


# What Affects the Level of Social Networking Site Daily Usage?

## An Empirical Analysis of Greek University Students

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### ABSTRACT

Social networking sites (SNSs) constitute a crucial topic of debate concerning the effect on business and society. The reasons for use and the time people spend on them have also been a topic that has been highly researched and discussed as several social, psychological, educational, and ethical issues arise due to the propagation of social media and SNSs in all demographic groups, and especially in younger people and students. This article aims to investigate the factors that affect the level of daily usage of SNSs by university students. Four major factors that affect SNSs usage were identified: debating, socializing, expression, and entertainment seeking. The results show that two of them, namely debating and entertainment seeking, have a significant effect on the level of SNSs daily usage providing useful insight into the ways that university students utilize SNSs.

### KEYWORDS

Consumer Behavior, Debating, Discriminant Analysis, E-Marketing, Entertainment Seeking, Level of Use, Post Adoption Stage, Social Networking

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Social networking sites (SNSs) has become an indispensable part of everyday life influencing the way people interact, behave, spend their time and allocate their resources. The adoption of Social Networking Sites (SNSs), regardless of the socio-demographic group they belong to, or the country they are living in, has disrupted the way firms and organizations communicate with consumers of their services, creating remarkable challenges for managers and marketers to both private and public sector (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014), as people tend to spend more time in the “new” media compared to traditional ones (Belch & Belch, 2014).

Truly enough, the significance of SNSs to business and marketing have been outlined by numerous studies (Berthon et al., 2012; Constantinides et al., 2013; Alves et al., 2016; Kavoura & Koziol, 2017). While Facebook is considered to be the most popular SNSs with more than 2.4 billion

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users worldwide (Statista, 2019) and almost 5.12 million users in Greece (NapoleonCat, 2019), new platforms like Instagram and Snapchat have also gained individuals' attention. Thus, nowadays, SNSs are considered to be an important aspect of our everyday life, that greatly influence peoples' way of living, their attitudes and behavior, and even more daily time spent by individuals on them (Koc & Gulyagci, 2013; Antoniadis et al., 2018).

As a consequence, the time that people spend and the level of SNSs usage have drawn the attention of researchers both from a social and psychological point of view (Brandtzæg, 2010; Brooks, 2015; Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). A number of studies focus on the patterns of usage (Hoffman et al., 2012; Chen 2012; Giannakos et al., 2013; Eltrun, 2017; Antoniadis et al., 2018) but not on the ways that these patterns affect the level of usage and time people spend on SNSs. As younger people and especially university students are the main users of SNSs (NapoleonCat., 2019), it was only logical that they would become the epicentre of research on that matter (Pempek et al., 2009; Saxena & Khana, 2013; Antoniadis et al., 2017), and on the reasons why SNSs greatly attract them. Another reason to examine the factors that affect the level of usage of SNSs by university students is the recognized linkage between SNSs' use and their academic performance as it has been reported in various studies (e.g., Mishra, et al., 2012; Ainin 2015; Maqableh et al., 2015; Lau, 2017).

Since SNSs intensity and frequency of usage have been identified as important factors on the way Generation Y interacts with their environment, sets its goals, norms, identity and expresses its emotions (Bolton et al., 2013), investigating these factors can provide meaningful insights to academics, practitioners, as well as regulators. In Greece, however, despite the high levels of penetration of SNSs, little attention has been paid on the factors that affect the frequency of their use. Therefore, in this paper, the patterns of SNSs usage are examined applying a typology developed by Brandtzæg and Heim (2011). Because of the fact that the measurement items interchangeable between each other, the framework of the study pertains reflective measures. In specific, the attitude of university students and their impact on the level of SNSs daily usage are investigated using a sample of university students in the region of Western Macedonia.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature on the effect and the usage of SNSs in general and more specifically to university students. Section 3 analyses the characteristics of the sample surveyed and the methodology used. In Section 4 the results of the data analysis are presented and discussed. Finally, Section 5 concludes the paper offering suggestions for further research.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The importance of SNS and the effect they have on their users and organizations have been recognized from the early stages of their introduction by numerous studies (e.g., Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Hughes, 2010; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Hanna et al., 2011; Kietzman et al., 2011; Alves et al., 2016). Kwon and Wen (2010) defined SNS as "a web service which is based on certain meaningful and valuable relationships including friendship, kinship, interests, and activities, which also allows individuals to network for a variety of purposes including sharing information, building and exploring relationships, and so on." The main features and nature of SNSs make interactions possible among individuals and brands or organizations (Berthon et al., 2012), by building and strengthening the bonds among individuals and communities, but also between individuals and organizations as well (Kavoura, 2014; Trainor, 2012; Vlahvei & Notta, 2014;) through engagement achieved by information, entertainment and socialization (Lin & Lu, 2011; VanDoorn et al., 2011). SNSs can, therefore, be employed to realize fundamental organizational and marketing goals like sales, brand awareness, loyalty, etc. (Gummerus et al., 2012; Kavoura & Koziol, 2017; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). The completion of these goals, however, is closely related to the reasons and ways individuals use SNSs and the time they spent on them.

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