Understanding the reasons for motivation and personal branding via usage and gratification of twitter

Syahruddin Ag Ahmad

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Malaysia Sabah
Corresponding author: syahag@ums.edu.my

Abstract

This research investigates several strategic reasons behind the motives of the usage of Twitter among University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) students and how did the motives could be linked to personal branding. This study also determined the association between frequency of students' usage of twitter for personal branding. Personal branding is a growing concept since the uprising of social media. First, the research found out that the reasons behind Twitter usage among UMS students are predominantly motives of entertainment, convenience, passing time and medium appeal. The result also indicates that the students do not strongly used Twitter for information purposes such as information-sharing, self-expression and self-documentation. The findings revealed that UMS students does not necessarily use Twitter for satisfying a need for personal branding. However, on that note, students are aware that employers now are using social media as a recruitment tool, and they are aware of the consequences of their online behaviour towards their future career opportunities. This study determined a positive small correlation between frequency of use and students' usage of Twitter for personal branding. The finding suggests that even though students often choose to engage to a various activity on Twitter but this does not imply that student will use the network for personal branding.

Keywords

Personal Branding, Social Media, Motivation, Twitter, Information

Introduction

Undeniably, social media provides many advantages, and one of them is personal branding. Personal branding is a long-held notion that recently became

trendy with the advent of social media. It is an ongoing process that helps people to differentiate themselves from others through the positioning of unique attributes. The existence of multifarious virtual platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc. has induced the growth of personal branding and enabled the opportunity for average people to self-brand (Zidar & Mari, 2015). Initiating our own personal brand can lead to many opportunities, ranging from self-development to building connections and networking.

Personal branding also gives a competitive edge to people who are in the process of seeking employment or settling into a stable career; in fact, recruitment is now migrating online, and it has become common for HR managers to use social platforms for reviewing potential job candidates (Labreque, Markos, & Milne, 2010). Hence, building a strong online presence is a crucial step to attracting future employment opportunities through the display of one's unique qualities on social media. A new study suggests that job seekers should consider building online personal brands to improve their job market performances, as the data revealed that candidates with a strong personal brand have a 65.9 percent higher chance of being employed compared to those who do not practise solid personal branding (Chen, Rui, Whinston, 2021; Coy, 2021).

Despite the benefits mentioned, Górska (2018) stated that, in general, most university students do not use and perceive social media as an effective career development tool in the same way that employers see the potential in those platforms. Employers recognise the importance of social media in recruiting talent; however, most university students have no idea how it can help them land a job. It is clear that, managing one's online presence is useful at times, particularly for students who are about to graduate and enter a new phase of life, which is career development. On the part of personal branding, there are still limited studies on the concept, specifically in social media, due to the concept being relatively new in the literature (Klein, 2002; Shaker & Hafiz, 2014). Moreover, there is also a dearth of research looking at university students' personal branding through online communication platforms.

Therefore, as the title suggests, this research intends to decide what reasons motivate Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) students to use social media, specifically Twitter, and to enlighten on whether the students use Twitter to satisfy a need for personal branding based on the Uses and Gratification (U&G) theory. Additionally, the research also looked into students' online behaviour on Twitter and how they use the platform for personal branding. The current research hopes to bridge the gaps in the literature surrounding personal branding as a growing phenomenon. The first chapter describes the study's background in order to demonstrate general contexts for the research. This is followed by the problem statement, research questions, goals, significance of research, research scope, and working definition.

Social media, because of its ideological and technological structure, allows people to promote themselves as brands in a cost-effective and efficient manner

(Karaduman, 2013). This refers to branding becoming more convenient due to the development of digital media and social platforms. According to scholars, social networking sites such as Twitter are now widely available for the process of personal branding (Labrecque, Markos, & Milne, 2010). Twitter was launched in 2006 and has been growing rapidly ever since to accommodate several aspects of mass and interpersonal communication (Johnson & Yang, 2009). It is a famous microblogging platform used by many to convey a message or "tweet" of up to 140 characters. There are three key features in the network that promote self-mediation and personal branding: 1) the prefix "@," which indicates a username; 2) "RT," which is an abbreviation for "retweet" or "forwarding" information; and 3) the use of the hashtag (#) (Page, 2012). Not only do these features enable users and their information to penetrate the larger masses, but they also help them get discovered and recognised by other people.

In support of earlier statements, McCorkle (2014) mentioned that Twitter is more suitable to support the self-branding process compared to other social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook. Twitter is also quick to garner people's attention as the platform has a large number of users. Personal branding came across as a relatively new concept in the literature and is often ignored in academic fields even though it is very practical in the real world (Klein, 2002; Shaker & Hafiz, 2014). There are still a lack of studies on the concept in regard to social media, even though the platforms give opportunities for personal branding efforts (Karaduman, 2013). The development of digital media has opened a new research area whereby personal branding applies to the online world, but surely this is ongoing research as the literature is still limited.

Therefore, based on the information presented, this research has taken a step to study UMS students' motivation to use Twitter and whether or not the students use the network to satisfy a need for personal branding. Moreover, the research assessed the association between frequency of use and students' usage of Twitter for personal branding. The U&G approach is employed in this research, particularly to shed some light on the idea of self-branding as a need that people seek to gratify when using SNS. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevicth (1973) suggested that the U&G approach be used to uncover the psychological and social needs that propel people to use certain kinds of media. As media decentralizes, it enhances greater interactivity and people's participation (Banerjee, 2008; Rajendran & Thesinghraja, 2014). People are no longer considered passive when creating content and conveying information, but rather active and self-participatory. This affirms the U&G approach, which suggests that people are actively seeking and using media.

Problem Statement

The major focus of this study is UMS students' motivations behind Twitter usage and whether they use the social network to fulfil a desire for personal branding. The research also focused on students' online behaviour, particularly

through Twitter, and related it to using the platform for personal branding. Social media never stops becoming a global social phenomenon as the number of users rapidly increases every year. Social media tends to be highly popular among younger generations.

Social media holds the capacity as a site for users to develop their own personal brands and communicate them to the world. This is due to its functions, which enable users to share information about themselves (Taksiran, 2019). Twitter, for instance, provides ample opportunities for users to communicate pieces of their professional and even personal information through various engagements such as sharing tweets, retweeting, or commenting. It is a fact that strong personal branding gives people a competitive edge and makes them seem desirable with unique qualities in the eyes of potential employers. This draws in more opportunities about the advantages of the career market and self-development, primarily in today's world where recruitment is made possible through online platforms.

Research Questions

In efforts to discuss the deficiencies of earlier literature, the research aims to answer the following questions:
i.   What are the reasons that propel UMS students to use Twitter?
ii. Is Twitter used by UMS students to fulfil a need for personal branding?
iii. Does the frequency of use influence UMS students' usage of Twitter for the purpose of personal branding?

Research Objectives

i.   There are three research aims that the researcher wants to meet.
ii. To investigate the reasons behind Twitter usage among UMS.
iii. To identify whether UMS students use Twitter to satisfy a need for personal branding or for any other
iv. To determine the association between frequency of use and UMS students' usage of Twitter for personal

Since the advent of new media, many studies have been conducted to look at the uses and gratifications of social media (Johnson, 2009; Whiting & Williams, 2013; Liu et al., 2014; Alhabash & Ma, 2017). However, research on the personal branding phenomenon in social media through the lens of U&G perspectives is still limited. This is given that the branding concept is still relatively new in the literature, so there are many gaps in theories and applications (Hughes, 2017; Zardaka, 2012), especially throughout the new media development. A study by Taksiran (2019) found that Turkish social media users do use the platforms to gratify a need for personal branding and to differentiate themselves from others. Nevertheless, the study is only confined to Turkey and among Middle Easterners. There is still a dearth of research conducted from a Malaysian perspective and among public university students.

Furthermore, Taksiran's (2019) research touches on multiple social networks at once, involving Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Hence, it is difficult to distinguish the strengths and weaknesses of each platform in terms of its validity, relevance, and capacity for the personal branding process. Other scholars, like Alhabash and Ma (2017), suggested that future research should attempt to focus on the uniqueness of each platform. Therefore, the current research is focused on Twitter and the reasons to use the network to promote one's personal brand. Twitter's strength lies in its functions to help users connect with others and share opinions publicly (Johnson & Yang, 2009). Besides that, the network is becoming more practical for use in self-branding. The research aims to discuss and enrich the gaps in the literature and potentially offer insights for upcoming research, particularly involving the concept of personal branding and SNSs.

This research set out to investigate the motivations behind Twitter usage among UMS students and to decide whether UMS students use Twitter to gratify a need for personal branding or for any other reasons. Consequently, the research adopts the U&G theory, as initially developed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevicth (1973), to uncover the motives that drive the students to continue using Twitter. Approaching the context of personal branding, the research used the same theory to shed some light on the perspective on self-branding as a need that people seek to gratify when using the network. Moreover, the research intends to study the association between frequency of use and students' usage of Twitter for personal branding.

The chapter also addressed the research issue, stating that employers are now more willing to use social media to screen potential candidates.University students, on the other hand, are disengaged in using social media for professional purposes and are unaware of its potential in attracting potential job opportunities. A population of university students is chosen, as they are indeed a part of the younger generation. Past scholars have noted that younger users tend to excessively use social media compared to other generations. Furthermore, university students will eventually graduate with their respective bachelor's degrees and be expected to enter the career world. Hence, starting to build a personal brand is important for students to open the golden gate of many opportunities, including recruitment. Lastly, the chapter described the scope of study, which was essentially confined to undergraduate students at UMS only.

Students' personal branding

Even though personal branding is more significant for famous people whose reputations are usually at stake, such as politicians and celebrities, However, one cannot deny the importance of personal branding among students. Plus, the strategy has become more inclusive to general people by stating that "everyone has their own personal brand," and this does not exclude students. Personal branding may bring advantages when it comes to career opportunities and employment, as social media is used today by companies to aid in their recruitment

process. For example, Human Resources (HR) may conduct a critical review of a candidate's social media to determine whether that person is a good fit for their company (Labreque, Markos, & Milne, 2010). As a result, this became more important for students, particularly university students who are about to enter the job market.

Past research suggests that college students usually engage in online personal branding in order to prepare their transition from school to pursuing careers or work (Edmiston, 2014, 2016; Hood et al., 2017; Johnson, 2017; Park, Williams & Son, 2020). It is a crucial step, as effective positioning of the personal brand can give a competitive edge to fresh graduates who are seeking a stable career. According to Edmiston (2016), students should make a positive impression on social media by emphasising their personalities as well as their qualities to potential employers. Furthermore, Hood et al. emphasise that students need to manage their social media critically, such as by organising their profile pages or pictures, as recruiters are now paying extra attention to incomplete or unprofessional profiles (Hood et al., 2014; Park, Williams & Son, 2020). Profile pages are indeed an essential tool for personal branding, as they showcase all the information about an individual, which is accessible to almost anyone, including hiring managers.

However, not everyone is aware of their personal brand or is strategically managing it (Shepperd, 2005), including students. Despite its importance, the idea of personal branding has been neglected by students for the longest time. Several scholars stated that students are unfamiliar with using social media efficiently for the purpose of personal brand building (Russ, 2015; Lewis, Messina, & Wellington, 2014; Górska, 2018). Most university students do not necessarily use social media professionally for career development, even though employers see potential in those platforms (Górska, 2018). Moreover, not all students also use social media as the right site for building professional networking. Thus far, the literature suggests an underwhelming reaction among students towards the idea of making professional use of social media. Park, Williams, and Son (2020) reasoned that even though students might engage in self-presentation activities on social media, they were found to be lacking knowledge on the concept of personal branding and had no specific social media strategy. Nevertheless, there are parts of the literature on students' personal branding that have yet to be explored.

The Motives Behind Twitter's Usage

Social media has always been an interesting phenomenon to study in terms of users' needs, gratification, and motivations. The U&G theory is both important and useful to explain why people consume and prefer certain media. Following Whiting and Williams (2013)'s work, they have identified ten gratifications for using social media: social interaction, information seeking, passing time, entertainment, relaxation, communication, expressing opinions, convenience, information sharing, and surveillance. The majority of study participants cited "social interaction" as

their primary reason for using social media, specifically to stay in touch with family and friends, reconnect with old acquaintances, and meet new people.

In contexts of university or college students' uses and gratifications, Ezumah (2013) came to a similar conclusion that college students mainly use social media to keep the conversation ongoing with friends and family, sharing photos, reconnecting with old friends, getting entertainment, and getting updates. The conclusion is in sync with past studies, which suggest that keeping in touch with friends and family members is the most prominent use of social media (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Bonds-Raacke and Raacke, 2010; cited in Ezumah, 2013). Henceforth, at this point in the literature, it is known that maintaining a relationship with others or social interaction are strong predictors of social media use. Referring specifically to Twitter, Johnson and Yang (2009) claim that even though Twitter was invented to keep in touch with friends and family by utilising its status updates, their study indicates that Twitter is primarily used as an information source and for sharing information. This is considered valid as Twitter encourages users to connect and communicate with other users, and information is easily generated through online conversation or knowledge sharing.

Later in the literature, Chen (2010) found out that people seek to gratify the need for connection with others when using Twitter. Liu, Cheung, and Lee (2010) discovered that information-sharing and social interaction are the main factors driving people's intentions to continue using Twitter. It is forethought, that it is not only do users use Twitter to engage with others through the tweeting and retweeting mechanisms, but sharing information is part of the reason why users first begin using the platform. Another group of researchers came to similar findings, whereby they implicated social interaction and information sharing as the motives for using Twitter and Instagram (Blight et al., 2017). Therefore, based on the existing literature, it can be generalised that both social interaction and sharing information are the major reasons behind Twitter usage. Consequently, Johnson and Yang's (2009) findings were also against the idea of entertainment as a motive to use Twitter; they found out that users were actually having less fun while using the site, which is beyond expectations. This is practically due to Twitter acting more as an information source, usually through word-based content and fewer visuals compared to its social media companions, YouTube, and Instagram.

However, a study by Alhabash and Ma (2017) differs, as they found out that students' reasons for using Twitter are mainly entertainment and convenience (Alhabash and Ma, 2017). Perhaps this could be justified based on the differences in population studied, where most college students are in fact drawn to various forms of entertainment on social media. Even though there is a strong relationship between social media and personal branding (Taskiran, 2019), past literature has yet to corroborate personal branding as a strong need for using Twitter. As noted by Brandtzg and Heim (2009), self-presentation is not a strong potential driver for using social media, despite the fact that some scholars have suggested the platforms be used for personal branding. Therefore, this research intends on addressing the

matter, particularly from the perspective of public university students and their reasons to use Twitter. Furthermore, the current research also focused on the frequency of use and students' usage of Twitter for personal branding. Higher frequency of use frequently implies active participation in Twitter activities such as tweeting, retweeting, liking tweets, replying to comments, and so on.

Regarding personal branding, past scholars have found that the more frequently people engage in social platforms to share information about themselves, the stronger the connection between social media usage and self-branding is (Taksiran, 2019). This refers to the fact that the more people engage in social media activities, particularly those involving self-presentation or sharing information about oneself, the more likely it is that people will use social media for personal branding efforts. Additionally, Taksiran (2019) stated that time spent on social media influences people's use of such platforms for personal branding. However, throughout the literature, there is still a lack of evidence on whether frequency of use could affect people's usage of social media for personal branding. Hence, this research attempts to discover the connection between the two variables.

Methodology

All the measurements for the variables in this study are based on existing measurements or scales developed by earlier scholars. The questions or items on students' reasons for using Twitter were based on the list provided by Liu, Cheung, and Lee's study in 2014. The list was structured using the perspective of uses and gratification and encompasses seven motives: 1) self-documentation; 2) information sharing; 3) entertainment; 4) passing time; 5) self-expression; 6) medium appeal; and 7) convenience. A five-point Likert scale was applied to the items to measure and figure out the students' reasons.

The researcher uses a five-point liker scale to examine whether UMS students use Twitter to satisfy a need for personal branding. This study specifically defined personal branding as a process to differentiate oneself from another through the proper positioning of unique characteristics, personality, or skills. The researcher will also look at the students' frequency of use as measured by their engagement with the many activities that are available on Twitter, which include posting tweets or updates, liking several tweets, retweeting other content, and replying to comments. The researcher performed a simple pilot study to determine the reliability of the questionnaire prior to its distribution. The pilot test questionnaire was given to small numbers of respondents (N = 26), and alpha coefficient values were identified.

The correlation between the frequency of use and students' usage of Twitter for personal branding was analysed using Spearman's rank-order correlation. Spearman correlation is used instead of Pearson correlation due to the independent variable, which is the frequency of use, being measured on an ordinal scale based on how many times the students engage in different activities on Twitter. Thus, for this reason, that data does not fulfil the assumption acquired by Pearson

correlation. The correlation analysis is performed using the SPSS tool, and the values found, whether positive or negative, are established as findings in this study. In terms of its interpretation, if the value of rs is closer to 1, then the relationship between the variables is much stronger. The overall analysed data is then translated into tables and bar charts, with descriptions provided throughout each section for better comprehension.

Based on the demographic data, several female students outnumbered male students, accounting for 199 responses (75%) as opposed to 67 responses (25%), respectively. Most of the respondents are 21 to 23 years old (82.7%), followed by those who are 24 to 26 years old (11.3%), 18 to 20 years old (4.9%), above 29 years old (0.8%), and only one respondent (0.4%) who falls within 27 to 29 years old. Thus, the data clearly shows that most of the respondents are from Generation Z. Moving on, third-year students occupied the highest number, denoting a total of 94 students at 35.3 percent. This is then followed by second-year students, which amounted to 76 responses with 28.6 percent, first-year students with 50 responses (18.8%), fourth-year students with 44 responses (16.5%), and lastly, fifth-year students with only two responses (0.8).

Reliability Test

Reliability concerned the extent to which a questionnaire or any other measurement procedure produced the same results at each single trial (Bolarinwa, 2016). In other words, the test is commonly used to determine whether a scale is consistent or dependable enough that it can be repeated multiple times and yield the same results, making it reliable for research. The reliability of the scale used in this research is tested using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient value. The value is said to be suitable for measuring any internal consistency of a set of scales or items (Goforth, 2015).

The alpha coefficient standard is still somewhat arbitrary; however, many reports suggest that the alpha value should be in the range of 0.70 to 0.95 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Bland & Altman, 1997; DeVillis, 2003), as cited in Tavakol & Dennick (2011).A high alpha value indicates that all items correlate with each other. This research conducted a pilot test to measure the reliability of the items in the questionnaire. The test was administered randomly to 26 students, and the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The Result of the Pilot Test (N=26)

Variables	Numberof Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Motivation	21	0.90
Personal branding	9	0.75

As depicted above, there are 30 items tested for reliability, which were divided into 20 items for assessing UMS students' motives for using Twitter and another nine items to test students' use of the network for personal branding. The

most recent Cronbach Alpha value calculated for the items on reasons is 0.90, which is higher than the lowest value of >0.70. Subsequently, the alpha value for personal branding is slightly above 0.70, which is still considered acceptable. Therefore, both values obtained imply that the items used in this study fit the criteria and are reliable.

The findings obtained are aimed at answering the research questions, which are: 1) What are the motives that propel UMS students to use Twitter? 2) Do UMS students use Twitter to satisfy a need for personal branding? 3) Does the frequency of use influence students' usage of Twitter for personal branding? There are 21 items intended to investigate students' motivations, which were constructed based on the list by Liu, Cheung, and Lee (2014) of self-documentation, information-sharing, self-expression, entertainment, passing time, medium appeal, and convenience. Furthermore, there are 10 items structured to test students' use of Twitter for personal branding. Additionally, this section also describes the descriptive data on time consumption and frequency of use of Twitter.

Findings and Discussions

This section attempts to discuss the research question, "What are the motives that propel UMS students to use Twitter?" Based on the list by Liu, Cheung, and Lee (2014), there are several motivations examined, including self-documentation, information-sharing, entertainment, passing time, self-expression, medium appeal, and convenience. The researcher developed three related items to tap for each motivation. The data collected for every item is analysed using descriptive statistical techniques, which results in the values of percentages and frequency to show respondents' agreement to the provided statements.

For the first variable, the findings do not seem to support the idea that UMS students use Twitter for the purpose of self-documentation. Most students (32.7%) are unsure of Twitter as an ideal platform to document life. The mean score for this item is 3.35, and the SD is 1.144. As a result, the majority of students (27.8 percent and 28.9 percent, respectively) said they were neutral about using Twitter to update information about themselves and to record new things they learned. The mean scores for both items are 2.85 with an SD of 1.316 and 3.12 with an SD of 1.276. The descriptive statistic for the motivation of self-documentation revealed an overall mean score of 3.11. This suggests that UMS students are least likely to use Twitter to document their lives.

For the second reason, which is information sharing, the data signalled differences of opinion among the respondents. A majority of the students (49.5%) strongly agree that Twitter is an appropriate platform to share useful information. The mean score for this item is 4.27, and the SD is 0.866. The following item showed that most students (36.5%) agree that they use Twitter to share their knowledge and interests with others. The mean score for this item is 3.56, and the SD is 1.132. However, 29.3 percent are undecided about using Twitter to share personal information. The mean score for the item is 2.78, and the SD is 1.191.

The descriptive statistic for the motivation of information sharing showed an overall mean score of 3.54. Thus, this suggests that UMS students do not strongly use Twitter for information sharing.

The third variable involves the reasons for entertainment; the findings show positive responses from all the respondents. This is because the majority of students (48.5%) believe Twitter provides them with entertaining content. The mean score for this item is 4.24, and the SD is 0.901. A great majority (48.1 percent) stated that they have fun while using Twitter, with an average of 4.18 and a SD of 0.973. Moreover, many students (57.1%) enjoy reading through threads and looking at memes on Twitter. The mean score for this item is 4.39, and the SD is 0.841. The descriptive statistic for the motivation of entertainment showed an overall mean score of 4.27. Hence, the result strongly suggests that UMS students mainly use Twitter for entertainment as their top reason.

For the motivation of passing time, the data also reported positive responses from the respondents. Most students (43.6%) strongly agree that Twitter helps them pass time. The mean score for this item is 4.06, and the SD is 1.021. Moreover, the majority of 54.5 percent and 49.6 percent, respectively, stated that they strongly agree that they use the network when they are bored and that they scroll through Twitter's timeline when they have nothing to do at the moment. The mean scores for both items are 4.17 with an SD of 1.146 and 4.09 with an SD of 1.167. The descriptive statistic for the motivation of passing time revealed an overall mean score of 4.11. It has been well established that students use Twitter to pass the time.

Moving on, findings on the motivation of self-expression differ, as students are mostly uncertain when confronted with the idea of expressing themselves on Twitter. Most students (30.5%) agree that Twitter is an ideal platform to share their ideas on current matters. The average mean score is 3.73, and the SD is 1.123. However, the majority (31.2 percent) of students are undecided about the statements about sharing their thoughts via Twitter. The mean score for this item is 3.37, and the SD is 1.198. Most students (27.8%) are also neutral about expressing their opinions by creating threads or replying to comments. The mean score for this item is 3.07, and the SD is 1.348. The descriptive statistic for the motivation of self-expression indicates an overall mean score of 3.39. Therefore, the numbers suggest that UMS students do not strongly use Twitter for expressing themselves.

Subsequently, the concept of medium appeal received some positive responses from the respondents. The data showed that the majority of students (34.2%) agree that Twitter enables them to post something immediately. The mean score for this item is 3.77, and the SD is 1.036. Furthermore, most students (53 percent) find the platform easy to use and cost-free. The mean score for this item is 4.31, and the SD is 0.862. With an average of 4.17 and a standard deviation of 0.945, most students (46.2%) strongly agree that Twitter's 24-hour update feature helps them stay up to date on the latest news. The descriptive statistic for the motivation of medium appeal showed an overall mean score of 4.09. As a result,

this strongly implies that UMS students use Twitter because of its medium appeal and features.

The last reason, which is convenience, also recorded positive responses from all the research participants. The data indicates that the majority of the students (51.1%) strongly agree that Twitter is convenient to use. The mean score is 4.25, and the SD is 0.923. The majority of responses (55.3%) also strongly indicate that Twitter can be used at any time and from any location, with an average of 4.36 and a standard deviation of 0.876. Additionally, most students (38%) strongly agree that they face fewer technical issues when using Twitter. The mean score for this item is 4.00, and the SD is 1.026. The descriptive statistic for the motivation of convenience showed an overall mean score of 4.20, which suggests that UMS students also use Twitter because it is convenient.

Overall, from this research, it was found that the strong motives that drive UMS students to use Twitter are entertainment (mean = 4.27, SD = 0.7962), convenience (mean = 4.20, SD = 0.7966), passing time (mean = 4.11, SD = 0.9725), and medium appeal (mean = 4.09, SD = 0.7665). Subsequently, a less reliable predictor of motivations is information sharing (mean = 3.54, SD = 0.8076), self-expression (mean = 3.39, SD = 1.0582), and self-documentation (mean = 3.11, SD = 1.034). The average and SD across three items for each reason are also presented.

Evaluation of UMS Students' Personal Branding

The data on the first item showed that most students (37.6%) stated that they strongly agree with the statement that suggests employers are now using social media as a recruitment tool to find potential job candidates. The mean score for this item is 4.03 and the SD is 0.937. For the second item, the majority of the students (46.6%) are also mindful or conscious when sharing information online, as they believe it could affect their future career or job opportunities. The mean score for this item is 4.21, and the SD is 0.879. Data on the next item showed that most students (34.2%) are uncertain about the statement that Twitter is an ideal platform to communicate about oneself, with an average of 3.50 and a SD of 1.100.

The fourth item shows that 39.1 percent of students said they were neutral about using Twitter to present a set of personality traits, skills, and knowledge as a way to differentiate themselves from others. The mean score for this item is 3.26, and the SD is 1.097. The later item on expressing opinions to differentiate oneself from others also shows neutral responses among students (33.1%) with a mean score of 3.24 and an SD of 1.107. Despite that, the majority of students (32.3%) agree that they always try to keep up a good impression when using Twitter. The mean score for this item is 3.72, and the SD is 1.046.

Furthermore, most students (39.8%) are undecided on establishing a personal brand, with an average value of 3.06 and SD of 1.116. Due to the growing importance of networking, the majority of respondents (34.2%) agree that Twitter is a suitable platform for building meaningful connections and networking. The

mean score for this item is 3.87, and the SD is 0.923. The data also demonstrated that most students (35.7%) strongly agree that Twitter is more for personal use than professional use. The mean score for this item is 3.90, and the SD is 1.039. Based on table 4.6, the descriptive statistic for UMS students' personal branding showed an overall mean score of 3.67. Therefore, this suggests that students do not necessarily use Twitter to satisfy a need for personal branding, as the average score across all items is below 4.00.

The final item of the questionnaire asked students to state their opinions on which social media they would prefer to use to promote their skills and qualities. The researcher identified several keywords in the students' answers, which mainly consisted of social platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc., and categorised them into types of social media. The researcher then recorded the frequency, or the number of times the social media were mentioned by students, in figure 2. The result indicates that the top three social media platforms chosen by the students to promote their qualities and skills are Instagram (31%), Facebook (19%), and Twitter (18%). In the light of these findings, the students reasoned that they chose Instagram as their most preferred social media platform because the platform works well at attracting a lot of attention, mostly through photos or short videos. Furthermore, Instagram, according to the students, is an appropriate portfolio to showcase their skills, such as photography and creating creative content.

Based on Table 2, the significance value is 0.000002, which is lower than the p value (0.01). Thus, there is enough evidence to suggest a significant correlation between frequency of use and students' usage of Twitter for personal branding. However, the correlation coefficient showed a value of 0.285, which can be interpreted as a weak positive correlation between two variables. Therefore, it can be said that even though there is an association between both dependent and independent variables, it is relatively small.

Table 2: The Spearman's Correlation Test Result

Dependent variables	Independent variables	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.	No. of sample (N)
Students' usage of Twitter forpersonal branding	Frequency of use	0.285	0.000002	266

In a nutshell, the result suggests that the motivations that drive UMS students to use Twitter are entertainment, convenience, passing time, and medium appeal. Conversely, the students are less likely to use Twitter for information sharing, self-expression, and self-documentation. Furthermore, the majority of UMS students are completely aware that today's employers are using social media for recruitment purposes. They are also very aware of their online presence on social media and the consequences of their behaviours on future employment or job opportunities. However, it has been discovered that students do not necessarily

use Twitter to fulfil a need for self-branding. UMS students also showed lower consumption and engagement than expected; students are spending less time on Twitter and showed low engagement when it comes to replying to comments and posting updates or tweets. Despite that, students show a high level of engagement when using the network by liking a post or retweeting other users' contents. Furthermore, there is a small but positive correlation between frequency of use and students' usage of Twitter for personal branding. This suggests that the frequency of engagements with various activities on Twitter does not necessarily suggest that students will use Twitter for personal branding.

Through descriptive data analysis, it was found out that the variables of entertainment (mean = 4.27, SD = 0.066), convenience (mean = 4.20, SD = 0.077), passing time (mean = 4.11, SD = 0.079), and medium appeal (mean = 4.09, SD = 0.087) strongly motivate respondents to use Twitter. Meanwhile, other variables such as information sharing (mean = 3.54, SD = 0.17), self-expression (mean = 3.39, SD = 0.15), and self-documentation (mean = 3.11, SD = 0.090) are the less predictive motives for using Twitter. Hence, this much answers the first research question, whereby the motivations that propel UMS students to use Twitter are entertainment, convenience, passing time, and medium appeal. Based on these findings, it is clear that students do not use Twitter for information-based purposes but rather more for seeking entertainment, which is the strongest motivation. As a result, Twitter and its medium appeal, which includes cost-free and simple-to-use features, encourage students to use the platform. Findings showed that it can be deduced that Twitter is seen as no different from any other social media like Instagram, where the main driving force is entertainment.

The second research question refers to "do UMS students use Twitter to gratify a need for personal branding?" The U&G theory is used to shed some light on personal branding as a need that people seek to satisfy when using Twitter. According to the theory, people use social media to satisfy a variety of social and psychological needs. Moreover, past research uncovered that people do satisfy the need for personal branding, especially when they use social media for information seeking (Taksiran, 2019). In contrast, the research findings showed that UMS students do not necessarily use Twitter for self-branding, as the average score across all items that rate students' personal branding is 3.67, which is less than 4.00. Hence, the idea that students do not necessarily use Twitter to gratify a need for personal branding.

Apart from these reasons, the study also enhanced the literature on personal branding. As previously stated, personal is a relatively new concept, and there have been few studies conducted (Klein, 2002; Shaker & Hafiz, 2014), despite the emergence of social media in accelerating the concept's growth. Moreover, even though personal branding has become more inclusive for average people (Shepherd, 2005), there are still fewer studies from the perspective of university students. This is in spite of personal branding becoming crucial for students who are about to enter the job market.

Therefore, this research enriched the gaps in the literature by addressing whether UMS students use Twitter to fulfil the need for personal branding by borrowing the U&G perspective. These findings correspond to earlier literature that suggested students are unfamiliar with how to use social media efficiently for building online personal brands (Russ, 2015; Lewis, Messina, and Wellington, 2014; Górska, 2018). The research findings are also consistent with Górska's (2018) study, in which university students are found to be ineffectively using social media for building personal brands. This research specifically established that UMS students do not use Twitter professionally, even though various sources suggested that the platform holds potential for self-branding efforts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research attempted to investigate the motivations for using Twitter among UMS students and assess whether the students use the network to satisfy a need for personal branding. Moreover, the research identified an association between frequency of use and students' usage of Twitter for personal branding. The U&G theory was mainly applied in this study to shed some light on personal branding as a need that people seek to gratify when using social media. The major findings revealed that UMS students use Twitter due to the motivations of entertainment, convenience, passing time, and medium appeal. Meanwhile, the motivations of information sharing, self-expression, and self-documentation do not strongly suggest Twitter usage among the students.

It is interesting that UMS students use Twitter for entertainment and convenience despite all the notions that suggest that the platform is an information source and commonly used for social interaction. Furthermore, students are aware that employers now use social media as part of their recruitment efforts. However, they do not necessarily use Twitter for personal branding purposes. This, in turn, does not support the idea of personal branding as a need that students seek to gratify when they use Twitter. The research also discovered a small positive correlation between frequency of use and students' usage of Twitter for personal branding. This research helps contribute to the literature, particularly in an attempt to get pieces of information on university students' usage of Twitter for personal branding. Nevertheless, there is still a need for improvements, as there are several limitations in the current study. Future research should consider expanding the research area on personal branding, as it is already a growing concept as a result of the popularity of social media.

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