The impact of social media engagement on enrolment intention: The moderating role of the student type

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CHRONICLE	ABSTRACT

Potential international students use social media platforms to acquire important information about schools and their brand reputations while making international higher education decisions. By means of a cross-sectional data from 384 international students at three universities in North Cyprus, the study aims to explore the relationship between social media engagement, information credibility and enrolment intention. Furthermore, if information credibility works as a mediator between social media engagement and enrollment intention, and the moderating role of student type. The study makes several contributions to the literature review and its recommendation helps top management at universities and policy makers in North Cyprus to pay attention to the role of social media in recruiting international students. The findings of this study indicate that credibility fully mediates the relationship between social media engagement and enrollment intention, but student type doesn't moderate the relationship between information credibility and enrollment intention. The limitations and future studies are discussed in this study.

1. Introduction

The number of students enrolled at institutions outside of their home country has increased significantly, from 2 million in 2000 to 5.6 million in 2018. (UNESCO, 2020). The statistics shows the high demand for higher education services abroad. According to OECD predictions, the pace of internationalization will reach 8 million by 2025, taking demographic trends into account (Banjong & Olson, 2016). Because of the growing pace of globalization and the fast growth of universities, these institutions must discover new ways to differentiate themselves from their peers and communicate their uniqueness to their stakeholders (Wit & Merkx, 2012). In recent years, universities have started relying on social media platforms to establish and preserve good connections with their prospective and current students (Smedescu & Nyangau, 2012). Social media can assist as an important means for executing the institution's brand (Nevzat; Yilmaz; Tanova & Hasan, 2016). People utilize social media engaging places because of the growth of technology (internet) while looking for materials about education programs, institutions of higher education, and also to look for feedback from recent graduates from an institution of their curiosity (Gray, Shyan Fam, & Llanes, 2003; Shields & Peruta, 2019).

Also, Potential and present students utilize social media to interact with classmates, stay up to speed on the institution's news, and even establish specialized associates (Shields & Peruta, 2019). Chugh (2012) labels social media platforms to be a virtual group of online operators where participants bond with one another to discuss common welfares, interests, and establish online

platforms. These interconnected platforms can be utilized in a variety of ways by universities to endorse occasions, propose seminars and training, simplify conferences, and post beneficial information (Kriescher, 2009). In several industries, social media platforms are used for building consumer connections (Eriksson & Larsson, 2014), virtual commitment and marketing (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013), and issue solving and grievance resolution (Chugh & Ruhi, 2017). Globally, the educational sector has joined and embraced social media settings. Social media may be used in higher education for content production, sharing, communicating, and networking collectively (Hamid & Waycott, 2011). The rise in admiration and occurrence of social media through college students and among university students to be specific, it is becoming highly appropriate to realize the kinds of influences with their social media efforts, higher education institutions are innovating. As Kinsky and Karen (2016) opined that the perception of online platforms has added to a rising interest intellectually by discovering in what way students utilize online networks along with the observations of prospective applicants utilizing online platforms for enrollment into higher institutions. As per Eder, Smith, and Pitts (2010), social media platforms for example Facebook, Instagram, blogs, as well as YouTube have substituted the old-style technique of contact, as it appears to be seen as an ideal collective way for updating an individual not just on global problems but also about education. This strategy assisted both learners and universities to extend to one another in a modest and quicker fashion. Smartphones and social media have ushered in a new era of technology, and in comparison, to traditional advertising techniques for example, print plus individual marketing, institutions are now expected to contact their followers in an innovative virtual setting. This is on track per Pringle and Fritz (2019) who indicates that owing to strong rivalry, universities must utilize social media to connect with participants as well as support its image to lure applicants, scholarships and humanitarian help. Agreeing to Peruta and Shields (2018These phases may be utilized as a portion of an advertising strategy to establish distinctiveness by linking with potential undergraduates in addition to graduates. Moreover, it is a long-term form of engagement for universities and citizens that the institution may employ in their quest for students, status, as well as revenue (Hayes, Ruschman, & Walker, 2009; Peruta & Shields, 2018).

With regards to communication, credibility is known to be one of the ancient theories to have been studied. Previously, based on the content, credibility has mostly been defined as acceptability, trustworthiness, alleged consistency, know-how, accurateness, and with several other models or combinations of them (Pasi, 2017). Specifically, the concern raised by both credibility and credibility evaluation has steadily progressed from old-fashioned communication settings, categorized by interactive and convincing communication, to mass communication and interactive facilitated by communication, with specific recommendation to online interaction (Pasi, 2017). Evidence gathered by persons through online platforms, for instance online customer evaluations, the valuable information offered by consumers who have knowledge about a product; it contains their assessments and involvements, presenting an innovative form of eWOM communication (Kim, 2007) social word of mouth (sWOM). Social word of mouth is a new type of eWOM that specifies consumer evaluations of a product via online platforms (Hajli & Xiaolin Lin, 2014). Today, the proliferation of Web 2.0 technology and online platforms has given rise to eWOM. Aided by social media platforms, individuals can interact through social communities (Zhang & Watts, 2008), generating credible data as a result. Credibility of information through social media is a fundamental element in marketing principles as well as the embracing of the information by people in social surroundings (Hajli, 2014).

Together, pull and push influences initiative requests for foreign higher education (HE), extending from globalization as well as economic circumstances to societal and technical elements (Mok, 2003; OECD, 2019). In this study, I concentrated on online networking interaction events as a factor influencing potential applicants' decision to enroll in an international universities through participating in online networks (e.g., Facebook, Instagram etc.), potential students can explore for openly accessible evidence about institutions of higher education, liken as well as analyze remarks from other prospective applicants as well as former students, and evaluate endorsements from professionals. Through these potential students communicating nature, social media have changed how people share individual know-hows and information. Dunne, et al. (2010) and Nguyen et al. (2015) established that social media is becoming increasingly significant in forming positive customer views of administrative brands. The current literature in this extent inclines to emphasis on the unswerving impacts of elements persuading students' choice to enroll in specific university (Eidimtas & Juceviciene, 2014; Ismail, Leow, Chen, Lim, & Ng, 2007; Sia, 2013), the power of online advertising policies about a study program as well as the institution of higher education choice (Constantinides & Stagno, 2012, 2013), the consequence involved in using Facebook to persuade potential applicants enrollment intents for overseas study courses (Idomi, Hamza, & Hassan, 2017), the impact of students' conduct, inspiration, university reputation, as well as environment on their decision to attend the institution (Solikhah, Hartoyo, & Yuliati, 2016), the influence of online platforms in higher education as a learning instrument (Chugh & Ruhi, 2017), online networks as tools of university advertising (Constantinides & Zinck Stagno, 2011), as well as online networks utilization in master applicants' choice (Galan et al., 2015; Shields & Peruta, 2019). In the social media setting, prospective students have extra elasticity in determining when, in what way and with what information and actions they are involved in (Milligan & Littlejohn, 2019). Student enrollment signifies students' readiness to enroll in a certain program. Before a student enrolls into a university, several encouraging elements would happen. Students' preparedness to enroll into a university characterizes the primary incentive to participate in the program and furthermore their obligation to accomplishing their educational ambitions (Law & Shuang Geng, 2019). Joseph and Josep (2000) have joined the impacts of established data and the impacts of family and friends as an independent variable and the reputation of the institution as a dependent. Actually, numerous studies have indicated that the influence of family and friends has a significant impact on a student's decision to pursue higher education. (Wagner & Fard, 2009). Pimpa (2003) singled family as the utmost persuading element on students' intention for international higher education. In addition, the effect of students' intentions to study abroad is influenced by relatives and peers (Chen &

Zimitat, 2006). Furthermore, Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) mentioned endorsements from peers and relatives as a significant impact on their "push" reasons in encouraging their choice target for applicants from Asia.

Hence, it can be concluded that the impact of relatives and peers plays a big role in a student's enrollment intention for higher education. The elements influencing student choice of institution of higher education comprise important conclusions which established the basis for accomplishment in life and profession. The choice procedure has transformed considerably throughout the past half-century as a result of changes in student demographics in addition to the improvement of institutional admissions and marketing practices (Palme, et al., 2009).

2. Purpose of the study

Social media are extremely significant in people's choice procedures, as well as great participation decisions (Bronner & Hoog, 2014). Chauhan & Pillai, 2013; and Shu & Scott, 2014 approved that institutions profit as of consistent communication through potential applicants on online platforms, the rate at which potential applicants' online commitment affects the institutions alleged credibility and applicants' application intent rests anonymous. With this study, the focus will be on the perceived reliability of online data through online engagement by prospective students to their enrollment objectives. The literature in this study aims to concentrate on unswerving impacts of elements inducing applicants' choice to enter in specific educational institution, the impact of online platforms as an instructive means for higher education, social media as mechanisms for tutoring advertising, the role of online platforms in the decision-making procedure of students, and outcome of online networks in persuading applicants' goals to join for higher education.

Contribution of this study

This study provides a vital investigation model in considering the input of online platforms engagement, the perceived credibility of online information as well as applicants' choice to join higher education. This paper will also contribute to other studies confirming how online platform interaction between applicants and institutions of higher education would be valuable to establish and maintain an institution's brand reputation. Additionally, the moderating impact of the student type adds some fresh perceptions to the work to improve the relationship between the study's components. The results will benefit universities with emerging policies that can outdo rivals in persuading students' intents to join their establishments.

2. Literature review

2.1 Social media engagement, and credibility

Gradually, advertising (Brodie & Jurić, 2011) and learning mechanisms (Kahu, 2013) deliberated on the word 'engagement'. Students' sensitive power, mental asset, as well as energetic involvement in educational knowledge and valuation processes are referred to as engagement in education (Kahu, 2013). Intellectuals partake in piloting numerous surveys proceeding student commitment, mainly regarding knowledge setting as well as the information (Blaj-Ward & Winter, 2019; Tai, Bellingham, Lang, & Dawson, 2019). Engagement happens in numerous areas, such as, learners communicate to their professor, program or the institution (Conduit, Karpen, & Farrelly, 2016). This meeting signifies a force in addition to a connection among persons with the principal body (as, the customer, institution) past essential operation (Brodie & Jurić, 2011).

This concept of student commitment acquired the source as of the influence of a learning exercise related to everything trained to develop student engagement. Engagement, these days is described to the drive a person puts in learning events which empirically are related to a favored institution's final outcomes (Kuh, 2009). Engagement comprises numerous elements, for instance the educational familiarity with the institution, communications with faculty, involvement in events in the class, and communication with friends. Kuh (2009) further that educational engagement in addition to out-of-class involvement is instructionally important, otherwise co-curricular events are the two primary qualities, both of which are critical to students' performance.

In the field of higher education, 81% of applicants use online networks every day (Lundin & Annika Bergviken Rensfeldt, 2018). Potential applicants can communicate with institutions by means of engaging in eWOM online events. These applicants can strive for guidance from fellow applicants, students, former students and lecturers, engage in interactions concerning higher education as well as notice their events. It is not unexpected, hence, that 98% of higher institutions introduce their contents on online platforms (Sembada & YeikKoay, 2019), but not specifically updating about current students on campus life but then again also to endorse the university brands to potential applicants (MacKie-Mason, 2018). By 2010, social media happened to be the avenue for finding information for 61% of operators (Lenhart et al., 2010) and kept rising. Individuals rely on online networks as a source of knowledge more than other media avenues, excluding newspapers (Metzger & Medders, 2010).

Universities, like other organizations, are now using online platforms to communicate with students, as per Walsh, Clavio, Lovell, and Blaszka (2013). In this study, it is hypothesized that this communication has an impact on how prospective students perceive the university's reputation. Online network platforms, hence, deliver a medium to which an institution will be able to station its image in the views of prospective applicants, this has an effect on the institution's reputation. In this research,

we propose that an institution's image on online networks possess a negative influence on prospective graduates' social intent to join in master's education. Rauschnabel et al. (2016) maintained the improved rivalry among HEI's intended for inadequate qualified applicants for admission intensified the requirement for universities to comprehend, cope, as well as influence a resilient image place, therefore its execution of common advertising procedures such as creating a robust elements for them to go all-out effectively, factors such as reputation are essential. (Chapleo, 2011; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006). Alavijeh, Rezaee, and Hosseinabadi (2014) suggested by appealing to and influencing student behavioral enrollment intention, schools may obtain a competitive advantage by developing and increasing their brand reputation. Therefore, the more a prospective student's desire to be associated with a university's personality, the more remarkable the university's personality appears to be. (Pinna, Carrus, Musso, & Cicotto, 2018; Sirgy, 2018). Gordon et al. (2016) settled that university's reputation possesses positive as well as negative relationships per a student's approach and both commercial and social marketing services have behavioral objectives. Student engagement symbolizes mutually the time and energy prospective students put in events protesting concerning learning commitments (Kuh et al., 2007). This paper additionally recommends thanks to peer collective environment persuasive undergraduates can affect others over the utilization of social media. Universities must hence use conclusive activities to control and outline this impact so that it is academically determined and aids to strengthen educational enactment. Higher Institutions landscapes, for instance magnitude, locality, university grounds design and amenities are prevailing useful features extremely considered by potential students (Wilkins & Huisman, 2015). For the time being, university atmosphere, superiority of courses and academics, student back facilities and professional services are related to opinions of sensitive traits (Berg et al., 2017; Plewa, Ho, Conduit, & Karpen, 2016).

In current research, it was revealed that establishing evidence to customers about the projected credibility of online products happens to be very valuable and appreciated to them (Schwarz & Morris, 2011). Potential applicants are not submissive receivers of data, relatively, they keenly communicate with online events and participate in everyday discussion with others on the podiums for credible information to ensure in their decision making for higher education. The study hypothesized:

H₁: *Social media engagement positively and directly impacts the credibility of the information.*

2.2 Perceived credibility and enrollment intention

The credibility of information is perceived as trustworthy by information recipients. The credibility of information has a direct impact on enrollment intention and students will tend to consider online information to be useful if they come from a trustworthy source (Veloutso & Lewis, 2005). Also, prospective undergraduates are highly expected to select the information they identify to be helpful for decision-making if it originates from a dependable source (Rieh & Hilligoss, 2008).

Veloutsou and Lewis (2005) showed that the impact of counseling and reliability information on high school students' university choice, the study highly appreciated the influence of prestigious information factors on students' decisions. Besides, information credibility is recognized by Kusumawati (2019) as the reliability of the information source, and they also affirmed the importance of information credibility affects the student's enrollment decision. Institutions of higher education websites may offer a foundation for an interesting user experience also online networks are perfect additions for interactive advertising events owing to its collective as well as communicating nature (Weiss, 2008).

Literature relating to planned matters, university advertising strategy, case studies or best practices related to online networks are insufficient. Nonetheless several institutions are progressively implementing online networks as measure of their advertising strategies (Barnes & Mattson, 2009a). Hayes, Ruschman, and Walker (2009) refer to utilization of an online interacting structure by a HEI's to an advertising means in their study; they established a momentous association among those registered on the online network as well as the probability of relating them towards the institution. Waters et al. (2009) established how private organizations abroad are embracing online site accounts, nonetheless they seem not utilizing those accounts to their best usage for association development.

In The Netherlands for instance, comparable to several European nations, there exists a limited revolutionary determination by institutions to present online platforms to measure their enrollment plans. Several Dutch institution websites exhibit links to *Twitter* or *Facebook* pages or allow guests to share materials by bookmarking pages as preferences by 'liking it' otherwise 're-tweeting it'. There are also some samples of blogs (http://www.e-learn.nl/, http:/www.mastersofmedia.hum.uva.nl/). However, blogging does not show a good display of a popular Dutch institution's online network mix.

In several instances, these presentations are not utilized as enrollment measures, on the other hand reasonably as learning measures and are basically intended to expand inner interaction. In numerous circumstances, online applications have a vibrant profitable drive, Tilburg University has in recent times presented a virtual medium targeting at enrolling foreign prospective undergraduates for their undergraduate courses. A related live conversation medium was established by the University of Twente aiming at applicant students in 201) and in March 2011 the Saxion University of Applied Sciences launched a fresh policy aimed at prospective students permitting the students to get education data from applicants in a communicating means. These techniques are still in their early stages of development. Frequently patchy in addition to moderately current; overall their social media tactics cannot be disclosed. Moreover, not any investigation concerning the real impacts of social media as enrollment implements is so far accessible. Bouhlel et al. (2011) indicated that universities reputation is an extinct objective related to image lines following from communications that a client has with it or as a result of advertising message.

This study has concentrated on the topic of online information credibility and with that, nothing has reflected the observations of diverse user sets or of students to be specific. Thus far, study has observed numerous concerns with respect to credibility, comprising platforms creation features (Fogg et al., 2001, 2001; Palmer et al., 2000; Shon et al., 2000), cross-media assessments (Flanagin and Metzger, 2000; Kiousis, 2001), source attributions (Sundar and Nass, 2000, 2001), and the part of consumers' dependence on social media centered information (Johnson and Kaye, 2000, 2002). Furthermore, additional investigation of website qualities is necessary for both academically in addition empirically (Burgoon et al., 2000; Eastin, 2001; Eysenbach & Kohler, 2002; Metzger et al., 2003; Schweiger, 2000) as well as the essential part concerning consumer features as well as actions (thus, authentication with website data) is vital to deliberate. Generally, though previous study delivers understanding into the main features of website credibility, there remain significant parts where study is acceptable and appropriate. Websites may be classified as sources of information epitomizing institutional otherwise separate foundations, whereas replicating the features of such sources from the appearance of the websites itself. Intellectuals have lately realized that credibility evaluations of online-based information can benefit from previous research results on the integrity of material source in further settings through evaluating in what way these outcomes apply to the network setting. (Metzger et al., 2003). For example, website quality (trustworthiness)can be conveyed by clear policy declarations or the absence of commercial material; attraction otherwise vitality can be conversed over numerous scopes concerning the website's design; and desirability otherwise vitality can be transferred over several magnitudes concerning website's design (e.g. layout, graphics, font, color). In numerous references, websites can be well thought-out to be related to personalities otherwise establishments to be databases whose features produce superior or inferior reliability. Credibility is defined here as rather than an objective judgment of the quality of some information or an information source, perceptual variable, as it is in most studies in this field.

Credibility cannot be described as an asset for an information or the source, rather an asset that is adjudged by the recipient of the information (Fogg et al., 2001; Freeman & Spyridakis, 2004). Significantly, credibility conclusions can be impacted through information's goal assets or its source. Flanagin and Metzger (2000) found information as well as sources of data acquired on the online site were ranked to be extra trustworthy than performing or profitable data. Data coming through broadcasting organizations is expected to be well-thought-out to be trustworthy, considering the collective understanding these institution's characteristically put on reporting consistency as well as quick-checking measures to the data that they offer. Certainly, Flanagin and Metzger (2000) established that information and information sources were evaluated as more sincere than other categories of online information, as already stated. Previous study certainly demonstrates marketable information to be professed as possessing lower trustworthiness (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000), reliable with studies signifying that individuals incline to discount information from sources with obvious persuasive intent (see O'Keefe, 2002). It is essential in evaluating trustworthiness in the web atmosphere to identify that the very perception of a source is multifaceted, for the reason that the source of an online information may be credited to the writer of the material on a certain website, parts of the information, the promoter of the site, or even the medium itself (Eastin, 2001; Kiousis, 2001; Metzger et al., 2003). This recommends that it is essential to distinguish concerning several online bases in addition to source 'levels' or brands, for the reason that data recipient's discover them as dissimilar, and since credibility evaluations can differ subject based on which source qualities look outstanding at the time of assessment. Based on observations of this study, three categories of believability were measured: information, website, as well as source reliability. Information reliability hinge on the features the information has, for instance, information superiority, accurateness, appropriateness, also semantic strength has seen to posse an effect on sensitivities of the ability and/otherwise dependability of information in the online environment (Metzger et al., 2003).

Website credibility may differ by website features that generate greater or lesser credibility, for example the graphics or quantity of information used on the website and the amount of interactivity presented to website guests. Flanagin and Metzger (2000) found that applicants conveyed that they certified the information that they gained through the web only hardly to infrequently, but verification actions were favorably associated to alleged information credibility

In seeking information about universities for enrollment, accurate comments, or mainstream information will be a reasonable basis for making enrollment decisions (Khoa & Khanh, 2020). Therefore, the credibility of information is the factor that makes information seekers feel that information is useful or not. Thereby, the hypothesis H2 is proposed:

H₂: *Perceived credibility positively influences enrollment intention.*

H₃: *Perceived credibility negatively influences enrollment intention.*

2.3 Moderating role of student type

Prospective undergraduate applicants keenly quest for data about a degree program, while graduate students seek masters' otherwise doctoral degrees. Though both show comparisons concerning their explorations for enlightening facts, their approaches and behavior happen to be diverse through a series of reasons, for example development, educational know-how, work capability as well as individuality in decision-making (Soares & Simões, 2010). Constructive involvements support the importance of crucial matters, while destructive experiences deteriorate such value. Ades and Higgins (2005) likewise recommend people assess data for their decisions in more appropriate ways towards the situations, example, the familiarity, personality and situation in a community setting. Regulatory engagement theory (Higgins & Tory, 2006) recommends that a motivational strong point of experience involves assessment processing. Centered on this, this paper maintains potential

undergraduates and graduates to implement eWOM pursuing actions inversely. Artino & Stephens, (2009) stated matured graduate candidates exhibit complex intelligent skills while evaluating informative evidence than their undergraduate colleagues. Graduates are not simply persuaded by endorsements (Cheong & Christopher, 2018). A research by Yeo et al. (2017) discloses an individual embracing an encouraging approach concerning an event will be extra motivated in executing a specific conduct. The results from the research specified how the attitude of prospective students is certainly related with intent as well as being the strongest element of students' objective to search for information on the internet. Hong et al. (2017) moreover identified that attitude influences objectives. The results demonstrate how student responsiveness on alleged importance in addition to persistence to enroll into higher education is intensely affected by a person's attitude. Watjatrakul (2014) claims that enlightening educational infrastructure quality in advanced education institutes produces an encouraging institution of higher education picture not just in the minds of current students, but also in the minds of potential candidates as they network on several online areas, which defines the students approach and influences intents.

There appeared to be an increased development among users' grasp of online interacting places, particularly at the university stage. This seems to have renovated interactive proposals even at indigenous level. Palen (2008) and Palen et al. (2009) specified how online networks can propose fresh techniques for people to network inside as well as outside of the restrictions of the experience. The admiration of exploiting online platforms amongst university students seems rising on a regular daily basis and most rest on their utilization for communications. Scholars (Smith & Caruso, 2010; Al-rahmi & Othman, 2013a), cited that a great percentage of students mostly at a bigger maturity level are implementing social networking inadequate to recall concerning their physical, mental and emotional health. Nevertheless, nation profile and convenience to the organization play a vibrant part in the improved usage. These applicants fancy their personal information and know-how by relying on past studies in addition to their own networks (Saari & Kallio, 2010). On the other hand, prospective undergraduate applicants devote much time to online platforms (Dunne & Carmen, 2019). In this study, the student's approach by means of a mediator is founded on the notion that people have attitudes toward items, products, people, or entities. Those are the principles that a student may possess, which could be in favor of or against a certain object. As a result, attitudes can be reinforced or reduced by quality judgments, subjective values, or societal force. The philosophy of involvement points out that applicants establish approaches as well as activities concerning education by becoming interactive in deliberations on higher education.

It is assumed that a student's enrollment in higher education is the consequence of successions of judgments taken in the search of their educational goals. Potential graduates will have more steadfast enrolling intentions as a consequence of their alleged personality the university has, as opposed to their undergraduate colleagues, whose policymaking methods are likely to be influenced by their relative's experiences(Bock et al., 2014). When it comes to postgraduate programs, their social and professional experiences provide them with greater autonomy and allow them to pursue a more career-oriented approach. Potential graduates have more networks to tap into for knowledge as they are more familiar with university brands thanks to distanced learning from peers and coworkers, as well as their personal experience. Former students have innovative cognitive and knowledge capacities, ensuring that their information is translated into purchasing decisions and intents (Li et al., 2013). This engagement improves their exposure to shared information, assessments and approvals about the reputation of the institution (Laurence, 2017), having a stronger possibility of accepting the information on the social media (Mishra & Maheswarappa, 2018). The study proposes:

H₄: *The positive influence of social media engagement on the perceived credibility information for higher education is stronger for prospective students.*
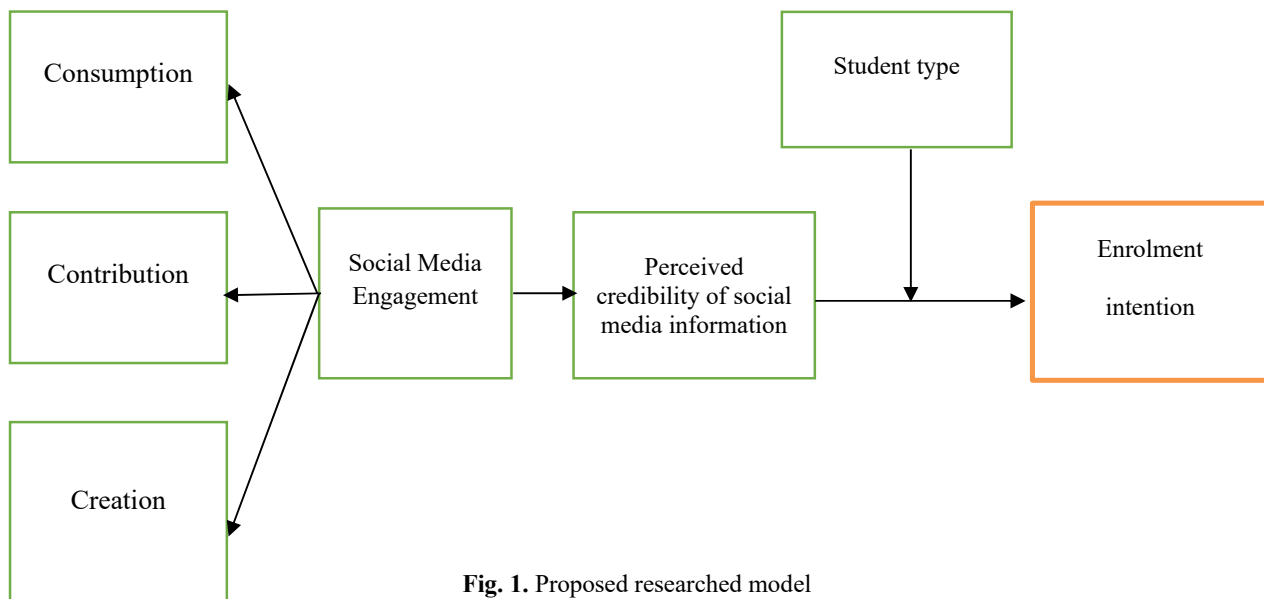
Fig. 1. Proposed researched model

3. Methodology

To examine the hypotheses, the research goal was the universities in North Cyprus, and international students were invited to participate in the survey. This selection serves the purpose of this research. International student recruitment stimulates social media engagement researchers to investigate closely the influence of online engagement on international student's decision to enroll into a certain university. However, one aspect that is less studied is how perceived credibility affects the decision to enroll. The authors personally contacted the international offices at the universities in North Cyprus and asked them for collaboration. Only three universities replied positively and agreed to provide emails of international students. The author utilized convenience sampling techniques and sent the questionnaire with a cover page to 985 international students. Three hundred and ninety-two replied and submitted the answers. However, due to missing data, 8 questionnaires were deleted, thus, only 384 questionnaires were used in statistical analysis. All respondents were ensured their confidentiality and anonymity.

About 70% of participants were males and the rest were females. The overwhelming majority of students are single (83%), 65% study undergraduate and 27% master's degree while the rest study for two years associate degree and PhD. Around 70% of students are from Africa and 25% from the Middle East and the rest from other regions.

3.1 Measures

A five-point scale was used for all research measures ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). International students were inquired to report on social media engagement, perceived credibility of social media information and enrolment intention. All measures were developed in English, no back translation was used since all international students know and study in English at North Cyprus universities. Social Media Engagement was measured using items taken from Zehua and Sheikha (2019) as well as Constantinides and Stagno (2012) with some little change to fit this research. The samples include; online platforms permit individuals with comparable interest to stay connected, the purpose I use social media most is it connects I personally to colleague students globally, I frequently use online networking sites to obtain common understandings across a variety of platforms, When looking for information on various education courses, I like to use online sites., I love online platforms because they allow me to share my thoughts on a variety of topics related to education through various venues and so on. Perceived Credibility had questions accepted from Sung and Yang (2008) and Rauschnabel et al. (2016). The variable measurements which are adjusted include, the institution's website information on student enrollment, university website information about institutions facilities, university website about information of scholarships and other offers, university website about information on tuition fees, university location. Enrollment Intention, to check this variable, prospective graduates and undergraduates were questioned on their present moods concerning signing up for an undergraduate or graduate educations, with the variable being measured in terms of semantics distinction objects to evaluate approaches by means of bipolar assessment adjectives; the prospect that I would deliberate enrolling for a degree is great, My decision to enroll will be based on the reputation of the university, I plan to enroll for a degree in future. Those items were taken on from Hennessy et al. (2012) and Ajzen (2013).

4. The results

Table 1 presents the results of the personal characteristics of the participants in our survey.

Table 1
Personal characteristics of the participants

		Number	Percentage
Age	17-20	18	4.7
	21-24	148	38.5
	25-28	139	36.2
	29-32	54	14.1
	Above 32	25	6.5
Gender	Male	270	70.3
	Female	114	29.7
Education	2 Year associate degree	24	6.3
	Bachelors	251	65.4
	Masters	107	27.9
	PhD	2	0.5
Marital status	Single	318	82.8
	Married	63	16.4
	Divorced	2	0.5
	Widowed	1	0.3

4.1 Demographics

Table 1 shows demographic analysis of the sample. Most of the participants were male. That is, 70.3% of respondents were male and 29.7% were female. Almost 75% of respondents were in the age of 21-28 years old. Regarding education, more than 90% do undergraduate and master's degrees. In terms of marital status, 82.8% were single, 16.4% were married and the rest were divorced or widowed.

4.2 Measurements

All items were subjected to exploratory component analysis using PCA with Varimax rotation. The findings in Table 2 indicate that all the factors were significant, and the item factor loadings ranged from .46 to .97 with an Eigenvalue greater than 1. The analysis yielded three factors and the factors collectively explained 55.36% of the variance. To screen for common method bias (Harman's single-factor test), the items were forced to load on a single factor. The result is around 28%, suggesting that it is not affected by common method bias, since it is below the cut-off level of 50% (McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992). Thus, the scales appear to be reliable. The results in Table 2 indicate evidence of internal consistency as well as convergent and discriminant cogency of the scales. All alpha values were higher than the cut-off level 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 2

Scale items, reliability and exploratory factor analysis results

Scale item	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cronbach alpha
Social media engagement (SME)		1.543	38.66	0.834
SME1	0.65			
SME2	0.69			
SME3	0.56			
SME4	0.69			
SME5	0.69			
SME6	0.79			
SME7	0.75			
Credibility (C)		1.042	34.63	0.858
C1	0.60			
C2	0.81			
C3	0.70			
C4	0.46			
C5	0.79			
C6	0.86			
C7	0.75			
C8	0.55			
Economic Intention (EI)		8.28	138.537	0.932
EI1	0.96			
EI2	0.90			
EI3	0.96			
EI4	0.97			
EI5	0.58			
EI6	0.65			
Student gap	0.76	0.587	0.311	0.911

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Variables' Correlations

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Engagement	Credibility	Enrolment	Student type
Engagement	5.34	0.78	-			
Credibility	6.12	0.74	0.31**			
Enrolment	3.14	1.96	0.116*	0.348**	-	
Student type	2.22	0.55	-0.055	0.067	0.095	

Note: For each variable, composite scores were calculated by averaging item scores. Standard deviation is abbreviated as SD.
[**] Correlations are significant at the .01 level
[**]Correlations are significant at the .05 level

Table 3 shows standard deviations, means and correlations analysis of the study constructs. Based on these results all the hypotheses are positively significant and related to each other except the student type. Baron and Kenny (1986) identified four steps as a benchmark for full mediation analysis. The first condition is regarding the significant association between the independent variable and the mediator. In table 3 engagement is positively related to credibility (r=.310 p<.01), Table 4 supports this finding. Thus, the first condition is satisfied. The next condition is regarding the significant correlation between independent and the dependent variable. The outcome presented in table 3 demonstrated that engagement has a significant relationship with enrollment intention (r=.116 p<.05), table 4 supports this finding. Thus, the second condition is also satisfied. The third condition is regarding the significant relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable. Table 3 shows that credibility is highly related to enrollment intention (r=.348 p<.01), regression analysis in table 4 backs this finding. Hence, the third condition is met. The fourth condition is checking for full mediation, that is when the mediator is added, the relationship between independent and dependent variables becomes insignificant. The outcomes in table 4, show that when the mediator was inputted, there was no significant connection between the independent and dependent variables. Hence, the fourth condition was met, therefore credibility fully mediates the relationship.

Table 4 exhibits hierarchical regression analysis, centered on the findings, hypothesis 1 was accepted ($\beta = .22$, $t = 2.28$), engagement in online networking has significant and positive effect on information credibility. Further, online engagement has significant and positive effect on enrollment intention ($\beta = .689$, $t = 6.75$), thus hypothesis 2 also received support. Hypothesis three is regarding the mediating effect of credibility, the results in table 4 lend empirical support to the abovementioned relationship ($\beta = .121$, $t = .276$). However, it is also significant according to the Sobel test result ($\beta = 0.028$, $p< .05$).

Table 4
Regression Analysis: Direct and Mediating Effects

	Credibility			Enrolment intention			
Variable	β	t-value	Variable	β	t-value	β	t-value
Engagement	0.22	2.28**	Engagement	0.231	2.37**	0.121	0.276
			Credibility	-	-	0.689	6.75**
F-value	5.230**	-	F-value	5.623**	-	25.92**	0.121
R^2 at each step	0.011	-	R^2 at each step		0.015		0.117

Sobel test for Engagement → Credibility → Enrollment intention .028
Note: The results do not show any problems of Multicollinearity.
** $p < .05$

Regarding the fourth hypothesis about the moderation effect of the student type on the link concerning information credibility and enrollment intention, the statistical analysis shows that student type cannot moderate the dependent variable's connection with the mediator ($\beta = .031$, $t = 1.46$). Thus, hypothesis 4 is rejected.

5. Discussion and implementation

The results in this research revealed that information credibility has an intervening influence on online engagement but does not have any influence on prospective students' intentions to enroll in for their degree education. The advancement of online has simplified a substantial transformation in the approach students communicate to Higher Education Institutions. This research has shown the significant importance of online engagement events by motivating prospective candidates' enrolment objective through pursuing information credibility, resulting in the development of the views of reputation of the university. Student's engagement online can considerably motivate their involvement in searching for credible information. Prospective students significantly increased online commitment which motivates the students' involvement in information searching actions. The findings from the study maintain the idea of how extremely active people seem to increase their platform activities, for instance, in looking for guidance and information from other platform users (Heinonen, 2011).

In line with prior research (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Ladhari & Michaud, 2015), the results show how constant consultations through peers in addition to colleagues over online networks increase the alleged effectiveness of information that has been shared, resulting in people's confident thoughts concerning the reputation. The impact of information credibility on alleged institution's reputation when the two groups are compared expose a higher information searching route constant for aspiring undergraduate students who are more likely to get accepted than graduate students. Undergraduate candidates with inadequate understanding of institutions of higher education have a bigger demand for higher education knowledge than graduate students. (Dunne et al., 2010).

In conclusion, the link concerning alleged university's reputation as well as recruitment target for potential undergraduates was lower, because they significantly depended more on their guardians for their choice for their undergraduate educations, as per the clarification by Broekemier and Seshadri (2000). On the other hand, potential graduates had established a constructive reputation the institution has, their want to enroll was stronger. This can remain credited to their understanding of the educational domain, the significant effort, knowledge and most importantly the freedom or freedom in life, which in all back their decision-making.

The study indicates that student-university online involvement may be utilized to create and improve an institution's reputation and identity. Also, the moderating role of the student type adds to the literature by improving the connection between the study variables. These can aid higher education institutions in establishing tactics that outperform rivals in influencing students' inclinations to enroll in their schools.

The struggle for scarce international students is gradually strong at nationwide and university stages, the organization of material superiority over online networks is of principal significance to education suppliers. It is important for management activities to publish significant data, for instance, about grant structures financed by both home and host nations, labor privileges for students as well as after-study working visa programs.

University administrators and policymakers should also instill strong personality traits such as honesty, which is a crucial element of every institution's operations reputation. Sincerity arises as a result of robust contact among students and institution's management, which results in equity in addition to effectiveness. (Sampaio et al., 2012).

Moreover, organizational procedures, actions of institution staff, in addition alleged education superiority may motivate observed diligence of an institution personality. Guidelines have to be positioned to make sure those procedures remain followed by all the institution workers so as to build resilient institution image personalities in the thoughts of students.

Also, online networks permit individuals to interact with one another as it is realized as a necessity in educational settings that permits applicants in seeking materials on numerous educational curricula, legislators as well as directors must establish and utilize those platforms as they provide new interaction opportunities which permit a direct meeting. This is backed by Constantinides and Stagno (2013) and Shields and Peruta (2019) indicated that online platforms form existence for the university

and brings potential candidates together with current students, those seeking for related data and support from the former students, hence persuading students' objectives to enroll in their universities.

Universities should invest all means in disclosing broad online information associated with educational agendas, amenities and accommodation, soft talents improvement, Student clubs and societies, as well as support services. Testimonies from present representative students, former students, relatives as well as educational professionals should be treasured. For potential graduates, per their economic status in addition to understanding, institutions would more probably profit from emphasizing graduate package outcomes for example professional development, access to former students' networks, certified engagement with business associates and prospects to study from leading researchers with important industry experiences.

For educational experts, it is important that HEIs realize their alleged reputations in the global market and the essential educational requirements of foreign students (Gray, Fam, & Llanes, 2003). Potential foreign applicants can begin their commitment expedition with institutions by partaking in educational events on online networks.

The attention for universities must be on communicating to involved persons spending more time evaluating HEIs on online sites. An instance can be giving potential students with appropriate information, for example university's rankings, accomplishment stories in investigation and education, institution scholarships, and job openings are all available.

Shu and Scott (2014) recommended that institutions make use of the realistic capability of student representatives, whose apparent credibility, understanding and consideration can create encouraging imitations about the university. These actions can reinforce potential students' comprehension of the institution and, sequentially, create affirmative events helpful for the university's image in the thoughts of investors. Institutions should also keenly inspire followers on its online platforms to pursue facts to improve their comprehension about the university, simplify assessments and views, and propose further communication prospects.

In conclusion, organizations can utilize online networks to make, market as well as endorse their exceptions in addition to wanted university programs which can impact the attitudes of students regarding enrolment.

6. Conclusion and limitations

This research offers a significant investigative model in indulging the importance of online engagement, information credibility and the plans to enroll in HEI's. The research approves that online interaction concerning students and institutions can be utilized to form and build up institutions 'reputation. Moreover, the controlling role of the student type which was not accepted adds some fresh perceptions into literature to improve the association of the research variables. These discoveries can assist institutions in establishing policies that can overtake their rivals in persuading students' intentions to enroll in their institutions. The authors gathered data from universities in North Cyprus with students and prospective students through their email addresses provided by these universities. The researcher opted for this online data collection due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, which resulted in closure of universities across the country. Some students were reluctant to participate or give out information due to the survey involving their emails even though they were assured confidentiality and anonymity of the information provided.

Covering this investigations to several states would improve the collected works by ensuring a better consideration of exactly how, and the level to which, online network interaction can create information credibility, and registration intention, taking much on the varied impact of peers as well as relatives, government financing chances, the mass media and further influential plus traditional services with much work to be done on the prospective student type as a moderator. By studying the importance of online network interaction on potential students' registration intent, the authors show how potential candidates participate on online network platforms to search for the views and judgement of others concerning HEIs, which in turn forms their individual insights of HEIs' image reputation. The research increased existing tolerances of the effect of online network interactions in a learning setting and added some contributions.

Firstly, extending on the shared information handling viewpoint, the authors have proved that social media stages give people the chance to meet others and generate an insight of the institution, ultimately leading to a durable alleged institution appearance. It is vital to note that online interaction by its name, may not inevitably lead to constructive insights of the institution. Reasonably, the handling of important facts via online activities permits people to develop brand awareness. These evidence pursuing events aid people only not for developing social connections to compatible individuals on the other hand to know the significance of the image of the institution in addition to forming future enrolment intentions.

Second, the research in the literature tries to look at the impact of social media engagement and information credibility on registration intention, compelling into perspective the student type. Whereas prospective undergraduates are much interested in the impacts of information credibility of the institution, the link concerning alleged brand reputation and enrolment intent is greater for graduate potential students.

Third, the author focused on the importance of online networks to the instructive industry in North Cyprus, taking the country as one of the major recipients of foreign students, this study provides beneficial understandings keen on the point to which

online interaction by prospective candidates can affect the creation of university's' alleged image and students' intent on the subject of foreign education.

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