LinkedGreek:

Using a professional social platform
in crisis-era Greece

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New Media and Digital Culture

Master Thesis

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1. Introduction

Since 2009 the issue of the "Greek debt crisis" has made its appearance with consequences on a social and economic level, with the rate of unemployment vastly increasing. In fact, according to the Greek statistical authority (ELSTAT) the rate of unemployment in Greece at 2011 was 17,9% and at 2015 raised to 24,9%. On top of that, there is widespread a feeling of uncertainty about the future, leading especially young people to look for jobs in as many ways as possible, including advertisements, the word of mouth and social media. In fact, with reference to Cachia (2008), the social network sites "have grown from a niche to a mass online activity, in which tens of millions of internet users are engaged, both for leisure time and for work" (p.13).

To that extent, LinkedIn is a professional social network where its users have profiles, constituting their resumes in order to connect with colleagues or search for a job. LinkedIn' mission according to their official website is "to connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful, while getting access to people, jobs, news, updates, and insights" (https://www.linkedin.com/about-us?trk=hb_ft_about, retrieved at September 17, 2016). Indeed, Utz (2015) states that social media such as LinkedIn facilitate the extension of users' social networks, augmenting in that way their "social capital" (p.1).

As a matter of fact, the last few years more and more of my friends and acquaintances have started using LinkedIn, either when almost finishing with their studies or when they would start looking for job. Although LinkedIn is not as popular in Greece, as in other countries, there is an obvious rise in its use by Greek young people and professionals, as a result of the general rise of social media use. In combination with the socio-economic crisis, I was motivated to explore this phenomenon more in depth, and to investigate how Greek millennials use and perceive a professional platform such as LinkedIn, as well as

to what extent the socioeconomic situation in Greece might have a distinct effect on it. Besides, according to Douai et al. (3, 2014) "social media are important catalysts of social, economic, political and cultural change".

Thus, this paper will examine how do Greek millennials perceive the use of LinkedIn during the crisis-era Greece.

In order to make the research question more manageable, I will answer the following sub-questions:

1. How does a sample of millennials job seekers use LinkedIn and its specific features?

2. How does this sample represent and promote itself on LinkedIn?

3. Can the use of LinkedIn alleviate the socio-economic effects for these millennials?

There are many comparative studies of social network platforms, but little research has been made specifically regarding the use of LinkedIn within different contexts. Ergo, focusing on a unique case, this paper will provide a solid ground for future comparative studies and generalizations, as none has explored so far this side of crisis effects. On that account, my aim is to stand on the debate concerning the human value of new media, arguing whether new media technologies are helpful for human and economic development on a national cultural level in critical times or not. I was inspired by the ethnographic localized studies of Miller and Slater (2000) in Trinidad and Miller and Horst (2006) in Jamaica, who investigated whether the Internet and the mobile, respectively, could alleviate the poverty and the suffering in these small communities. Henceforth, in my case, I am eager to test whether and to what extent are Greek millennials more optimistic about their future during the crisis-era -where the rate of

unemployment and social inequality is quite high- by using the services of LinkedIn and, thus, being a part of an international online professional community.

That being the case, in order to properly frame my paper, I will first present the features and the affordances of LinkedIn in relation to the job seeking process and networking by several scholars, such as Jakoway (2012), Papacharissi (2009), Dikel and Roehm (2004), as well as Schepp and Schepp (2009). In addition, I will explore how people construct their online identities within social media platforms in combination with the sense of belonging, as mentioned by Malan (2009), Van Dijck (2013), Maheswaran et al. (2010) and Shaw and Gant (2002). To continue with, I will investigate how people narrate and perform these identities in social media, and especially in LinkedIn, in order to construct a contextualization for my analysis, based on scholars such as Roulin and Levashine (2016), Schwartz and Halegoua (2014), Pearson (2009), as well as Guillory and Hancock (2012). Finally, I will engage with relevant studies regarding the relationship between impression management in LinkedIn and professional recruitment, with reference to Goffman (1959), Caers and Castelyns (2010) and Chiang and Suen (2015), concluding with the notion of truthfulness and trust in social media as mentioned by Tang and Liu (2015), Papacharissi (2009), Van Dijk (2013) and Roulin and Lavashina (2016).

My methodology will include semi-structured interviews with Greek millennial users of LinkedIn seeking for job in crisis-era Greece, or that already have a job, but were using LinkedIn through their search. Thus, after presenting the affordances and use of LinkedIn alongside with the concepts of online self-presentation and impression management, through these interviews with Greek millennial users I am eager to explore which of the features they use most and how they represent themselves in LinkedIn, aiming to discover how they perceive the network, as well as whether the crisis has a distinct effect on it. Based on scholars such as Robson and McCartan (2016), Gill et al. (2008), Gillham (2005), and Ragin and Becker (1992), I will construct an interview guide with predefined

themes, aiming to extract from my respondents the respective outcomes. After carrying out the interviews, based on my field notes and recordings, through a content analysis I will try to interpret and classify the data into thematic categories depending on relevant patterns, in order to answer my research question and sub-questions concerning the use and perception of Greek millennials during the crisis-era.

2. The professional self

2.1. LinkedIn's features and affordances

In this first sub-chapter, I will describe the basic features and affordances of LinkedIn, as well as the structure of a LinkedIn profile (Appendix no 3) in order to provide the necessary context for the interviews regarding the use of LinkedIn by Greek millennials. To begin with, a LinkedIn profile has a specific structure that resembles with a traditional resume, starting with a single (formal) photograph of users as "eye-catcher" (Van Dijck, 2013, p.208), aiming to promote their professional self and to "create an impression of being conscientious through a professional-looking profile picture" (Roulin and Levashina, 2016, p.239). Besides, Van Dijck (2013) has mentioned that the emergence of digital technologies has extended the purpose of photography to the creation of people's identities and self-representation (p.61). Indeed, Harrisson (2002) deduced that the recent years there was a significant change to the use of photography, from "family representation to self-representation" (p.87-111). To that extent, in the LinkedIn photo it's advised to put one professional image, which also reflects the user's personality as much as one photo can do.

Next to the photo there is space for a user' name and working area or job title. Jacoway (2012) states that in the section of the working area it's suggested to "put industry information to improve one's chances of being found, by thinking about key words people will use to search in this area" (p.63). To that extent, Papacharissi (2009) highlights the emergence of the "taste ethos" (p.212), which starts from the initial act of connecting to a specific network. Being a user of LinkedIn "communicates a statement of class and profession" (p.212), and that also explains why the job title and experience are being presented in a structured and detailed format, providing little space for customization.

Below the photograph and the headline there is space for a 'Summary', where users have the freedom to describe themselves and their skills, either in a text format or with bullets in order to promote their professional persona, including sometimes a short presentation of their self and social skills or a summary of their profile. Jacoway (2012) also highlights that the 'Summary' section is ideal for users to "express their personal brand and show what unique value of promise they can bring to the table" (p.65).

To continue with, there are the sections of educational background and working experience in the form of lists, formatted automatically in a chronological order based on the respective dates inserted from the users, followed by the user's skills and expertise where their connections can endorse them at any time, in order to confirm their authenticity. Subsequently, at this point it is evident that the platform imposes a specific structure of a resume, including also an area for recommendations from former colleagues or employers, so that the users' professional profile will be additionally verified and their personal brand will be strengthened. Furthermore, at the bottom of a LinkedIn profile, users can fill in any volunteering experience and the causes they care about, as well as any organizations or groups they are members of and the people they are connected to. In addition, LinkedIn offers to its users the possibility to share with their contacts any change or addition they make in their profiles if they want to.

Moreover, LinkedIn has a 'search button', where users can search for people, companies, articles, as well as groups they might want to join groups in LinkedIn, which can offer an efficient method for professional networking during the job seeking process (Jacoway, 2012, p.64). Indeed, LinkedIn is used predominantly for job searching. Thus, the platform provides an additional 'job search' button, a useful tool where users can type their job title and find all the available advertisements from companies, which are also sent to their personal email every week. Through this feature users can apply to a job advertisement either by using their LinkedIn profile or sending their traditional resume to the

company's official email. To that extent, according to Dikel and Roehm (2004) "a complete job search involves four activities, including networking, researching and contacting employers about possible opportunities, reviewing job leads and preparing a resume and distributing it" (p.2). Therefore, Schepp and Schepp (2009) advise people who want to find a job online to join professional platforms, such as LinkedIn, create effective online profiles, build a circle of business contacts, and "marketing themselves" (para.3). Hence, the process of searching a job online connects immediately with the construction of the professional self, which includes all the aforementioned practices in order to get strengthened.

Nevertheless, in LinkedIn, users have a restricted freedom for customization of their profile –and, thereupon, of their identity- with predetermined space, sections and keywords to use. To put in a nutshell, LinkedIn consists of numerous features that afford all the aforementioned practices, but at the same time imposes a specific behavior of its users, entailing to a normative creation of people's professional self within the platform. To that extent, in the next sub-chapters, I will explore in depth how online identities are being constructed, performed and promoted in social media, and more specifically in LinkedIn, in order to provide a solid grounding for the interviews with Greek users.

2.2. Construction of online identities in social media platforms and sense of belonging

To begin with, it is significant for this research to explore how people identify themselves in social media and more specifically in LinkedIn. With reference to Mallan (2009), when someone creates an online profile, "the resultant identity is a certain mode or process for realizing possibilities, as it gives a particular interpretation or representation of the subject; a process that is apt to change according to context" (p.54). There are three dominant subjects connected with online identities: "form, content and accuracy" (Maheswaran et al., 2010, p.242). On that account, according to Maheswaran et al. (2010)

as online identities can be considered the online profiles of users on social media, as well as their associated data and the connections they have with other people (p.265). Indeed, Mallan (2009) has mentioned that social network systems "provide new spaces and ways for virtual identities to be constructed, visually presented, and narrated" (p.52).

Along these lines, social networks do construct users' identities, depending on their affordances and imposed actions. In fact, Papacharissi (2009) deduces that the architecture of a social network is respective to the existential purpose of the platform and can impose the self-presentation and identities of users (p.196). This observation confirms the thesis that technology suggests specific uses, underlining the concept of the technological affordances. On that account, a looser space entails more flexible affordances, permitting an interaction between the human actor and the technology, whereas a tighter space shapes more effectively users' practices. As far as LinkedIn is concerned, both Papacharissi (2009) and Van Dijck (2013) have indeed mentioned that the platform's interface has more tied spaces in relation to other social networks, which, besides, corresponds with the purpose of its existence as a business-oriented network, leaving less space for "spontaneous interaction" (Papacharissi, p.199).

Additionally, the notion of belonging plays a major role in the construction and performance of user' identity, which, in fact, according to Bauman (2004) was "born out of the crisis of belonging" (p. 20) and at the same time is demonstrated through this sense of belonging (Robards and Bennett, 2011, p.310). The Internet is a technology that overcomes geographical limitations and brings close people that share the same interests or identities, and thus enhance the interpersonal relationships of users (Shaw and Gant, 2002, p.158), both on a personal and a professional level. To that extent, according to the study of Shaw and Gant (2002) the Internet use was found to decrease loneliness and depression remarkably, as well as perceived social support and people's self-esteem due to the "social involvement" (p.157-9). Hence, regarding my research, the fact of being a

member of the LinkedIn community, could enhance Greek millennials users' self-esteem, which has been deteriorating due to the crisis and the high rate of unemployment with reference to several studies from scholars, such as Zavras et al. (2012), Economou et al. (2012) and Matsaganis (2011).

2.3. Online self-presentation and impression management on LinkedIn

2.3.1. The narrative self in social media

To continue with, in this sub-chapter, I will present how people narrate and perform these online identities within social media and platforms. Ricoeur (1991) presents the meaning of the narrative identity as the one that people can "access thanks to the mediation of the narrative function" (p.73). To that extent, Schwartz and Halegoua (2014) have highlighted the extended research concerning online practices of self-presentation and impression management in social media (p.1645). Indeed, Van Dijck (2013) highlights that "social media are popular stages for self-expression, communication and self-promotion, after a change in platforms' architectures from databases of personal information to tools for (personal) storytelling and narrative self-presentation" (p.202).

As a result, from platforms for connectivity, social media have become nowadays narrators of users' identities and stories, shifting from a database logic of the platform to a narrative one. On that account, according to Mallan (2009) social platforms create the appropriate environment and space for users to construct and narrate their online identities from the beginning, even if they are not exact duplicates of their real ones: "the narratives of identity and agency that have traditionally been available to young people, are being complemented by new possibilities that are the direct outcome of their participation in the larger, technologically mediated world" (p.53-4). Adjusting this statement to the case of this paper, LinkedIn, as the largest professional network, offers to Greek millennials users the opportunity to create and present their professional self as they want it to within the restricted underline structure of the platform.

Furthermore, Van Dijck (2013) mentions that people have the need to construct and narrate more than one different life story based on the respective parts of their identity (p.211). In addition, the convergence of public and private spaces in social media platforms entails different types of self-presentation, defined as a "face depending on the situational context" (Papacharissi, 2009, p. 210), which is developed and substantiated by users' circle of friends. To that extent, according to Robards and Bennett (2011) performing identity online enhances users' interaction (p.307), allowing them to "go on in each other's' presence" (Bauman, 1996, p.19). Pearson (2009) highlighted that these performances of users' online identity develop within their imagination and get projected with the assistance of tools, such as the technology (??). With these tools users can constantly "renegotiate and continuously revise their consensual social hallucination to create not only online selves, but also the staging and setting in which these selves exist"(Robards and Bennett, 2011, p.307).

Thus, the configuration of the suitable identity performance can be difficult due to the widely varied audience, including friends, family, acquaintances, colleagues etc. (p. 308). People have a different persona, when it comes to colleagues and employers, than with friends, and resultantly they have to learn how to manage each platform's profile and privacy settings appropriately. By all means, online self-presentation, as a kind of performance, depends on the users' target audience. On the one hand, in personal social media networks, people want to interact with their friends and "increase their online popularity" (Roulin and Lavashina, 2016, p.239), by posting interesting articles and photographs. On the other hand, "professional profiles are built like extended online resumes for career related purposes" (p.239). Likewise, in LinkedIn users have a specific audience, the professional one, which makes the building of the identity a clearer process than in other social networks. Thus, users aim to create a strong online image of

competence, by highlighting and even exaggerating their skills and accomplishments; a practice that will be analyzed in the following chapters.

2.3.2. Self-presentation in LinkedIn

At this point, it is evident that the underlying structure of social networks controls the pattern of users' self-presentation. In particular, as aforementioned in the first chapter, LinkedIn -as a business oriented network- imposes a specific format of users' profile similar to the traditional resumes, focusing on people's education and professional experience and including the possibility of endorsing one's skills or writing recommendations. Although LinkedIn has this specific orientation in users' profile, the platform shares similar strategies of narrative and connectivity with others famous social networks, such as Facebook. To that extent, Van Dijck (2013) highlights that both social networks, Facebook and LinkedIn, construct a specific "normative behavior" (p.212) for their users through platform's interface, which has become a significant tool for shaping identities and self-presentation. Notwithstanding, LinkedIn specializes in facilitating the communication and networking among colleagues and the sharing of knowledge and professional experiences, imposing the creation of a professional persona.

More specifically, according to Caers and Castelyns (2010) LinkedIn is appropriate for keeping up-to date on friends' professional development, as well as for other organizations, in contrary to Facebook which serves only for social networking (p.438). Hence, the creators of LinkedIn acknowledge the interaction between the underlying structure and users' practices, by focusing both in connectivity as well as in a subtly narrative business-oriented profile of the users. Features such as "People you may know" confirm the connective turn of LinkedIn, as well as the social ads "X people in your network like this group".

Additionally, social media platforms, like LinkedIn, have transformed the notion of "mass self-communication" (Van Dijk, 2013, p. 210). Users have learned how to exploit

the platform for their own advantage aiming to self-promotion, while advertisers always find a way to do the same thing, even when users are not aware of it. As a result, the platform's owners have to manage users' expectations with business interests. However, there are different types of users with different needs and demands from the platform, each of them with "multiple stories about themselves addressing to a limited audience" (p.211). Nonetheless, all users get to be more careful with their self-presentation in social media when seeking for job, as recruiters seem to check candidates' online profiles, in order to get a more authenticated image than from their formatted CV. Thus, in the analysis chapter I will present how Greek millennials narrate and represent themselves in LinkedIn and to what extent they are mindful of the professional purpose of the platform.

2.3.3. Impression management in LinkedIn and professional recruitment

With reference to Goffman (1959) impression management is the process where individuals adjust their behaviors and share their information selectively depending on the audience: personal or professional (p.22). To that extent, Roulin and Levashina (2016) have stated that social media are the ideal platforms for impression management as "they allow people to easily control or manipulate information and content" (p.229), and especially job seekers "do engage in various forms of impression management" (p.223). In addition, there was a recent "connective turn" in social media platforms (Van Dijk, 2013, p.202), that enlarged the networking community and consequently making users more mindful of each platforms' mechanisms and how to manipulate them for their own benefit. Therefore, the process of impression management and promotion of the self has become already a natural phenomenon, starting from famous personas, which have learned so far to create their online brands efficiently.

Nowadays the online community, -which is in fact "a manifestation of the physical community" (Chiang and Suen, 2015, p.517)- plays an important role in people's lives,

including the professional world, with companies seeking for future job candidates in social networks such as LinkedIn and job seekers creating more and more positive self-presented online profiles to impress the recruiters. In fact, LinkedIn has become the most used professional social networks both for recruiters and job seekers, initiating "a new era of workforce recruitment" (p.517).

Users are engaging into different types of practices when it comes to impress their online friends, but take more time to adjust their profile in order to create "the desired impression" for professional reasons (p.229). In particular, according to Van Dijk (2013) "on professional social media such as LinkedIn, users tend to build a narrative of competences and past job experiences" (p.204). With reference to Chiang and Suen (2015) the purpose of online self-presentation for job seekers is to create a strong image and resume according to a "script concept" (p. 517) that will be matched with recruiters' expectations. More specifically, regarding the job applicants, "their objective is to be perceived as qualified for a specific job and be hired" (Roulin and Levashina 2016, p.225), and thus they orient their profile according to the employer's expectations and selection criteria (p.227).

In particular, LinkedIn requests from its users not to describe their life story, but to point out their strong skills and professional experiences in order to attract potential employers. Nonetheless, people use also LinkedIn to network and seek partnerships, which affects the content and the use of the platform, something that might cause confusion in the process of job seeking, as it might include unnecessary or undesired characteristics for the recruiters. Here comes the role of impression management, entailing the promotion of specific elements of users' profiles which will increase the possibilities for future hiring recommendations. To that extent, job seekers that engage with impression management practices, are highly careful with whom to connect,

selecting users that could potentially help them during their career (Roulin and Levashina, 2016, p.239).

Consequently, social media can affect the recruitment both in the selection process of candidates and in the final selection of employees. Therefore, job seekers must be mindful of their online practices and interactions, as future employers can have easyaccess to their online profiles and create a positive or negative impression for their persona (Caers and Castelyns, 2010 p.7). On the other hand, social networks can also benefit users, by sharing information for job vacancies that might interest their connections. Finally, it has been revealed that LinkedIn can indeed help a job seeker when having references from former colleagues and a full description of their professional experience, as well as the number of connections (Caers and Castelyns, 2010, p.7). That being the case, after exploring how Greek millennials users construct their online professional identity in the analysis chapter, I will demonstrate as well how they promote and adjust their persona in order to match with recruiters' expectations based on the aforementioned theories regarding the connection between impression management and professional recruitment.

2.4. Trust and truthfulness in LinkedIn

To continue with, after presenting how people construct and perform their online identities in social media and in particular in LinkedIn, it is essential to discuss, at this final sub-chapter, about the notions of trust and truthfulness within these platforms in relation to the construction of users' identity. More specifically, according to Tang and Liu (2015) the notion of trust in social media regards the audience that users trust to share and accept information from: "with trust, we make the mental shortcut by directly seeking information from trustees or trusted entities, which serves a two-fold purpose: without being overwhelmed by excessive information and with credible information due to the trust placed on the information provider" (p.1). As a matter of fact, Trepte (2015) has distinct two interpretations of online communication: "on the one hand we mean the

warm affordances including sharing and networking, and on the other hand, the cold affordances, which entail accepting that all is shared with an unknown company that sells personal information at an unknown price" (p.1). Indeed, all social media platforms impose a specific architecture and privacy agreements which are presented within the "terms of use", as well as with options that users can change manually depending on how public or private they want their profile to be; "this agreement is an integral part of social media use, and as such, an affordance of use" (Trepte, 2015, p.1).

By that account, LinkedIn first imposes the existence of a "transparent self" (Van Dijk, 2013, p.212) through the interface strategy of the mandatory 'real name policy', which appears the moment users create their online profile, thus linking the offline with the online identity of users instantly (Maheswaran et al., 2010, p.244). In addition, Papacharissi (2009) has studied the architecture of LinkedIn in order to reveal how its underlying structure can afford specific practices, identifying the connection between private and public being developed in three stages. At the first level comes the criteria for membership, where LinkedIn is open to everyone, but is mostly used by professionals and students. On the second level comes the access to member profiles, where LinkedIn offers to its users the possibility to determine who and what can see in their profiles. Finally, LinkedIn has a multilevel access starting with the "gated-access approach" (p.204), where in order for someone to connect with another user, it is mandatory to define their pre-existing relationship. To put it simply, users can manage in several ways who and what others can view in their professional profile depending on the level of trust and familiarity among them. To that extent, "the public display of users' connections", which is of great significance for their identity performance, "can also be considered as an indicator of users' reliability" (Boyd and Heer, 2006, p.73). Thus, if users want their online personas to be "established and verified" (Papacharissi, 2009, p.210), they should keep their circle of connections open to the public.

To continue with, another significant related concept to the notion of trust in LinkedIn, is the one of truthfulness regarding the identity and information presented in one's profile. To that extent, according to Roulin and Lavashina (2016) "the impression management tactics of social media users could be either honest or deceptive" (p.230). In other words, people tend to represent themselves in order to satisfy others' expectations and preferences, entailing sometimes to deceptive resumes. Indeed, with reference to Guillory and Hancock (2012) the publicness of online self-representation can determine how users will deceive in their resumes in order to obtain their goals, by choosing carefully where to exaggerate or lie, depending on the possibility of an online confirmation (p.135). That is to say, the willingness for enhanced online self-presentation and impression management leads people to an attentive deception.

In fact, Guillory and Hancock (2012) first studied how LinkedIn constructs themes of deception in users' resumes, arresting the belief that "online communication is more deceptive than traditional formats due to the flexible affordances of computer mediated communication", taking as example the case of LinkedIn (p.138-9). More specifically, they argue that people are mainly honest about their professional experience and skills in the LinkedIn resumes, as their future employers can easily confirm these statements based on other's recommendations or available online links and databases, whereas users tend to be more deceptive in the section of personal hobbies and interests (p.136).

In other words, the publicness of users' resumes renders people to be more mindful on what to include and to what extent to exaggerate in the context of impression management. Everyone seeks to create a positive online identity, from which they can benefit on a social but also a professional level, entailing to a partial deception. Finally, Roulin and Lavashina (2016) came to add that users with high narcissism or low consciousness and self-esteem are most likely to use impression management on their LinkedIn profiles (p.231). Hence, given the fact that the crisis in Greece has affected the

self-esteem of young job seekers due to the high rate of unemployment, this final sub-chapter aims to provide a contextualization for the interviews with Greek millennials users of LinkedIn, in order to investigate to what extent the crisis has influenced their impression management tactics and ethical limits.

3. Methodology: Media Ethnography

3.1. Introduction

Jensen (2013) has highlighted the importance of qualitative research in media studies "in order to explore empirically how the media generate meaning, as cultural artefacts provide people with a sense of identity and a means of orienting oneself in social interaction" (p.236). Bower (1973) in fact has said that "the best way to find out what people think about something is to ask them" (vi). Indeed, according to Robson and McCartan (2016) interviews is one of the most used qualitative research methods for data collection (p.228), aiming to reveal insightful elements about how the research population encounters particular states of affairs. (Gill et al. 2008, p.292). The respondents are considered as the "representatives of a social and cultural category" (Jensen, 2010, p.240).

More specifically, there are three main types of interviews, structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Gill et al. 2008, p.291), as well as three types of questions, including close, open and scale ones (Robson and McCartan, 2016, p.288). The structured interviews have a predetermined sequence of the questions (p.321), whereas the semi-structured ones have a less tight sequence and formulation of the questions that can change based on the answers of the respondent and the flow of the conversation (p.331). What is more, in semi-structure interviews there is also space for follow-up and prompt questions based on the respective thematic area, in order to go in-depth and extract from the interviewee all the desirable information for the research (Gill et al., 2008, p.291). Likewise, using open questions can also help in revealing unpredicted findings, as the interviewers can adjust the way they will pose the questions, in contrary to the closed questions that control the way interviewees respond (p.327).

What is more, there are three criteria that must be taken into account when designing the interviews: the duration, the structures and the depth (p.241). The duration depends on

the purpose of the research, as well as to practical circumstances. The most challenging part when planning the interviews is how to structure them in order to have the desirable results. On that account, an interview guide with predefined but not closed themes is a useful tool, in order to address the aiming issues extract the appropriate answers from the respondents for the research, and create eventually their "data-collection plan" (Kennedy, 2006, para.3).

3.2. Justification and general planning

As far as this research is concerned, I carried out semi-structured interviews with open questions, followed by prompts when necessary, as I was eager to explore how my respondents use and perceive LinkedIn in crisis-era Greece and extract from each respondent all the helpful information according to their varied educational and professional background. My questions were based on specific issues based on an interview guide I created (Appendix no2): some general questions about LinkedIn and how they perceive its use, some more specific questions about its features, and finally some questions about how they represent themselves on LinkedIn. However, the sequence of the questions depended on the flow of the conversation, including also prompts when necessary, aiming to extract any significant and unpredicted findings.

Concerning the interviews with Greek millennial users my target was between 25-30 years old (Appendix no 3), with an active LinkedIn account, unemployed that want to find job in Greece, or recently employed that were looking for job for a long period and were using the LinkedIn. I paid attention to have as much diversity both in educational background and working experience as I could, as well as in gender. On top of that, I chose this specific age range as they are the ones who deal with the immediate effects of crisis at the beginning of their professional career, and at the same time is a generation highly familiar with technology ("digital natives", Prensky, 2001). I interviewed eight Greek users, five girls and three boys. Finally, all users were friends or acquaintances to

whom I was connected on my personal LinkedIn profile. However, as Ragin and Becker (1992) have highlighted, before the research starts there was an agreement from both sides that during the interviews we will have a research relationship, as researcher-object (p.151).

In addition, all the interviews were carried out face-to-face in order to collect the desirable data and gain further insights in a relaxed atmosphere, as the respondents would feel more comfortable to discuss their online practices in person (Boyce and Neale, 2006, p.3). During the interviews, I was keeping 'field notes' regarding the most important information from each answer and at the same time I was recording with my phone – after asking for permission from the interviewees– so that I would not miss any information and be able afterwards to carry out a proper data analysis (Gill et al., 2008, p.292-3). The duration of the interviews varied from 10-40 minutes, depending on the flow of the conversation and the willingness of the respondents to provide detailed answers to each question. Due to the fact that the language of the interviews was Greek, I didn't transcribe the answers, but after listening the recording, I wrote down all the main issues from each interview and I translated some important parts to quote in my results in order to provide authentication of the research.

Finally, when analyzing the interviews I carried out a content analysis and divided my questions into several thematic parts based on relevant patterns. According to the digital library of the University of Surrey, content analysis is "a procedure for the categorization of verbal or behavioral data, for purposes of classification, summarization and tabulation". Likewise, Gillham (2005) indicates that when researchers carry out a content analysis, they have to classify the most significant issues of the interviews, by distinguishing them and placing them into the respective categories (p.135). Having the categories in the center of analysis, Mayring (200) highlights that "the aspects of text interpretation, following the research questions, are putted into categories, which were

carefully founded and revised within the process of analysis" (p.3). Hence, I tried to interpret and classify the data from the interviews in order to comprehend the information collected and to reveal any significant findings, in order to answer my research question and sub-questions.

3.3. Limitations of methodology

Regarding the limitations of this research, some people might argue that a small sample of interviewees cannot provide the desired results and a solid ground for generalizations. However, according to Boyce and Neale (2006), "the sufficient sample size has been reached when the same themes, issues and topics are emerging for the respondents" (p.4). Indeed, after conducting the first three interviews I was already observing that the respondents shared several similar beliefs and I decided to interview at least five more users in order to ensure that I would have as much variety as I can, aiming to make the sample representative.

In addition, according to Newton, (2010) "the success and validity of an interview rests on the extent to which the respondent's opinions are truly reflected; the interviewee's 'voice', communicating their perspective" (p.4). In the case of the semi-structured interviews I carried out, threads to their validity could be the leading questions based on the interview guide I created, alongside with my preconceived ideas that might have affected what was and was not worth discussing, potentially resulting to be prone to bias. However, I ensured during the interviews that my respondents were truly heard. On top of that, the validity of the interviews has been challenged by the live nature of face-to-face interviews, combined with the difficulties of verbal communication and the correct use of language. Nonetheless, "this same vulnerability and complexity produces a richness and depth to data worth many of the risks" (Newton, 2010, p.5).

4. Results & Discussion

4.1. Introduction

After analyzing the responses from the interviews, through a content analysis I divided the answers that were alike into thematic groups, adding any significant exceptions that came out in each group. More specifically, within the next sub-chapters I will present and reflect on the findings from each thematic group, starting with how Greek millennials perceive LinkedIn as a professional social network, continuing with the way they use it and represent themselves online and ending with the issue of truthfulness in LinkedIn throughout the crisis-era.

4.2. Greek millennials' perception of LinkedIn

To begin with, most of the users created a LinkedIn profile after they finished their bachelor or master studies and were at the stage of looking for a job, as they were told that it is essential to have a LinkedIn profile nowadays. Thus, the use of LinkedIn was kind of imposed from social circumstances, pushing all Greek millennials to create an online professional profile in order to be active members of the professional community.

All users are highly aware of the usefulness as well as the necessity of having a LinkedIn profile nowadays. They acknowledge that it is an easy-to-use platform, that assists the networking, as well as the job seeking process, and keeps users always up-to-date with professional news that are "only one click away" (Evelyn K., 26 years old, unemployed). Thusly, the respondents confirmed the statement of Chiang and Suen (2015) about LinkedIn initiating "a new era of workforce recruitment" (p.517). In fact, one respondent, Francesco P. (26 years old, unemployed), highlighted the importance of the platform, stating that "Nowadays, if you do not have a LinkedIn profile, you do not exist in the professional world", confirming the "taste ethos" of professional networks that reveals the class and profession of users as Papacharissi has mentioned (2009, p.212). In other

words, Francesco connects his professional self and identity independently with the use of LinkedIn. In fact, LinkedIn becomes his online professional identity. Another respondent, Maria X. (25 years old, employed), actually called the platform "the new Facebook," as she uses it to check on friends and find out what they are doing on a professional level, confirming that LinkedIn is appropriate for keeping up-to date on friends' professional development (Caers and Castelyns, 2010).

Likewise, most of the respondents think that there are, indeed, more opportunities through LinkedIn, as there are a lot of companies that post job openings exclusively on the platform, rendering the platform as a necessary tool in the job seeking process. However, there was one respondent, Nicole K. (26 years old, unemployed), who believed that one can find almost the same job offers in LinkedIn as, for example, in Google search.

Furthermore, all the respondents claim that the use of LinkedIn is more prevalent abroad, with the majority of them talking about the delayed arrival of technology in Greece, resulting in a smaller amount both of companies and professionals that use LinkedIn. To that extent, Francesco P. continued, by stating that most recruiters in Greece are of an older age and, therefore, are not yet familiar with online recruitment, especially in some fields. This generation is what Prensky (2001) calls "digital immigrants", meaning people that were born before the emergence of digital technology and struggle to adopt as many aspects of this world as they can (p.2). This statement also explains why LinkedIn in Greece is more prevalent in specific domains, such as digital marketing, communication and consultancy, where professionals are already more familiar with digital technologies and social media. Likewise, another respondent, Fragiskos Z. (28 years old, employed), confirmed the above statement, adding that, in Greece, the interpersonal relationships still play an important role in the professional world. Hence, Greek millennials have to create a strong professional self and focus in networking both in the physical and the digital world.

Finally, although LinkedIn can be significantly useful throughout the job seeking process and networking, all the respondents stated that they would not pay for the premium account unless they were really desperate and had nothing else to count on, specifying that the premium account offer is not "value for money" (Francesco P.) or does not ensure that they will get a job. In fact, some of the respondents had tried for free this version of LinkedIn and admitted that it had some benefits such as receiving more job advertisements or being able to see who else had applied for one, but it did not get them a job, thus, in the end, it did not really matter whether they had the basic or premium account. In other words, given the fact that digital technologies are mostly available for free to its users, with an abundance of information they can find and numerous ways to represent themselves online, people would pay for a service like this, only if there were visible benefits to this choice.

4.3. Use of LinkedIn by Greek millennials

To continue with, half of the respondents stated that they visit LinkedIn daily or at least two times per week. In addition, all the respondents mentioned that they use the basic features of LinkedIn such as networking, looking for a job or getting informed about corporate news. In the same way, half of them tend to join 'LinkedIn Groups' either for networking or to keep up with corporate events and updates. Besides, as Schepp and Schepp (2009) have mentioned, these practices are essential during the job seeking process, and whereas the construction of their professional self. However, all the respondents noticed that there are not many Greek groups and, thus, they are not really interested in the content of the existing groups, from which they already receive too much worthless information. In fact, one respondent, Fay R., stated that sometimes she does not even get accepted in some groups. Hence, Greek millennials face some barriers throughout their LinkedIn use and their professional self-construction accordingly.

Most of the respondents used to have the 'Views Count' feature enabled in order to be able to check who sees their profile and to look through theirs in return, as this enhances their presence within the platform. By all means, this datafication of their professional self gives them a sense of additional security and confidence, as the more people view their profile the stronger they feel about their presence and professional identity in LinkedIn. Moreover, more than half of the interviewees stated that they do not view numerous profiles with no reason, as "It is not like Facebook (Christos P.)," but they do have a look at recruiters' profiles when they are searching for a job, in order to make their presence more visible. Consequently, Greek users of LinkedIn strategically use the 'Views Count' feature as an additional tool during their job seeking process, in order to 'impose', in a way, the attention of the potential recruiters and employers. Hence, at this point it is evident that users have learned how to manipulate LinkedIn's platform mechanisms and affordances for their own benefit, as Roulin and Levashina (2016) have mentioned.

Concerning the section of 'Recommendations' in LinkedIn, only one respondent had already one recommendation from a former employer, but all the other respondents stated that they intended to ask former employers or colleagues to write one for them, as it proves to be an additional asset to their professional profile. As Sophia X. highlighted, "Recommendations are the finishing touch you can add to your profile to make it credible and authenticated." Thus, this feature of LinkedIn functions as an additional verification of the professional identity users have created and promote in the platform, which strengthens their online persona. Indeed, Caers and Castelyns (2010) have revealed that having references from former colleagues or employers can demonstrably help users during their job searching.

Most of the users admitted that they do not fill the section of 'Summary'. However, there was a distinction between users who stated that they would include only their work

experience and respondents that would add a description of their soft skills as well. In addition, Christos P. actually said that he has adjusted the cover letter that he encloses when applying for job positions, in order to have a summary of his resume in this section. Moreover, one respondent, Fay R., stated that she would not write about her character, as she believes that it is something one cannot write about but will be shown in the actual interview. Hence, connecting to what Jacoway (2012) has mentioned, most Greek millennials are not yet highly familiar with promoting also their "personal brand" through this section, and show to the recruiters "what they can bring to the table" (p.65). In fact, they perceive differentially how they should construct their professional persona and what kind of things they should include about themselves, which would promote their self efficiently in potential recruiters and their connections. Some believe that they should keep their LinkedIn profile strictly about their professional experience. Others, however, take advantage of the 'Summary' section of LinkedIn to promote their personality and soft skills as well, in order to create a complete image of their personal and professional self.

Furthermore, given that the respondents use LinkedIn to look for a job on a regular basis, they all take advantage of the 'Job Search' feature, inserting either one or multiple keywords -depending on their job title- usually based on one location (Athens, Greece), in order to have consistency on the emails they receive about job openings. All of them agreed that it is a really useful feature of LinkedIn, which differentiates the platform from other professional websites, as it has several filters and options that make their search a lot easier. On that account, it is evident that the keywords offered by LinkedIn actually determine the professional identity that users can choose in order to look for the job they want to, confirming once again the significant role of social media during the process of online identity construction (Papacharissi, 2009).

4.4. Self-presentation of Greek millennial users during crisis

To continue with, the respondents were aware of the distinction between their presence in other social networks and the professional appearance that they must have in LinkedIn, which corresponds with their online professional persona. As Papacharissi (2009) has already indicated, users construct their self-presentation depending on the "situational context" (p. 210) and the "target audience" (Roulin and Lavashina, 2016, p.239). In fact, Greek users stated that they are definitely more cautious concerning their activity in LinkedIn than in other social media, as its purpose is professional and the platform itself imposes a specific behavior and self-presentation, leaving little room for the users to personalize their profiles. Besides, Papacharissi (2009) has highlighted about the imposed self-presentation of users within the platform that corresponds to the existential professional purpose of LinkedIn (p.196). One respondent, Christos B. (30 years old, employed), actually stated that "LinkedIn is my professional image, which can either boost or jeopardize my career, therefore, how could I not pay extreme attention to retaining my status?" Hence, as Caers and Castelyns (2010) have stated, indeed Greek job seekers are mindful of their online practices and interactions in LinkedIn, since future employers can have easily access to their online profiles and create a positive or negative impression for their persona (p.7).

However, there was a distinction between users that were highly aware of the strictly professional purpose of the platform and that were mindful with whom to connect and how to comment on an article or within a group, and, on the other hand, there were users who had a professional profile on LinkedIn but did not always pay so much attention to maintaining a carefully strategic and consistent attitude within the platform. What is interesting, though, is that most of the respondents tend to connect either with people they are somehow acquainted with or with people that seem credible and "might have something to give them at some point, especially if they are from the same work area"

(Fragiskos Z., Vilma D., Christos B.). Therefore, at this point comes the issue of trust, with users enlarging their professional circle even with people they don't know, but whose profile seems reliable. Besides, the circle of friends plays an important role in people's self-presentation and identities, as Papacharissi (2009) has already highlighted. Thus, given that LinkedIn is a professional network, most Greek users are mindful of their practices, and perceive every action they make within the platform as business, by connecting with people that might be useful somehow for them in the future. As a matter of fact, Roulin and Levashina (2016) have already indicated that the job seekers "don't blindly accumulate connections on professional social media, but decide selectively people that might help them in their job search and career"(p.239).

In addition, most of the respondents usually include almost the same things in LinkedIn as in their traditional resume, but there is a distinction between people who say that they are a bit more analytical on their LinkedIn profile and others that are more detailed on their traditional resume, especially regarding the field of education. Hence, the majority of users create their online identity based on the things they have already written in their traditional resumes, which they just adjust into the predetermined space and sections of LinkedIn. One respondent, Francesco P., mentioned that he does not want to disclose every detail about his education because it can be viewed by anyone, indicating once again the issue of trust in social media. In fact, LinkedIn differentiates from other social media, as people aim to promote their professional self, not only to people they know, but to any potential business co-worker, employer or recruiter. Thereupon, the imposed purpose of the platform forces users to publicize the majority of their profile, in order to attract people that they are not yet connected to. Besides, as Guillory and Hancock (2012) have stated, this publicness of users' self-presentation in LinkedIn, makes them more mindful on what and how to include in their professional profile, and thus how detailed their professional self will be.

In addition, most of the respondents stated that they update their LinkedIn profile at the same time with their traditional resume, except for Fay R. On that account, Sophia X., noted that, when it comes to a new job, she does not update her LinkedIn profile immediately, but does so after a couple of weeks, so that she will not seem to be flaunting. What is more, Francesco P. stated that he may have to adjust his traditional resume, depending on the job position he applies to, so he needs his LinkedIn profile to be more general, in order to be relevant for every potential job application. Besides, Sharone (2013) has mentioned that "the real key to getting a job is establishing one's fit with a particular self" (p.2), connecting independently the job search with the construction of one's professional self (Schepp and Schepp, 2009). Thus, users should change and adjust their professional self depending on the different requirements of job applications, in order to have as more chances as possible to get hired. Likewise, another respondent, Evelyn K., brought forward the issue of LinkedIn's tight structure, stating that, when building a profile, there are highly specific options in some areas and sometimes it is not easy for her to write everything she wants. Consequently, some Greek users distinct their physical professional persona from the digital one, not only due to the publicness of LinkedIn, but also because of the restricted space and options of the platform. Notably, Papacharissi (2009) has highlighted that the architecture of a social network is respective to the existential purpose of the platform and can impose the self-presentation and identities of users, which in the case of LinkedIn is tight and business oriented.

On top of that, most of the respondents revealed that they get inspired by what other people from the same work area write in their profiles, -this usually happens only when they first create their profiles or during the job seeking process-, in order to get ideas from how others structure and present their career and educational path. By way of explanation, people tend to create their online self-presentation based on existing examples in order to get accepted from the online community by having a normative

profile, and in the case of LinkedIn, a proper professional one. Regardless, it is interesting that respondents who already have a job state that the career path which other people follow stimulates their own careers, showing that when users have already established their professional self on LinkedIn and have found a job, they go a step further, and try to evolve their professional career based on information they can found on others' LinkedIn profiles.

Moreover, all the respondents use to pay attention to the photo they must choose for their profile, as it is an essential criterion that shows their professionalism as well as their persona, confirming once again the "script concept" that job seekers follow in order to create a strong image and resume that will be matched with recruiters' expectations (Chiang and Suen, 2015, p.517). For that reason, they select the appropriate photo which pictures themselves serious and professional, but also wearing a slight smile -in order to show that they have easygoing personalities. Additionally, one respondent, Christos B., said that, when he is employed, he prefers to display a corporate photo with the brand of his company noticeable, in order to strengthen his professional persona. To that extent, Greek users are highly aware that their visual image plays a key role in their profile, as people first look at the picture and then at the rest of the profile. Besides, as Van Dijck (2013) has highlighted, photos may suit the individual's need for self-presentation and instant communication. Henceforth, with one appropriate photo, LinkedIn users can promote their professional self instantly, enforcing the notion of a picture being worth 1000 words.

Furthermore, most of the users declared that the crisis has not changed the way they use LinkedIn or represent themselves in it and that they would act likewise even if the crisis had not occurred. Yet, many of them highlighted that, indeed, using LinkedIn makes them feel a bit optimistic, but as Nicole K. well said, "it is an illusion," as she personally never got an answer whenever she applied. More specifically, through the 'Job Search'

feature, users are able to not only see the available job offers but even receive them in their personal email, often entitled "The Y companies are looking for a candidate like you." As a result, when users see that there are job openings like the ones they are seeking, they feel that one of them may be their next job. However, only a small part of the interviewees have ever received positive feedback or a reply.

Likewise, another two respondents stated that LinkedIn is, indeed, an additional tool which contributes to the job searching process by enhancing their professional image and leaving them with a feeling of security. More than that, some respondents stated that the use of LinkedIn broadens their horizon, both personally and professionally, even if they have not found a job through the platform yet. These statements verify what Shaw and Gant (2002) have mentioned about the decrease of loneliness and depression and the increase perceived social support and people's self-esteem due to the Internet use (p.157), offering them a "sense of belonging" (Robards and Bennett, 2011, p.310) by bringing close people that share the same interests or identities, and thus enhance their interpersonal relationships (Shaw and Gant, 2002, p.158).

4.5. Truthfulness and deception in crisis-era Greece

As far as truthfulness and deception within LinkedIn are concerned, most of the users indicated that it is simpler to be deceitful in the traditional resume than in LinkedIn, as it is easier to expose dishonesty in the latter. This statement confirmed what Guillory and Hancock (2012) have mentioned about how the publicness of online self-representation can determine how users will deceive on their online profiles, leading to an attentive deception. Nevertheless, one respondent, Francesco P., stated that he finds it equally easy for someone to cheat in both, if he or she seeks to do so.

Moreover, there was a distinction between users that would never be dishonest in LinkedIn -not even in their CV- and those who admitted that, in case they practiced some

kind of deception, it would include an exaggeration in the description of their tasks or an extension of a working period. In addition, all of them agreed that they would never lie about a skill they do not have or a job they never did because, whenever they would be called for an interview or even a new job, their dishonesty would be revealed.

To that extent, it is evident that Greek millennials are mindful of how important is to have an honest professional persona, avoiding deception in their LinkedIn profile. It could undermine their efforts of creating a suitable online professional self, as well as their reputation within the professional world, both online and in the physical world. However, if they would deceive somewhere, it would concern details that they believe they can undertake when necessary, in order to get a job, resorting to an "attentive deception" as Guillory and Hancock (2012) have mentioned.

Finally, all the respondents declared that the crisis-era which they live has not really affected the way they represent themselves nor their ethical limits, rejecting the belief of Roulin and Lavashina (2016) that users with low self-esteem are most likely to use impression management on their LinkedIn profiles (p.231). More specifically, the interviewees unanimously affirmed that, despite the uncertainty and the high rate of unemployment, they just try their best in order to promote themselves effectively and to stand out of the crowd, without resorting to deceit in either their resume or LinkedIn profile. Hence, Greek millennials as job seekers construct their online professional self and apply the necessary impression management tactics in such way in order to match recruiters' expectations, but since the publicness of users' profiles augments the verification process, users are highly mindful of the information they include in their profile and avoid being deceitful.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, Greek millennials think of LinkedIn as an essential tool for their professional career, especially when seeking for a job. More specifically, this research showed that most Greek users have similar behavior and practices with slight differences in use of features and self-presentation, but all with a high awareness of the professional purpose of the platform. Most of them are influenced by other users and the recruiters' expectations when it comes to the construction of their online professional persona, in relation to the tight structure of LinkedIn that imposes a specific structure of their profile -and thus their self. Concerning the crisis, the respondents seemed to be already familiar with the difficulties of the job searching process in Greece, and although there is an evident uncertainty within the society, this hasn't prompted greater deception practices either on LinkedIn or their traditional resume, as they are aware that everything will be revealed eventually due to the easiness of online verification nowadays. On top of that, Greek users argued that the use of LinkedIn broadens their horizon personally and professionally, and provides them with a sense of security since they are part of an extended online professional community with numerous opportunities for networking.

Indeed, LinkedIn offers a wide variety of features and tools to professionals and job seekers, imposing though a specific online self-presentation according to a "script concept" (Chiang and Suen, 2015), which resembles to the traditional resume as Papacharissi (2009) indicates. As a result, users have a restricted freedom when it comes to the construction, customization and promotion of their online identities within the tight structure of the platform. In addition, the online job searching is highly connected with the construction of these identities (Schepp and Schepp, 2009). Hence, professional social networks, such as LinkedIn, offer a solid ground for people to network and search for a job by renegotiating and narrating their online persona (Mallan, 2009 & Van Dijk,

2013). Thus, job seekers aim to adjust their professional self according to recruiters' expectations in order to stand out of the crowd, leading to impression management practices (Schwartz and Halegoua, 2014 & Roulin and Lavashina, 2016) and sometimes even deception due to one's low esteem(Guillory and Hancock, 2012). Given that, most Greek job seekers do their best to represent themselves with professionalism in LinkedIn by following the script concept of the platform and getting inspired by other users. Nevertheless, the current socio-economic crisis in Greece hasn't really affected users' online practices and impression management tactics, avoiding to resort in any kind of deception as well.

Ergo, the aim of this paper was to take a stand within the current debate of academics concerning the relative merits of digital technologies in alleviating the human pain, by investigating how a professional network is being perceived and incorporated in a particular country during this crisis-era. On that account, the findings of this study confirm, at a level, the current scholarly literature regarding the new media human's value. LinkedIn does offer a slight alleviation to Greek millennials' uncertainty and low-esteem due to the socio-economic crisis and the high-rate of unemployment. Being a member of the LinkedIn community has given to users one more tool and a pinch of optimism for their professional future, as being part of the largest professional network where they can find all the information needed about companies, professionals and job positions. However, this pinch of optimism is usually temporary, as they haven't yet found a job through LinkedIn; which is the mere reason for joining the platform. Nonetheless, a significant factor that plays a key role to this situation is the current reduced use of LinkedIn in Greece, due to the late arrival of digital technology and the restricted familiarity of Greek recruiters and professionals with relevant digital platforms.

To conclude with, regarding any possible limitations of the methodology and analysis, the interview guide I created for the semi-structured interviews revealed remarkable and in-depth findings as well as fulfilled the purpose of this study. Additionally, although it was an ethnography of a small sample, from a specific country, this study was a unique case that can become a solid grounding for future comparative analyses concerning the perception and use of new media within a socio-economic crisis. However, since through the interviews I was aiming to extract the opinions of my respondents regarding their use of LinkedIn, I wasn't able to verify their words concerning their online self-presentation. Hence, taking this study as an example, further studies of LinkedIn's use are suggested, both in a national and international level, in order to explore how professional networks affect people's personal as well as professional lives within this worldwide socioeconomic crisis. More specifically, after this study having revealed how a sample of Greek millennials perceive and use LinkedIn within this crisis-era, it would be really interesting for future studies to carry out a textual or discourse analysis of these specific LinkedIn profiles. In that way, we will be able to create a complete and real image of how Greek millennial users of LinkedIn construct and promote their online professional self, which words and terms they tend to use, and, lastly, to what extent these outcomes correspond with the ones from my current research.

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7. Appendix

No 1: Sample LinkedIn profile*

Sample LinkedIn profile (cont'd)

Education

University of California, Berkeley
Economics, B.A.
2010 – 2014 (expected)

Volunteer Experience & Causes

Big Buddy
Skyline High School
September 2012 – May 2013 (9 months) | Education

Mentored an Oakland high school student through the college application process, helping him get into his dream school.

Skills & Expertise

Most endorsed for...

12	Economics
11	Start-ups
10	Due Diligence
10	Venture Capital
10	Management

Honors & Awards

The Achievement Award Program
UC Berkeley

Four-year scholarship awarded to community-minded students with a proven track record of academic success.

Courses

University of California, Berkeley

- Microeconomic Theory (Econ 101A)
- International Monetary Economics (182)
- Public Economics (230A)

Projects

Venture Capital Financing in India
May 2013

For our international Monetary Economics course, Paul and I decided to study the emerging venture capital industry in India. By looking at data from the World Bank, we were able to understand the challenges and opportunities facing this nascent sector. And we developed a series of recommendations for overcoming these challenges, which we delivered to our professor in a final term paper.

5 team members

David Xiao
Econ Major and Aspiring Financial Anal...

Paul Smith
Student at UC Berkeley

Recommendations   Received (2)

Venture Capital Internship
Berkeley Ventures

Tim Lee
Partner

❝ David spent the summer with us at Berkeley Ventures and made an immediate impact. He showed us a brand new technique for firm analysis that he had just learned in school and came through with recommendations that opened our eyes to a unique set of opportunities.

We don't normally hire undergrads as interns but after working with David, we will again!

November 13, 2013, Tim managed

General about LinkedIn

1. When did you create a LinkedIn profile and why?

2. What do you think about LinkedIn as a professional social network?

3. Do you think there are more professional opportunities through LinkedIn?

4. Do you think that the use of LinkedIn is more prevalent abroad, and if so, why?

5. Do you think your use has changed after the crisis? If yes, how?

6. Do you feel more optimist about your career prospects by using LinkedIn, as being a part of an extensive professional community?

Use and features of LinkedIn

7. Do you think you are using the full range of possibilities on LinkedIn? Which of them do you use mostly and how?

8. Do you visit the LinkedIn on a daily basis or only if you have any notification or something specific to do?

9. What is your connections policy?

10. Do you ask your former colleagues and employers to write recommendations on your profile and why?

11. Do you use the job search feature and how?

12. Do you apply to job advertisements on LinkedIn?

13. Do you join groups and network with people with same interests/job?

14. Do you use the views count feature? If yes, do you have a strategy on whose profile to look at?

15. Do you have the basic or the premium account? Why?

Self-presentation and Impression management

16. Do you pay more attention on what you do in your LinkedIn profile than in other social media and why?

17. Do you get influenced by what other people, especially from your field, include on their profiles?

18. Do you update instantly your profile for a new job or skill?

19. Which are your criteria for the photo selection on your profile?

20. Do you write the same things in your LinkedIn profile as in your traditional resume? If not, what do you change and why?

21. What do you include about yourself and skills in the "Summary"?

22. Do you think it's easier to deceive more in LinkedIn than in the traditional resume?

23. In which areas do you think you could deceive easier in your profile and why?

24. Do you tend to exaggerate more for your competences and interests due to the crisis and the high rate of unemployment in Greece?

No 3: Interviewees

1. Christos B. (30 years old, employed, bachelor and master)
2. Evelyn K. (26 years old, unemployed, bachelor and master)
3. Fay R. (27 years old, unemployed, bachelor and master)
4. Fragiskos Z. (28 years old, employed, bachelor, master and previous working experience)
5. Francesco P. (25 years old, unemployed, bachelor)
6. Nicole K. (26 years old, unemployed, bachelor, master and previous working experience)
7. Sofia X. (26 years old, employed, bachelor and master)
8. Vilma D. (27 years old, , employed, bachelor and master and previous working experience)