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Preference of Social Networking Sites for Uncertainty Reduction: Case of two Nationalities in Tertiary Institution

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Abstract- The computer mediated communication is shrouded in uncertainty and as a result, users tend to consider other social networking sites to clarify their uncertainty. This paper tries to find out the number of social media platforms employed by students in reducing their uncertainty during communication when in North Cyprus. Questionnaire of about 310 were administered but 300 retrieved for the analysis among two nationalities Nigerian and Palestinian in North Cyprus amidst male and female of different educational level. Choice seems to be a mediating factor, because students are open to different platforms in reducing their uncertainty. Out of the 300 that participated about 164 are using more than one platform which implies that students in Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), don't depend on a platform in reducing uncertainty. Female dominates with about 200 and male 100. Descriptive and Inferential statistics was used for the analysis as results revealed that one way sample t-test with age and level of uncertainty are significant while preference and nationalities when correlated are positively correlated and also statistically significant at .000. Students' nationalities have positive influence on their choices of social networking sites they use in reducing their uncertainty in communication thereby promoting social capital. This means uncertainty reduction leads to information seeking which in turn improves rate of communication and strengthen social capital.

Keywords: uncertainty reduction, preference, social networking sites, nationalities, north cyprus.

I. Introduction

Social networking sites (SNSs) are significant part of our lives in our society today;as a result, there is never a day that passes without its application, (Bozkurt, Karadeniz, & Kocdar, 2017)

These have made some authors to say that the use of SNSs such as Whats App, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram is enjoyed all over the world because of how paramount it has been (Hashim & Kutbi, 2015; Gracia-Domingo, Aranda, & Fuentus, 2017).

Users have enjoyed from this type of communication because of benefit they derived for example, the interactive and collaborative nature of the means of communication it offers (Faizi, Afia, & Chiheb, 2013). Research revealed that all over the world over 1 billion users are engaged in usage and this have propel researchers to continually involve researchers in conducting research on how people use the sites(Jin, Diego, & Chen, 2013; Subramani, 2015).

Thus there a lot of research interest on how international students also use the platforms available for their needs gartification(Rahman, 2014; Binsahl, Chang, & Bosua, 2015).

It is as a result of these availability and the engagement of usage that the present work tend to consider which networking sites do students prefer to use in EMU, North Cyprus and also to find out why they prefer some sites to others thereby considering the correlation that exist by nationality.

It is worth knowing that not communication online is now a days utilized as a single entity rather users are trying as much as possible to apply two or three for better results, while some are aimed at quaranteeing privacy sucha s Facebook, some like Instagram gives details using pictures with lots of attention from other, while some other prefer the use Twitter for intellectual stimulation, hence they are all aimed atsocial connection but having different communication modalities and such appeal to individuals in their own different ways (De Wall, et al. 2011; Hughes, et al. 2012).

Is not the availability but how students are managing their time to read and also the time they have for other things: the questions how often do they use the social media platform and which one do they frequently prefer to use since there are a lot of platforms. Based on this there may be some reasons that prompt them in choosing a platform to the other thus they are refered to as the reasons why people reduce their uncertainty if so how many platforms and the likely reasons for reducing their uncertainty.

II. Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain if students use just one platform or prefer to use more than 1 social networking sites for their communication.
2. To ascertain if the reasons given are effective for a relationship to hold by students when using social networking sites in reducing their uncertainty.
3. To know the number of platforms needed to reduce uncertainty in communication by students.

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4. To know if there is positive or negative relationship between the nationality=ies use nad the preference of usage by users.
5. These are some of the questions that are posed for the research

III. Research Questions

RQ.1 Do you use just a network or you prefer to use more than one since there are other networks?

RQ.2 What are some of the reasons students consider before relating with other students before they reduce their uncertainty?

RQ.3 How many platforms do students need to reduced their uncertainty in a communication?

RQ4. What is the correlation between nationality and preference of usage among users?

IV. Literature Review

a) History of Uncertainty reduction Theory

The uncertainty reduction theory was said to be theorized by Berger and Calabrese with the aimed at reducing any form of uncertainty in initial interaction theory in 1975 from the post- positive perspective, being the only theory that considers communication before engaging in a communication. This hinges on the fact that when people wants to interact they need some information about their interlocutor partners those information acquire will help them reduce their uncertainty about one another.

The Uncertainty Reduction Theory which is said to be initial communication in reducing doubt in communication based on the axiom posed by Berger and Calabrese, in an interpersonal communication is being utilized on SNSs too by users as buttressed that media users make use of media in an interpersonal way to satisfy their communication need (Eginli &Tas 2018). Vijayalakshmi and Lawrence (2018), in an empirical studies emphasize that there is interpersonal relationship among middle age on social media with about 390 sample, which was related to different social networking platforms with the aim of ascertaining the impact of the use of platforms among students.

This is because present communication is dominated by SNSs for interaction, collaboration and also regarded as the fastest means of communication which turns out to be a global means of communication, people cannot stay a day without using or applying it to their daily functions hence SNSs are inevitable in our daily lives (Yao & Cao, 2017; Luna & Pennock, 2018).

b) SNS and their different Historical background

The history of Social networking sites are believe to be in stages which can be traced back to the time that human begin to use the computer for their interaction (Linke, 2011). In 1997, the SNS began with the "sixdegrees.com" model which witness advancement in communication to be call (SNSs) this advancement, ease the manner people interact (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

In supporting this, Chae(2018), observed that there are different SNSs with different functionality and applicability. Prominent among the sites are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat use for communication purposes, blogging and forming of communities as submitted by (Faruq, Rahman, & Alam, 2017). For example detailed information are done with Facebook, Pictures of things happening and other event are carried out with other platforms like snapchat and others.

WhatsApp are refered to as instant messaging thus, seen as secretive but very effective where users can upload, pictures and video,audio and also described as a selective instant messaging service for selected phones which can be connected to the internet hence its services are subscribe to, for smart phones and some selected phones with the features that WhatsApp, can be downloaded and function on

This is confirmed by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project who chooses to examine SNS in a research to establish a fact that people all over the world depend on the use of social networking sites for their communication needs (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie, & Purcell, 2011).

All these are based on the gratification users derived from the use of their media. The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT), consider how individual deliberately apply their media to fulfil certain needs. Some of the satisfactions users derive are itemize as: pastime, affection, fashion, share problems, sociability, and social information as given by (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

There are different reasons why people use specific media, while others are of the opinion that they use the Facebook to get in touch with friends some are of the opinion that they use it to pass time and to be entertained (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009). According to Ancu & Cozma (2009), their research revealed that users are after desire for social interaction, Information seeking and Entertainment on SNSs, while to Clark, Lee, & Boyer, (2009), SNS is use to be specific for passing time and meant to entertain.

In a recent research the use of SNSs was seen to be in different category in satisfying interpersonal need of connecting people, self discovery, entertainment value and social enhancement Ifinedo, (2016), thus we can say that SNSs are employed differently by different users and the users have choice of a platform.

In a similar vein, users also reduced their uncertainty using the SNSs too, as one of the means through which they can solve their problems as stated by Quan-Haase & Young, (2010). One of the uses and gratification obtain by user is to seek answer to those

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pressing issues or those things that motivate seeking for explanation in their relationship one to another.

This present paper argues that female students in Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus, among Nigeria and Palestine have different preference on SNSs in reducing their uncertainty, since there are availability of platforms to be use in communication, Yao & Cao; Luna & Pennock).

Ascertaining this by age, category among the students which group seems to be the avid users of reducing their uncertainty with a specific SNS, if more than one SNSs is put to use.

Secondly, age seems to be a factor that influences the choice of a network by preference, so the correlation between age and the preference will also be considered, since all the two nationalities use Facebook being the dominant of all the SNSs.

A lot of people have made some research inline the way people tend to prefer one network to the other but in Eastern Mediterranean University, there is little research with respect to case preference of a social media platform used by students, thus this will add to existing literature. For example, thesis on "Use of Social Media as an Alternative News Sources Among University Students" and the other on "Instagratification": Uses and Gratification of Instagram by University Students for Interpersonal Communication all conducted in the EMU, Faculty of Communication and Media studies between 2014 and 2013 respectively (Mesole 2014;Oloo 2013).

c) Research Methodology and Design

The method use for this study is the quantitative research method which is based on measuring the strength in relationship between the variables. The questionnaires that were administered to the two nationalities were 310 but only 300 was successfully filled and returned with about 96.77% response rate.

The quantitative research methodology is said to be reliable because other researchers have employed this method in collecting data theses are:(Manasijevic, Zivkovic, Arsi, & Milosevic, 2016; Rousseau, Eggermont, & Frison, 2017). The research is aimed at conducting a survey on international students restricted to two nationalities (Nigerian and Palestinian) students in North Cyprus of their preference of SNSs by use.

d) Sampling and data Collection

Data were collected from 300 respondents studying at the Eastern Mediterranean University North Cyprus by using a probability sampling technique. Based on agreement from the Ethics committee, to carry out the research, the questionnaires were designed by the researchers. After administering the questionnaire it was collected back as they filled, the need to use the two countries is to give a reflection of not being restricted to a particular region hence Nigerians from Africa and the Palestinian from the Middle-East all in EMU, North Cyprus.

e) Measures

The questionnaire administered contains Demographics questions, Background information of the users. Others questions are those that concerns the users number of hours and reasons for using a particular social networking sites additionally the students level of uncertainty based on behavior exhibited on social networking sites were put into consideration and questions on their preference reasons for preferring a particular platform was also posed.

9-28 questions are divided into questions on Likert scale of use of platform, uncertainty and preference of a platform. Each group uses the Likert scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree on a scale of 5 points. And in all the questions posed to answer the questions are in statements form in accordance with (Froget, Baghestan and Asfaranjan 2013).

V. Reliability and Validity

The computed Crombach alpha is at .818 and on standardized item, .837, thus meeting the required measurement scale as reliable to be qualified as given by Nunnally(1978) thus for the questions under preference on friendship and reduction of uncertainty, the result is seen on the tables below.

Considering *table 1* below the questions are mixed with those on friendship and how their uncertainty in those relationship are establish and which one is most preferred. The outcome is the crombach alpha of each question, thus based on the table they can be used since it is quantitative results and can be generalized:

Table 1: Showing the result for each variable crombach alpha as computes

Statement	Mean if item deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I relate with peers better because of age	11.0167	9.749	.598	.361	.790
I reduced uncertainty based on pictures I see even if there is no word	11.1800	10.683	.701	.580	.766
I relate faster with	11.4167	7.929	.615	.385	.806

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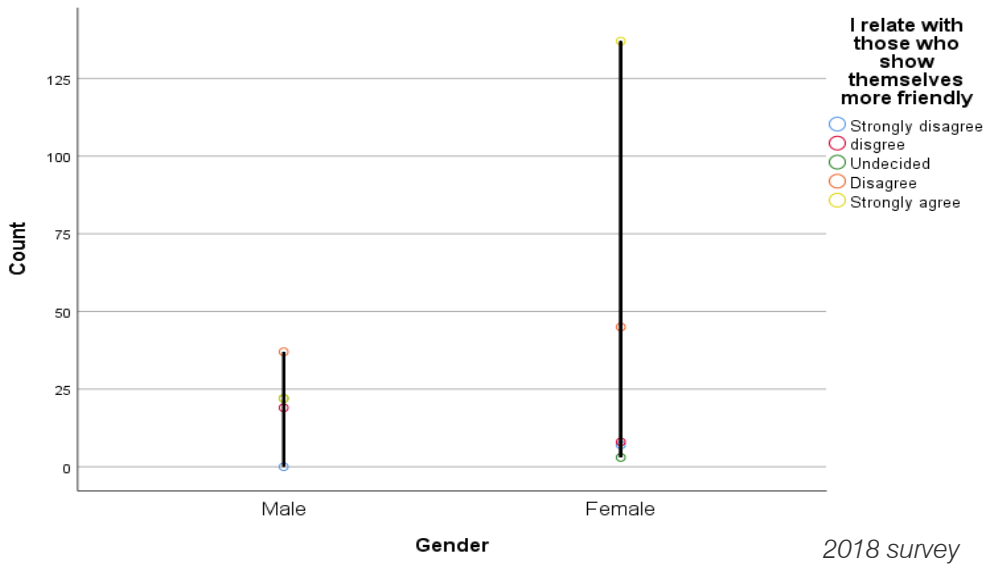
people think they can easily accept my friend's request					
I reduced uncertainty based on words I read attached to pictures because they explain better	11.3767	8.985	.734	.619	.727

VI. Data Analysis and Results

Data collected were analyzed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Science version 25.Descriptive statistics were used to for the description of the samples and the Pearson's bivariate correlation, one-tailed significance criterion to determine the correlation of the variables age and usage for inferential statistics. Aside that, correlation for the two nationalities by preference, and that of level of uncertainty by gender, a one sample t-test (one tailed test) was used to ascertain if women reduced uncertainty more or their male counter parts

Graph as table 2



2018 survey

Using point graph for the plotting friendship on social networking sites among international students in EMU, North Cyprus is based on how they show themselves friendly one to another. The number of men tend to be shorter as female dominate. On part of the female it depicts that the plotting is not directly on the lines which means it is not fully with strongly disagree but then also disagree to some extend that is not up to 10 counts that and below 50 also said they disagree and above 125 agree that students that show themselves friendly are those they relate with on side of the female respondents only since their points seems to be higher.

a) Ethical considerations

The research was guided and approved by the university Ethical Committee after fulfilling their requirement of submission of the consent letter to carry out a research on this topic, with the sample of the questions attached (reference number: ETK00-2019-0019) for the approval on the 21.02.2019. Participants were assured of the anonymity and the confidentiality of their rights and pre-inform of their willingness to withdraw from the study if they felt when they felt to withdraw.

b) Results

The result of the present study will be grouped into descriptive, Graph on points and inferential statistics to determine whether the questions posed are well answered based on this we can know the position of the questions if hypothesis posed can be accepted.

c) Descriptive results

Descriptive data analysis of the demographics respondents showed that age bracket between 22-27are the majority of the respondents with (n=159)53%, while age between 16-21 made up (n=81)27% and age 28-33 constitute (n=60)20%of the respondents. Based on gender more than half of the sample size are female constituting (n=200) 66.7% and the male are (n=100)33.3%.Regarding educational background,

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(n=225)75% for undergraduate while (n=75)25% for the graduate students. Lastly the result revealed that the majority of the respondents by Nationality are Nigerians (n=200)66.7% and Palestinians (33.3%, n=100).

With use of platforms as students the result reveal that the use of 2 platforms by students is the highest (n= 164, 54.7%), platforms (n= 74, 24.7%), the use of four platforms (n=42, 14%)while the use of one (1) platform, (n=20, 6.7%).

Table 1(a): Number of Platform use by students when they want to reduce uncertainty

Number of platform used to reduce uncertainty	Frequency	Percentage
1only	20	6.7
2only	164	54.7
3only	74	24.7
4 and above	42	14.0
Total	300	100.0

Field survey 2018

Results revealed that those who use more than one platforms are the majority about 164 out of 300 students use2 platform 54.7% and it is followed by students that uses 3 only with 74(24.7%) which is a clear indication that students have more than one social media platform for their communication for their gratification. On two different submissions Facebook as a platform is still leading in communication with about 85% and in place of business with 2 billion users making use of it as these two authors revealed with effect from January 1 to 10 that Facebook is still effective in all spheres (Ahmad 2019; Lua 2019).

Table 2: Descriptive Demographics information of the respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age of respondents	16-21	81	27.0%
	22-27	159	53.0%
	28-33	60	20.0%
	Total	300	100.0%
Gender	Male	100	33.3%
	Female	200	66.7%
	Total	300	100.0%
Level of Education	Graduate	75	25.0%
	Undergraduate	225	75.0%
	Total	300	100.0%
Nationality	Nigerian	200	66.7%
	Palestinian	100	33.3%
	Total	300	100.0%

Table 3: Depicting the reasons for reducing uncertainty for relationship to take place with the crombach alpha of each question

S.No.	Statements on reducing uncertainty in relationship	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1.	I relate with those that I have had prior face to face contact	.564	.762
2.	I relate with those who show themselves friendlier.	.560	.762
3.	I relate with people based on lifestyle.	.649	.730
4.	I relate faster with people I think they can easily accept my friend request.	.546	.774
5.	I relate with my peers better because of age.	.605	.746

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d) Inferential statistical results

Correlation analysis and one sample test ANOVA were performed to test the questions posed if they are truly answered.

Table 4: One- sample Test

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Age	48.935	299	.000	1.93000	1.8524	2.0076
Uncertainty	59.418	299	.000	1.98571	1.9199	2.0515

Also on sample t-test results revealed that age and level of uncertainty are significant. Therefore the degree of freedom is at 299 while the mean is 1.93 for age and mean for uncertainty when computed is 2.00 based on this it is significant.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis

Correlations			
		Nationality	Preference
Nationality	Pearson Correlation	1	.687**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Preference	Pearson Correlation	.687**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Based on the result above when all questions under preference are pull together they are given a name "preference of social media platform"(I prefer to use Instagram because it is Instant, "I prefer to use Facebook because you can write and share with other people," I prefer snapchat because you can snap and chat at the same time, Sometimes I use two to three platforms for my clarification, "I prefer to use Twitter because of less words, " I use LinkedIn as a professional, " I combined platforms because it reduced my uncertainty better, " On SNS I prefer to relate with my friends) "(α= .751, M=3.93, all questions are on 5 Likert square, thus given "P"which is used to do the correlation and the since there are two items they are bivariate, result shows they nationalities and the preference of social media platform have positive correlation at 1 level of significant .000 is statistically significant at 2 tailed. Hence there is relationship between nationality and the user's preference of their social media platform.

VII. Discussion

Based on the question posed for this very research, result revealed that students will prefer to use more than a particular platform for their communication thus the use of at least two is the most preferred. This supports the notion that when there is high level of uncertainty information seeking behavior increases (AXIOM 3). *See table 1a above*.

Students are always willing to know something new based on research conducted in a school, results revealed that students use the different platforms based on their motivation thus they prefer one platform to the other therefore not using just 1 but 2 platforms, 3 platforms and 4 is an indication that students are inquisitive to source for information through other platforms (Alhabash and Ma 2017). See table 1a above too.

Correlation and the t-test sample shows that all nationality and preference of the platform are positively correlated and also age and level of uncertainty are significant statistically. Thus, the two based on inferential statistics they are positively related and also significant when computed.

Table 4 depicts some reasons for relationship to take place in other to reduce level of uncertainty, which the highest .776 "I relate with those that I think they can accept my friends request" which is faster.

Relationship usually is faster with those we think we know in a natural setting agreeing with the notion

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that for a relationship, " Results confirmed that Facebook as a platform which is agree to be the most popular of the platforms; facilitates spread-out social networks that grow excessively through distant kinds of relationship (acquaintances and activity connections), while also expanding the number of close relationships and stranger relationships, albeit at slower rates" (Manago, Taylor and Greenfieeld 2012).

Therefore since the place of uncertainty reduction is aimed at reducing uncertainty possibly it is worth knowing that the place of perceived Outcome value (POV) too is taken into consideration the rational steps of considering the goal during initial stage of meeting is targeted at interpersonal outcome,(Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

But the perspective of the POV individual at the beginning is for interactive friends to gain more information about their partner to enable them antedate the outcome in future interaction. In other words individual may choose to lay off the relationship if there is no need to have a close connection with their associates, (Sunnafrank 1986; 1990). Consideration is given in the place of how to the conversational partners meeting and exchanging ideas that could open up for more interaction by way of information seeking thereby reducing uncertainty.

VIII. Recommendation

This very research was conducted in an institution of learning therefore a similar research can be carried out in a work place where we also have different people of different background. Although the work took place in Turkish Republic of North Cyprus a replication of the work can be conducted in Greece Cyprus to ascertain the result by nationalities that are there if it will yield same result. Additionally the need for longitudinal study to be conducted can also be carried out. More nationalities can also be used when next the researcher wants to conduct a similar research but with different nationalities.

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