previous research demonstrated that brand communities in social media enhance brand loyalty and trust mediates this relationship. In other words, the strength of the online brand community enhances brand trust which in turn will lead to higher levels of loyalty (Laroche et al., 2013). A strong consumer brand will attract the targeted customer groups and correspondingly an effective university brand will enable the university to compete for the best students and faculty members, increase alumni loyalty and contributions, and improve community support (Judson et al., 2008).

With the shift of emphasis in academic literature and practice towards relationship marketing, more attention has been directed towards understanding how trust serves as an antecedent of loyalty. Much of the research had focused on brand reputation and satisfaction leading to loyalty, however, the current discussion of trust views the brand as the consumer's partner in a long-term relationship. It has been shown that trust leads to higher commitment especially when the customer involvement is high. The customer commitment towards the brand also brings higher price tolerance (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001).

2.4 Social Media and Citizenship Behaviors

Bateman and Organ, (1983) describe Organizational Citizenship Behaviors as individuals' behavior that collectively assists organizational effectiveness, but that is neither a requirement of the individual's job nor directly rewarded by the formal system". This extra role-based behavior definition is not accepted by many researchers. In contrast, they described Organizational Citizenship Behaviors as "respect for work and following the rules and procedures on voluntary basis" as in in-role behavior and "devoting more time and effort to tasks that will help the organization without any exception of rewards" as in extra-role behavior (Vey & Campbell, 2004). In terms of marketing literature, the Organizational Citizenship Behaviors concept has been described as Customer Citizenship Behavior (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2007). The customers are often referred to as "partial employees" due to the role they play as participants in service creation during their services (Bove, Pervan, Beatty, & Shiu, 2009). The Quality of Experience (QoS) then depends on the skills and the knowledge of the customers through the in-role and extra-role behavior of the participants. In-role behaviors; which are also referred to as the customer co-production behaviors; facilitates effectiveness of service offerings such as being punctual for an engagement, being accurate in-service delivery, giving constructive feedback about the problems and issues that has been handled and delivering promises and satisfying commitments. In educational institutions, the students are regarded as co-producers rather than customers and these behaviors are vital in many situations for the effectiveness of services delivered. The activities investigated in co-production role of the students may include retail self-service stations, working at the bookstore or library and checking homework. Most of the work done in co-production focus on cost reduction by using co-production behaviors in educational institution which goes

beyond cost reduction. Most of the previous work on the co-production behavior is said to be theoretical and lacking focus. When the students are regarded as co-producers in a university, they need to participate actively in the process of learning through research, taking part in the working groups, providing feedback and get involved in the decision-making processes (Groth, 2005).

2.5 Hypothesis Made for the Study

In order to determine the sequence of activities follows by the students starting from behavioral attitude and its lead to the development of the subjective norms and hence the formation of intention for the activity, the following three hypotheses are made.

H1: Behavioral Attitude depends on Behavioral Beliefs and Outcome Evaluation

H2: Subjective Norms depend on Normative Beliefs and Motivation to Comply

H3: Intention depends on Perceived Behavioral Control, Behavioral Attitude and Subjective Norms

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA

3.1 Data

The sample was obtained from EMU student surveys for current students and Cyprus 12th grade students. EMU have over 18000 students from all around the world. EMU also uses social media as an advertisement method for attracting possible future students. If we were to look at North Cyprus in general we can observe that it has become an international student attraction, over the last decade the number of international students increased majorly from 40000 to over 70000 in the last 10 years. Addition to these there is also over 13000 local students from North Cyprus which tells the significance of international students. With a population of only 313000 (as of 2014), 70000 international students have a major impact on the economy of the local citizens and to the general life in North Cyprus. Having this many students and alumni all around the world in many different sectors requires an effective way to keep all these people connected. Keeping them connected with social media increases their loyalty to the university (mebnet, 2017).

In this thesis my main objective was to measure how effective and influential social media is while recruiting potential future students and how influential it was in the decision-making process of Cypriot students when they made their university choices.

I expect to identify social media users trust towards using social media while selecting a university and found out any patterns regarding these students (future or current) decisions.

Social media has become a very effective and easy way to reach all sorts of people from all around the globe with the click of a button. I expected to observe that social media has also become an effective way for future students to get reliable information from universities social media accounts.

The measurement scales used in this study was based on a previous work of Presley et al (2010). Basic modifications were implemented to suit the targeted high school students of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Survey was conducted by Eastern Mediterranean University Social Media department with the help and permission of Ministry of Education and Culture. The survey was overseen by respected teachers of psychological counselling and guidance in each school with permission of school principals.

The data was gathered from current high school student who were studying in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. This survey had 261 respondents from different variety of high schools all around Nicosia. Nicosia was chosen because it is the capital and the most populated city in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Responses that had too many missing data also had to be removed. Out of 238 respondents; 104 (43.9%) were male and 133 (56.1%) were female also 1 had no response. The age of the respondents was fairly close; majority 165 (69.3%) were 17, then followed by 37 (15.5%) 16 lastly 27 (11.3%) were 18 years of age. In addition to these there were 1

with no response, 1 respondent of age 19 (0.4%) and 2 respondents of age 20 (0.8%). Majority of respondents 147 (61.8%) was from Lefkosa, followed by 22 (9.2%) from Girne, 12 (5%) were from Magusa, 10 (4.2%) were from Gonyeli and the remaining 47 (19.8%) were from smaller rural areas.

Table 2: Demographic of data collected

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
City			
<u>Girne</u>	23	8.8	24.1
<u>Gonyeli</u>	11	4.2	28.4
<u>Lefkosa</u>	161	61.7	93.9
<u>Magusa</u>	13	5.0	99.2
Others	53	20.3	
Total	261	100.0	
Sex			
Valid	Male	116	44.4
	Female	144	55.2
	Total	260	99.6
Missing	System	1	.4
Total		261	100.0
Age			
	16	45	17.2
	17	178	68.2
	18	29	11.1
Valid	19	1	.4
	20	2	.8
	117	1	.4
	Total	256	98.1
Missing	System	5	1.9
Total		261	100.0

3.2 Research Method

The correlation and regression has been used as the statistical software tool for analysis of the survey data in order to test the hypotheses. The correlation and regression tool will be used to derive the variables based on the measurement data in a similar manner to the covariance based structural modelling of the equations. It is possible to observe some of the dependent and independent variables using the correlation and regression model that influence the variables in the hypothesized causal sequence.

A two-step approach commonly adopted in correlation and regression analysis is employed in presentation of the results, where at the initial step, the reliability and the validity of the measurement items are focused in order to justify that the results are significant according to structural model. In the final step, however, in order to see how well, the hypothesis is endorsed by the data, the structural model is adopted.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

4.1 Measurement Model

In order to produce a valid SEM analysis, reliability and convergent validity calculations were made with respect to measured items. Table 1 provides Cronbach alpha values to determine reliability. Also, Average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) with their factor loadings are provided to determine convergent validity. Constructs AVE values were either above or equal to the recommended range of 0.50 or above. Constructs CR values were also above the recommended range of 0.70.

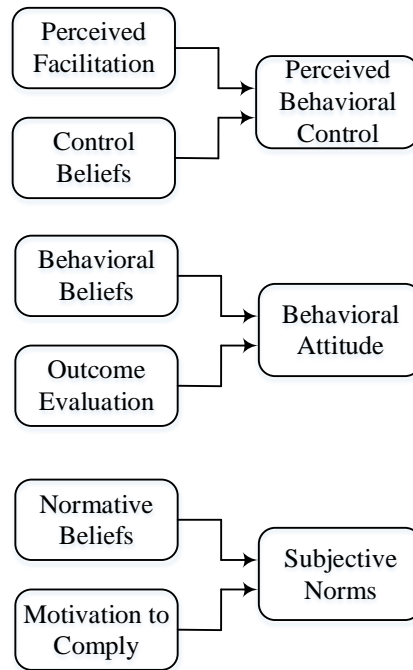


Figure 2: Showing Theory of Planned Behavior Distribution

Table 3: Measurement Components

CONSTRUCT	MEASUREMENT ITEMS	LOADING	CR	AVE
	Attending a university based on the information they post on their Facebook page is ...	0.691	0.717	0.395
	Social media gives you firsthand information from reliable sources	0.695		
	I will have the same experience as the students I see on the Facebook posts	0.427		
	If you use social media to make decisions, you are very likely to make big mistakes	0.662		
	How much do you care what your parents think about on using social media to get information about the university to attend	0.831	0.809	0.679
	How much do you care what your friends think about on using social media to get information about the university to attend	0.818		
	I plan to go to one of these universities	0.947	0.966	0.905
	I will make an effort to enroll in one of these universities	0.957		
	I intend to study in one of these universities	0.951		
	Facebook is an effective way of finding information about a University	0.472	0.807	0.417
	For me, using Facebook to get information is very useful	0.731		
	I am confident that the information I will find on Facebook is accurate	0.642		

I am confident I can get accurate information from University Facebook page about university activities	0.590		
I am confident I can get accurate information from University Facebook page about university fees	0.809		
I am confident I can get accurate information from University Facebook page about campus life	0.576		
Most people whose opinion I value would approve of me using social media to get information about universities	0.659	0.833	0.501
It would be considered normal that I use information found in social media in deciding which university to attend	0.749		
All the young people use social media in their decisions	0.636		
My parents would look favorably on using social media to get information about the university to attend	0.740		
My friends would look favorably on using social media to get information about the university to attend	0.747		

The question “All the relevant universities that I might be interested in have a presence on Facebook” has no relationship between any other questions so it was not included in a component.

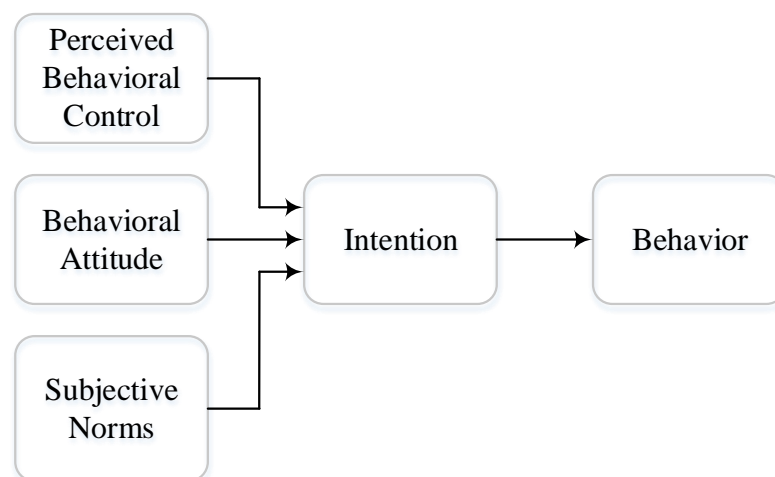


Figure 3: Showing Social Media Behavior Model Designed using Presley’s model

4.2 Data Analysis

4.2.1 Correlations

There is a very strong positive correlation (.876) with significance at level of 0.01 between item 1 and item 2. Secondly there is also a very strong positive correlation (0.866) with significance level of 0.01 between item 1 and item 3. Finally, there is a very strong positive correlation (0.889) with significance level of 0.01 between item 2 and item 3.

Table 4: Correlation analysis of Intention questions component

	1	2	3
1.I plan to go to one of these universities	1		
2.I will make an effort to enroll in one of these universities	.876**	1	
3.I intend to study in one of these universities	.866**	.889**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5: Correlation analysis of Intention questions

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Facebook is an effective way of finding information about a University	1					
2. For me, using Facebook to get information is very useful	.438**	1				
3. I am confident that the information I will find on Facebook is accurate	.311**	.554**	1			
4. I am confident I can get accurate information from University Facebook page about university activities	.407**	.387**	.374**	1		
5. I am confident I can get accurate information from University Facebook page about university fees	.322**	.481**	.453**	.433**	1	
6. I am confident I can get accurate information from University Facebook page about campus life	.352**	.348**	.294**	.363**	.437**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

After examining the correlation table, we can observe that the weakest correlation is between item 1 and item 3 which is a positive correlation (0.294) with significance level of 0.01. This is correlation between getting information from Facebook and getting information from university Facebook page. The strongest correlation is between item 2 and item 3 which is a moderate positive correlation (0.554) with significance level of 0.01. This is a correlation between using Facebook to get information and the confidence of using Facebook to get information. All the correlations between items have a significance level of 0.01.

Table 6: Correlation analysis of normative beliefs and subjective norm questions component

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Most people whose opinion I value would approve of me using social media to get information about universities	1	.			
2. It would be considered normal that I use information found in social media in deciding which university to attend	.475**	1			
3. All the young people use social media in their decisions	.382**	.346**	1		
4. My parents would look favorably on using social media to get information about the university to attend	.411**	.475**	.322**	1	
5. My friends would look favorably on using social media to get information about the university to attend	.417**	.463**	.388**	.637**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The weakest correlation (0.322) is between item 4 and item 3 which is a positive correlation, with a significance level of 0.01. This is between future students' parents' opinion about students getting information about university through social media and young people using social media in making their decisions. The strongest correlation (0.637) is between item 5 and item 4 which is a moderately strong positive correlation, with a significance level of 0.01. This is between future students' parents' opinion about students getting information about university through social media and future students' friends' opinion about students getting information about university through social media. All the correlations have a significance level of 0.01.

Table 7: Correlation analysis of motivation to comply questions component

	1	2
1.How much do you care what your parents think about on using social media to get information about the university to attend	1	
2.How much do you care what your friends think about on using social media to get information about the university to attend	.552**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a moderate strong correlation (0.552) between item 1 and item 2 with a significance level of 0.01. This is related to how much future students care what their parents think about getting information from social media about university and how much future students care what their friends think about getting information from social media about university.

Table 8: Correlation analysis of attitude and outcome evaluation questions component

	1	2	3	4
1.Attending a university based on the information they post on their Facebook page is ...	1			
2.Social media gives you firsthand information from reliable sources	.472**	1		
3.I will have the same experience as the students I see on the Facebook posts	.256**	.174**	1	
4.If you use social media to make decisions, you are very likely to make big mistakes	-.329**	-.337**	-.208**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The weakest correlation (0.256) is between item 1 and item 3 which is weak positive correlation, with significance level of 0.01. This is between attending university based on information found on their Facebook and having the same experience as a student seen on Facebook posts. The strongest correlation (0.472) is between item 1 and item 2 which is a nearly moderate positive correlation, with a significance level of 0.01. This is between attending university based on information found on their Facebook and social media giving firsthand reliable information. All the other correlations have a significance level of 0.01.

4.2.2 Reliability Analysis of Factors in Model

4.2.2.1 Attitude

Table 9 shows the reliability analysis of attitude questions in the survey. It has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.584 which is lower than the expected 0.7 or higher value making them not very reliable.

Table 9: Reliable analysis of attitude questions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.584	2

4.2.2.2 Outcome Evaluations

Table 10 shows the reliability analysis of outcome evaluations questions in the survey. It has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.296 which is significantly lower than the expected 0.7 or higher value making them not reliable at all. Therefore, this measure was not used in the analysis:

Table 10: Reliable analysis of outcome evaluations questions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.296	2

4.2.2.3 Subjective Norms

Table 12 shows the reliability analysis of subjective norm questions in the survey. It has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.663 which is pretty close to the expected 0.7 or higher value making them reliable.

Table 11: Reliable analysis of subjective norms questions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.663	3

4.2.2.4 Normative Beliefs

Table 12 shows the reliability analysis of normative beliefs questions in the survey. It has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.778 which is above the expected 0.7 or higher value making them reliable.

Table 12: Reliable analysis of normative beliefs questions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.778	2

4.2.2.5 Motivation to Comply

Table 13 shows the reliability analysis of motivation to comply questions in the survey. It has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.711 which is above the expected 0.7 or higher value making them reliable.

Table 13: Reliable analysis of motivation to comply questions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.711	2

4.2.2.6 Perceived Behavioral Control

Table 14 shows the reliability analysis of perceived behavioral control questions in the survey. It has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.553 which is lower than the expected 0.7 or higher value making them not very reliable.

Table 14: Reliable analysis of perceived behavioral control questions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.553	3

4.2.2.7 Control Beliefs

Table 15 shows the reliability analysis of control beliefs questions in the survey. It has a Cronbach`s Alpha value of 0.676 which is pretty close to the expected 0.7 or higher value making them reliable.

Table 15: Reliable analysis of Control Beliefs questions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.676	3

4.2.2.8 Intention

Table 16 shows the reliability analysis of motivation to comply questions in the survey. It has a Cronbach`s Alpha value of 0.955 which is very above the expected 0.7 or higher value making them very reliable.

Table 16: Reliable analysis of Intention questions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.955	3

4.2.3 Regression Analysis

In light of the model Figure 2, regression analysis is required to test the 3 hypotheses made. Hypotheses need to be rewritten according to our data. So, the new hypotheses are;

Hypothesis 1: A high school student's attitude towards using social media to find information about a university depends on their thoughts of whether or not it is a mistake to use social media while making a decision and how reliable they think social media and Facebook post are.

Table 17: Showing regression analysis for hypothesis 1.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.593	.228		6.987	.000
1 Behavioral Belief	.163	.046	.209	3.538	.000
Outcome Eva.	.447	.063	.420	7.105	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude

As we can see from ANOVA analysis in Table 18 the attitude of student can be predicted from student's outcome evaluations and behavioral beliefs as it has a significance of $p < 0.005$. It can be observed that outcome evaluation ($B = 0.447$, $p < 0.005$) and behavioral beliefs ($B = 0.163$, $p < 0.005$) have a significant impact on the attitude of a students. So, hypothesis 1 is supported.

Table18: ANOVA analysis for attitude

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	67.725	2	33.863	46.193	.000 ^b
Residual	172.270	235	.733		
Total	239.996	237			

Hypothesis 2: There are two factors causing social pressure on a high school student when they are using social media to gather information about a university. First are their parents, friends' etc. opinion about them using social media to gather information about a university and the second is how much value they put on these opinions.

Table 19: Showing regression analysis for hypothesis 2.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.504	.167		8.995	.000
1 Normative Belief	.466	.043	.575	10.727	.000
Motivation Comply	.050	.043	.062	1.161	.247

a. Dependent Variable: Subject Norm

As we can see from ANOVA analysis in table 20 the subjective norms of student can be predicted from student's normative beliefs and motivation to comply as it has a significance of $p < 0.005$. It can be observed that normative beliefs ($B = 0.466$, $p < 0.005$) have a significant impact on the subjective norms of students. But motivation to comply ($B = 0.050$, $p = 0.2475$) has no significant effect on subjective norms of a student. So, hypothesis 2 is not supported as, high school student's family, friends etc.

might not approve of them using social media to get information about a university but this would not affect their decision.

Table 20: ANOVA analysis for subjective norms

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	67.725	2	33.863	46.193	.000 ^b
Residual	172.270	235	.733		
Total	239.996	237			

Hypothesis 3: Intention of a high school student to attend a university depends on the student's attitude towards using Facebook and social media to find information about university, their confidence and trust towards reliability of this information and the opinion of their family, friends etc. on using this information found on social media.

Table 21: Showing regression analysis for hypothesis 3.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.519	.492		3.089	.002
Attitude	-.066	.119	-.042	-.555	.579
Subject Norm	.083	.114	.051	.729	.467
Perceived Beh. Cont.	.238	.130	.144	1.825	.069

a. Dependent Variable: Intention

As we can see from ANOVA analysis in Table 22 the intention of student cannot be predicted by student's attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control as its significance of $p = 0.153$ is not enough. According to the analysis it can be observed that perceived behavioral control ($B = 0.238$, $p = 0.069$) has a slight significant impact on the intention of students. But subjective norms ($B = 0.083$, $p = 0.467$) and attitude

($B = -0.66$, $p = 0.579$) has no significant effect on intention of a student. So, hypothesis 3 is not supported. So, a high school student's intention of attending a university cannot be predicted by their attitude towards finding information from social media, the reliability of this information and their family, friends' etc. opinion on using this information found on social media.

Table 22: ANOVA analysis for intention

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.827	3	4.276	1.773	.153 ^b
	Residual	547.546	227	2.412		
	Total	560.373	230			

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Discussion

The focus of this research is to assess the effectiveness of a university's social media presence on local secondary school student's recruitment to university. This research was initiated upon conclusion of the previous work about the role of social media on student retention through brand identification and brand trust where the current students at the Eastern Mediterranean University were studied. Therefore, mentioned work was adopted to determine the factors that influenced the current local student's identification and trust for the Eastern Mediterranean University through social media activities. Since those students who attempted the survey were the current students of the Eastern Mediterranean University, that work measured the factors affecting their willingness to continue their study at the university.

In deciding on the choice of university, on one hand, the students and their families have to understand in detail and make decisions on an extremely complicated subject such as higher education and research involving the quality of academic staff, laboratory infrastructure, accommodation and daily living environment, employment statistics after graduation and the like.

On the other hand, students and their families can rely on the universities brand equity and reputation to simplify the decision-making process (Judson et al., 2008).

In order to develop a strong brand community, an effective social media presence in general and Facebook activities in particular will enhance identification with the university community and the university brand. Interacting with the Facebook community will enable the university to clearly display its brands distinctiveness. If the social media platform is used effectively, the messages could be delivered to the targeted people in a more cost effective and influential manner. Members of the university community can share the posts of the university with their friends, contacts or followers and extend the reach of the message to larger crowds. Naturally, only the very interesting messages or posts will be shared by the community if it is interesting enough and people associate with it.

5.2 Conclusion

The present work was initiated as a continuation of the previous work to determine the role of social media on student retention through brand identification and brand trust. The work mentioned was assumed to determine the factors that affected the current student's identification with and the trust for the Eastern Mediterranean University through their engagement in social media activities. The measured value was the student's willingness to continue their study at the Eastern Mediterranean University. The present work, on the other hand, investigates the effectiveness of social media in marketing with a focus on the Theory of Planned Behavior which describes the formation of people's attitude, which in turn is expected to turn into intention to choose a brand/university and end up in a behavior to buy/register. Since the function under study was the behavior to register to the addressed university, the subject group of interest was chosen as the local high school students of ages between 16 to 18 as the potential students. The subject group was given a small talk on the behavior of young people using social media and benefiting from the online information. It is evident that

majority of high school students get information from the internet and share their finding with their social media friends, leading to the viral spread of information (Figure 1). The accuracy of the information gathered from these social media resources is solely dependent on the accuracy of the knowledge shared by their friends and relatives and the trust to the knowledge they share on the social media.

Before registering to a university, the students and their families must understand in detail before making their decisions on an extremely complicated subject such as a university involving the quality of academic staff, laboratory infrastructure, accommodation and daily living environment, employment statistics after graduation and the like. It is observed that rather than doing their thorough investigation on the merits of a university, they preferred to rely on the university's brand equity and reputation to simplify the decision-making process. If the social media platform is used effectively, the messages regarding the university's brand equity and brands distinctiveness could be delivered to the targeted people in a more cost-effective manner. Members of the university social media community will then share the messages regarding the qualities of the university with their social media friends and help extending the reach of the message to larger crowds.

The indirect assessments carried out through survey questionnaires revealed that, even though high school students get their information about universities from social media platforms, this does not have a significant effect on their intention to register to a previously considered university.

5.3 Future Research and Improvements

The presented work investigated the role and effectiveness of social media on student recruitment for a university with a predominantly international student population. The majority of the subjects studied were local secondary school students with a smaller number of international students. To broaden the coverage and usefulness of the research, survey should be extended to international scale and larger numbers of international students are encouraged to take part and share their opinions. Hence, the findings will be more useful for a wider group of higher education institutions in a wider geography. The findings of such a research at an international scale will help universities to direct their advertising and promotion budgets to more accurate destinations using social media as an instrument.

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APPENDIX

Questions used in the survey in orderly fashion.

1. City
2. Sex
3. Age
4. How did you first find information about EMU?
5. Facebook is an effective way of finding information about a University
6. Attending a university based on the information they post on their Facebook page is...
7. Social media gives you firsthand information from reliable sources
8. I will have the same experience as the students I see on the Facebook posts
9. If you use social media to make decisions, you are very likely to make big mistakes
10. Most people whose opinion I value would approve of me using social media to get information about universities
11. It would be considered normal that I use information found in social media in deciding which university to attend
12. All the young people use social media in their decisions
13. My parents would look favorably on using social media to get information about the university to attend
14. My friends would look favorably on using social media to get information about the university to attend
15. How much do you care what your parents think about on using social media to get information about the university to attend?
16. How much do you care what your friends think about on using social media to get information about the university to attend?
17. For me, using Facebook to get information about universities is very useful
18. I am confident that the information I will find on Facebook is accurate
19. All the relevant universities that I might be interested in have a presence on Facebook
20. I am confident I can get accurate information from University Facebook page about university activities
21. I am confident I can get accurate information from University Facebook page about university fees
22. I am confident I can get accurate information from University Facebook page about campus life
23. I plan to go to one of these universities
24. I will make an effort to enroll in one of these universities
25. I intend to study in one of these universities
26. University choice 1
27. University choice 2
28. University choice 3
29. List three universities that you think are present on social media