A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON NGOS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ÇANAKKALE

ÇANAKKALE İLİNDE SİVİL TOPLUM KURULUŞLARININ SOSYAL MEDYA KULLANIMINA YÖNELİK NİTEL BİR ARAŞTIRMA[1]

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Abstract

Use of social media platforms in Turkey has increased promptly in recent years. Although prior research has intensively scrutinized individuals' use of social media, there is a body of research focusing on the use of social media platforms by NGOs. The aim of the study is to fill the gap by shed light on use of social media by NGOs in Turkey. To this end, data from interviews with key informants in NGOs such as managers, employees or volunteers managing social media activities in the city of Çanakkale are analyzed. Through this analysis, questions such as in which extent they use the potential of social media, the impact of using social media on their activities and performance, and barriers prohibiting their use of social media are answered. Analysis shows that most of the NGOs use social media for sharing information regarding events, celebrations of important days and legislations that have an impact on their target audience. The most important barriers preventing NGOs from using social media effectively are; lack of professional personnel specialized in social media, lack of time, lack of funding (smartphones, computers etc.), and fear of being misunderstood. Although most of the NGOs don't fully benefited from use of it, they considered themself sufficient with current use. Nevertheless most of them plan to find a professional or volunteer expert in the next few years to organize their social media activities.

Keywords: Non-Governmental Organizations, social Media, communication, qualitative research

Özet

Son yıllarda Türkiye'de sosyal medya platformlarının kullanımı hızla artış göstermiştir. Geçmiş çalışmalar çoğunlukla sosyal medyanın bireysel kullanımı üzerine odaklanmış olsa da, STK'ların sosyal medya kullanımına ilişkin de bir miktar çalışma yapıldığı görülmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı da, Türkiye'deki STK'ların sosyal medya kullanımını araştırarak bu boşluğu doldurmaktır. Bu amaca yönelik olarak, Çanakkale ilinde bulunan STK'lardaki sosyal medya hesaplarını yöneten yöneticiler, personel veya gönüllülerle yapılan yüzyüze görüşmelerden elde edilen veri analiz edilmiştir. Analizler yoluyla, STK'ların sosyal medyayı ne derecede kullandığı, sosyal medya kullanımının STK'ların faaliyetleri ve performanslarına etkisi ve sosyal medya kullanımının önündeki engellerin neler olduğu sorularına yanıt aranmaktadır. Analizler göstermektedir ki, STK'ların birçoğu sosyal medyayı gerçekleştirdikleri faaliyetlere ilişkin duyuruları yapmak, önemli günleri kutlamak için kullanmaktadırlar. STK'ların sosyal medya kullanımının önündeki en önemli engeller, bu konuda uzmanlaşmış profesyonel personel eksikliği, zaman yetersizliği, kaynak yetersizliği ve yanlış anlaşılma korkusudur. STK'ların birçoğu, sosyal medya kullanımından tam

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anlamıyla yararlanamasa da, kendilerini bu konuda yeterli görmektedirler. Yine de birçoğu, sosyal medya faaliyetlerini yürütmesi için bu konuda uzman bir profesyonel veya gönüllü istihdam etmeyi planladığını belirmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları, sosyal Medya, iletişim, nitel Araştırma

INTRODUCTION

As more people connecting to Internet, the users of social media platforms are also increasing in number consistently. Cheaper, faster and easier Internet connections increase the time people spend on the Internet and social media platforms as well. Especially the widespread use of smartphones facilitate to be connected on the nets and being active on social media platforms. Around sixty-six per cent of users visit a social media site at least once a day and the time spent on these platforms are constantly increasing (Briones, Kuch, Liu and Jin, 2011).

Facebook has 1 billion 550 million active users globally. 1 billion 10 million users visit the site daily and 1 billion 390 million users visit the site via mobile devices (smartphones and tablets) (Noyes, 2015).

Twitter has 320 million active users globally. 80% of the users are accessing to the site via mobile devices. The mission statement of Twitter is "To give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers" (Twitter, 2015).

Nowadays social media use has become a part of daily life (Quinton and Fennemore, 2013). The days organizations claimed being up to date with technology with just creating a website are over. Today organizations need to use social media which is becoming a part of organizational communication (Auger, 2013). This innovative and instant communication platform provides the ability to reach more stakeholders with lesser resources. The cost effective internet strategies instead of costly printed communication are attracting the attention of NGOs (Auger, 2014).

Social media plays an important role in further development of civil society and enhancing people's awareness in their social responsibilities. Hence, not only individuals but also private sector organizations, public sector organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) increasingly use social media in their public relations efforts. NGOs have becoming more aware of the potential benefits of being active in social media platforms and are still trying to make use of this potential. Before the emergence of social media platforms, they were trying to reach individuals via their websites for recruiting human resources, acquiring donations, and keeping people informed about their activities. With the emergence of social media, NGOs started to stand out on these platforms as well. Search and rescue announcements, blood donation announcements, volunteer search announcements, donation announcements for schools and hospitals increasingly take place in social media and individuals respond to these calls as a member of the civil society.

Accordingly, use of social media platforms in Turkey has increased promptly in recent years. Although prior research has intensively scrutinized individuals' use of social media, there is a body of research focusing on the use of social media platforms by NGOs (Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas, 2009; Bortree and Seltzer, 2009; Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton, 2012). The aim of the study is to fill the gap by shed light on use of social media by NGOs in Turkey. To this end, data from interviews with key informants in NGOs such as managers, employees or volunteers managing social media activities are analysed. Through this analysis, questions such as in which extent they use the potential of social media, the impact of using social media on their activities and performance, and barriers prohibiting their use of social media are answered.

NGOs And Social Media

NGOs are formal or informal structured, flexible and mostly temporary and volunteer based non-profit organizations that work for the benefit of society. Local associations as well as global foundations can also be included in NGO concept (Akatay, 2009). Social media can be defined as websites which the content are created by users and continue to exist with the participation of users (Tredinnick, 2006). The most used social media sites in Turkey are Facebook and Twitter. Research shows that 89% of the 200 largest NGOs in USA are using a form of social media (Butcher, 2009).

The reasons for NGOs' social media use can be examined in four dimensions as strategy, capacity, governance and environment. Firstly NGO determines the communication strategy to realize its mission. After this process the ability to realize the mission is determined by the NGOs' inner resources and capacity. With the specification of strategy and capacity NGO decides whether or not to use social media. However governance structures as the third dimension also plays an important role in effective use of resource and strategy implementation. The environment which the NGO exists becomes the last determinant of communication strategy and success of the NGO (Nah and Saxton, 2013).

Auger (2013) searched for an answer as to which functions of social media attracts the NGOs. Auger (2013) claims social media has thirteen functions for NGOs. These can be listed as:

- Providing information about the organization,
- Continuing events and local event announcements,
- Conveying thanks and contributions,
- Responding to requests,
- Donation announcements,
- Product sales,
- Promotion of organizational events,
- Voting or registration in another website for the organization,
- Learning how to help,
- Employee and volunteer search announcements,
- Lobbying and advocating activities,
- Article and video sharing.

Research shows that especially event announcements, conveying thanks and responding to requests and messages are frequently used functions (Auger, 2013). Guo and Saxton (2012) examine how the NGOs are using social media beyond having an account in a social media platform and propose a pyramid model with three dimensions, namely "reaching out to people", "keeping the flame alive", and "stepping up to action". They pointed out that these phases can occur consecutively or even simultaneously. In their study of communication strategies, transparency and credibility of NGOs on social media, Sisco and McCorkindale (2013) suggest that NGOs should regularly create and keep dialogs with stakeholders on social media. Even though NGOs are trying to make use of the potential that social media offer them via these functions they still run into problems in these platforms.

Social Media Use Of NGOs And The Problems They Encounter

Social media attracts the attention of NGOs as an innovative communication tool (Nah and Waters, 2012). Whether or not the NGO had a website before social media use plays an important role in adaptation to social media. Even though it is not important the duration of the website is not important, attempting to create one makes the transition to social media easier and becomes a determinant of success in social media use (Nah and Saxton, 2013). Since there is no guide for Facebook and Twitter use NGOs are failing to make use of social media potential. Even though NGOs try to be transparent in social media other than news, photos and discussions they are not giving complete information about the organization (Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas, 2009). Also prior research argue that NGOs are falling behind in adaptation of social media to their public relations activities (Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas, 2009; Bortree and Seltzer, 2009; Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton, 2012). Their findings show that NGOs are using social media to introduce and promote themselves and create transparency in their activities; however they are not paying attention to feedbacks and dialog opportunities which are basically the essence of social media as interactive communication. Rather, NGOs are using social media sites as bulletin boards like their websites and not making use of the potential social media offers. Waters (2009) argues that proactive NGOs which adapted earlier are using it better than others and are more successful in gathering donations and finding volunteers.

As it has been said before one of the most important problems is the lack of a guide regarding social media use and the lack of talent regarding social media use in NGOs. The research of Waters and Jamal (2011) shows that NGOs are using Twitter to convey one-way messages and missing to opportunity to create an interactive dialogs with not responding to comments and answers (Waters and Jamal, 2011). Twitter uses the hashtag (#) to create agendas. Another problem the NGOs encounter is forming a community around the messages they create via hashtags. Regular use of the message attached to the hashtag make people identify the message with the NGO and causes the goal of the NGO and the message to spread among the users of social media. Users share the message positively and become a part of this communication. NGOs' inability to integrate these individuals to this process increases the difficulty of spreading the message (Saxton, Niyirora, Guo, and Waters, 2015). Also lack of trying to create dialogs with stakeholders is another problem of NGOs. Even after creating a dialog but not supporting this dialog with necessary information such as photos, videos, news, and evidences diminish the success of NGOs in social media (Bortree and Seltzer, 2009). Being able to create dialogs with officials in key positions, being able to present facts with photos, videos and news and gaining their attention is one of the important advantages of social media.

The research of Nah and Saxton (2013) shows a negative relationship between donations and frequency of social media use. This situation starts with NGO viewing social media as an important platform and increasing the frequency of use. Allocating the resources towards social media from traditional donation gathering methods reduces the donations from traditional donations. Even though the NGO gathers more donations from social media the total donations are reduced (Nah and Saxton, 2013).

Bulletins are an important part of social media. Most of the time it provides an opportunity for NGOs to give up to date information other than fundamental information they have in their website. Informing readers about what has been done since the last bulletin, presenting plans about what the NGO will do next is important for transparency. Also sometimes a story-telling bulletin attracts the interest of readers (Miller, 2011). One of the NGOs in Turkey, Civil Society Development Centre, makes use of this method in their website as "Civil Stories" videos and conveys their cause as stories in videos to get more people interested in their cause (STGM, 2016). Most of the time NGOs makes the same mistake in bulletins and repeat the

information they have in their websites which people can usually reach and ergo not interested to hear it again. Most of the NGOs are not trying to think creative ways to give information to their stakeholders (Miller, 2011).

Another problem NGOs run into in social media is about governance. The characteristic of governance plays an important part in effective use of resources and implementation of strategies regarding information Technologies. The decision of using social media rests with the upper management and the structure of relationship between stakeholders and management affects deciding to use social media. A management disregarding the suggestions to use social media or stakeholders disregarding the managements' inducements to use social media makes the social media adaptation process more difficult (Nah and Saxton, 2013). Also not having a social culture within the organization causes conflicts. The resistance against change can create discords between the recent and older generations in the NGO (Kanter and Fine, 2010).

Another important part of social media use is age. The age of individual, which generation individual belongs to plays an important part in internet use (Hackler and Saxton, 2007). People born after the 1980s almost can't remember a time without the internet but for people born before internet is a whole new skill to learn. Because of this reason trying to ask for donations or volunteers in social media from older generations creates a reverse effect. Websites and social media pages are not effective in reaching older generations (Nah and Saxton, 2013).

The impatience of members and desiring quick results are also among the problems of NGOs. Social media use is not an instants action but a process. The social media page or account of the NGO will have more visitors and followers in time as long as it can analyze what are doing right and wrong. Sharing a video and having only few comments is not a reason to disregard social media but a reason to analyze what went wrong. With increasing "correctly done" sharings NGO will be able to reach more people in time (Kanter and Fine, 2010).

Nah and Saxton (2013) scrutinize the reasons for social media usage of NGOs in their research. They argue a model to create a social media account and starting communication in social media (Nah and Saxton, 2013). As mentioned before most NGOs are aware that having a social media account is beneficial. There are a lot of social media tools freely available for NGOs to use but at the same time the technology and time to use these tools are not without cost (Sisco and McCorkindale, 2013). NGOs don't have the resources or time to continuously pay attention to their Facebook pages or Twitter accounts (Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas, 2009). To create a profile and just leaving it unattended only causes a minimal promotion and alienates potential supporters who notice the inactivity. Because NGOs can't analyze the way their stakeholders are using social media they also can't gather enough support or donation and reach potential volunteers by means of social media (Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas, 2009). Amateurly designing complex steps for donation or support instead of a easy to navigate system for their websites and social media accounts forces potential volunteers, donors and supporters to search for a link to see how they can contribute and this process reduces the incoming support (Waters, 2007).

As it can be seen from the literature the biggest problems NGOs encounter in using social media is lack of resources, time and talent regarding social media. Miller (2011) explores the difficulties NGOs encounter on social media use and found enough time, resources and educated personnel are main drawbacks for NGOs in fully utilizing the advantages of social media. Bortree and Seltzer (2009) suggests designating an official employee or volunteer to oversee or to be in charge of social media activities. This person acting as the social media resource of the organization should make use of the

dialog opportunities by responding to other users of social media and provide beneficial information to stakeholders (Bortree and Seltzer, 2009). Quinton and Fennemore (2013) also focus on the reasons leading NGOs to use social media in the U.K. and shows frequency of use mainly depends on availability of resources and talented and educated people. Because even though there are a lot of problems regarding social media use there are also a lot of advantages for NGOs as well.

Advantages That Social Media Offers To NGOs

Social media platforms created new possibilities and opportunities for all organizations. Becoming a whole new communication platform for society (Saxton, Niyirora, Guo and Waters, 2015). Waters and Lo (2012) examines the social media pages of 225 NGOs from Turkey, China and U.S.A. and the relationship between culture and social media use. They argue that social media is becoming a global virtual culture. Social media allows organizations to easily reach their stakeholders, gather instant feedback regarding their actions and announcements and create dialogs for new ideas (Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton, 2009). Every day becoming more credible as a communication tool (Curtis, Edwards, Fraser, Gudelsky, Holmquist, Thompton and Sweetser, 2010) social media offers a variety of benefits to NGOs. Such as improving the existing relationships with stakeholders or reaching new members of society and creating new relationships. Allowing individuals with the same goal in mind to find each other and create new NGOs can also be counted among the benefits of social media (Briones, Kuch, Liu and Jin, 2011). Seo, Kim and Yang (2009) suggest that integration of new media tools in public relation activities allows NGOs to improve their image and resources. Research shows that increasing social media use also increases the sensitivity regarding social changes (Durukan and Bozacı, 2014). In this context social media use contributes to participatory democracy (Zuniga, Jung and Valenzuela, 2012).

Solmaz and Görkemli (2012) suggest social media offers benefits in organizational communication, communication with target audience and media relationships. Easy information sharing can be specified as an important benefit to NGOs. Informing members about policy changes or training them through videos or posts is easier trough social media. Informing masses about the mission, activities, communication information and history of the NGO is much less costly trough social media than doing it by traditional means. If designed correctly, this information can easily be accessed in social media pages and website of the NGO (Miller, 2011). Saxton and Guo (2014) focuses on stakeholders and create a detailed framework in categorizing the relationship between NGOs and their stakeholders on social media based on stakeholder theory and note that the strategic role and organizational performance outcomes regarding stakeholder targeting.

Cho, Schweickart and Haase (2014) focus on the impact of social media on public responsibilities. They note that two-way symmetrical communication is successful in created positive relationships with target audience. Naturally social media can't replace or rather shouldn't replace the traditional methods of NGOs but if used effectively the impact on NGO activities are can't be disregarded. Placing emphasis on innovation, sharing beneficial information, improving transparency and communication increases the credibility of NGOs and paves the way for them to reach their goal (Merchant, Elmer and Lurie, 2011). Research shows that NGOs who frequently update and use their social media accounts are perceived more credible than those who don't (Sisco and McCorkindale, 2013).

Waddingham (2013) argues that Facebook plays an important role in facilitating donations. It is suggested that NGOs should have a link for donations on their websites and social media pages (Millers, 2011). Research shows that an easy to find

and easy to use link increases the incoming donations (Waters, 2007). Especially NGOs that have limited resources and capacity are able to use social media to quickly increase the reputation and resources of the NGO (Seo, Kim and Yang, 2009). The research of Saxton and Wang (2014) suggests that smaller NGOs are able to gather more support in social media than large NGOs. Also it should be noted that with the increase of transparency and credibility donations also increase. Trough social media NGOs are able to share the information about what is being done with the donations and respond to the questions instantly and create two-way communications (Waters, 2009). In the year of 2011 Facebook directed more than 1 million donors to the donation organization named "JustGiving" and helped generate over 30 million U.S. Dollars. Over %3 of these donations came from donors who connected Facebook from their smartphones. These donations increased 32% in 2012 and %130 in 2013 (Waddingham, 2013).

Another advantage social media offers to NGOs is about creating a trademark or brand. Social media platforms allow NGOs to test and measure the strength of their brand, their relationships with the stakeholders in key positions, their reputation. For NGOs which have a marketing strategy and trying to analyze their actions, social media acts as an important information source (Quinton and Fennemore, 2013).

NGOs can also potentially benefit from social media to have a say in issues that divide society. Auger (2013) focuses on the role of social media in dividing issues such as gun control. The findings show that NGOs are using different channels for different purposes. Segerberg and Bennet (2011) focuses on the role of Twitter regarding protests and revolutions. They emphasize the role of social media in shaping governments' policies.

Another important advantage of social media is its critical role in disasters. Mulidharan, Rasmussen, Patterson and Shin (2011) investigate the activities of NGOs on social media to make people take action after the earthquake in Haiti in 2010 and suggest more use of two-way communications. Gao, Barbier and Goolsby (2011) also argues the coordinated use of social media in disaster management. They suggest that social media plays an important roles and offers benefits in communication between victims and NGOs and in responding to emergency situations. The information gathered trough social media had important contributions regarding disaster management. After the Haiti earthquake in 2010 Red Cross was able to gather 8 million U.S. Dollars for victims with the help of social media platforms in only 48 hours (Gao, Barbier and Goolsby, 2011). Furthermore with the collapse of GSM Networks after the earthquake as a solution people started to communicate via Twitter, Facebook and Skype and shared information through social Networks. Gao , Barbier and Goolsby (2011) suggests that coordinated use of social media should increase the speed of information gathering from people on the scene and giving information to disaster victims.

Methodology

This study uses qualitative research methods. The data is gathered by interviews with management and social media pages of 11 NGOs which are active in Çanakkale. There are a total of 15 semi-structured face to face interviews with 15 managers from 11 different NGOs which took 13 hours and recorded via recording device.

At the stage of choosing the right sample of NGOs to gather data, a meeting was held with Çanakkale Directorate of Associations. Çanakkale Directorate of Associations is the government office which records and regulates all the NGOs in Çanakkale City. A list of all NGOs in the city was given to us at the meeting. After relaying the information about the study, their opinions and observations regarding which NGOs

would be possible for the study are asked for. It is determined that NGOs which use social media actively would be a better choice as a sample. Then, social media pages of NGOs have been pre-examined and eleven eligible NGOs for interviews are decided. These NGOs engage in different fields with different structures and purposes.

A 15 item question form is used as a guideline in these semi structured interviews. Questions are derived from extensive literature research and opinions of experts in this field. The goal in mind with this question form is to correctly determine the current situation of NGOs in social media, detecting the obstacles regarding better social media use and examining their plans and opinions about the future. After these stages the transcriptions of voice recordings are processed by researchers of the study and turned into texts.

Interview texts are analysed with the method of line by line coding. Firstly codes have been created with open coding method. To increase credibility coding process has been done separately by 3 researchers. After that main categories are created. In the next stage of the study categories are explained, interpreted and to reflect the views and opinions of interviewed managers' direct quotes are given. Also the last 2 months of activity in the social media pages of interviewed NGOs are examined and the frequencies are given as a table including donation calls, volunteer calls, events, news/useful information, photograph sharing, video sharing, responds to comments, important day celebrations, response to messages.

The questions used in the interview can be seen below:

1.   What do you know regarding social media? Do you have information about its use in the world?

2.   On which social media platforms do you have accounts? Are these accounts institutional or individual?

3.   Did your organization have a website previously? If so since when? Does it still exist and are you using it actively?

4.   Are there people taking care of the social media accounts of your organization? If so who are they and what are their roles and positions in the organization?

5.   How frequently are you checking your social media accounts? How frequently are you sharing new information and post new things?

6.   Do you perceive social media important for your organization?

7.   Do you communicate with your stakeholders trough social media? How would you compare this communication with the other communications regarding your organization? Also is this communication one-way (giving information) or two-way (interactive communication)?

8.   What kind of posts do you use on social media? (Sharing photos, videos, celebration of important days, announcements, events, invitations etc.)

9.   In which subject do you think social media contributes the most?

10.   Are you using social media to facilitate donations and find volunteers?

11.   Did you start to pay less attention on traditional donation gathering methods after beginning to use social media?

12.   Do you think you are using social media effectively?

13.   How do you think you can use social media more effectively? What are the problems and obstacles preventing you to use it better?

14.   What are you doing or planning to do to use social media more effectively?

15.   Do you know or have ideas how other NGOs and organizations are using social media?

Findings

Why Are NGOs Using Social Media?

NGOs are using social media basically to keep their members and other stakeholders posted about their activities and announce them. Also they are using social media to carry out their activities. Via social media they are able to organize faster and get more success in their events. NGOs which are located in Çanakkale but a local branch of a national organization are serving as a communicator and relaying the information regarding the activities and opinions of the organization they are a part of. Also further than keeping up with the agenda and announcing the developments, social media is a good tool for creating an agenda to facilitate changes in certain situations.

"We opened the social media account to announce. Just to reach more people."

"We are using it to announce our activities, just to keep people our target audience up to date with our activities, for this purpose time to time we share information on our social media page."

"I don't have an account but we opened one for the association. Because we needed to announce the activities, to reach more people."

"As a branch we are using it to give information."

"We are sharing events as we do them, for example we have completed a workplace agents training Wednesday in Gelibolu and shared that, yesterday we were in Ayvacık and shared it."

"We are always tracking developments from social media, keeping up with the agenda and communicate with each other and facilitate our meetings on social media. For example the other day we had a marching, about the martyrs, a march for the 44 martyrs, and we got together via social media. We met at the place and joined the march together."

"What did North Marmara disaster depot send to Çanakkale and did it arrive to people who required it? For this reason social media is a must have for us."

"Generally because we are branch usually we share the activities and the opinions of the union and union president."

"We are bound by a protocol to an NGO which is operating on a national scale, time to time we announce their activities like Ramadan campaigns etc."

"All the decisions taken by headquarter or verdicts of lawsuits whatever there is, we share it on Facebook to announce it to friends."

"Currently there are 43 thousand people, 13 thousand are from Çanakkale, and I mean % 10 of Çanakkale is following us so we are able to create agendas. For example there is martyrdom up the road. Hospital slope, the grass there hasn't been mowed for a long time even though we reached out to Mayor's Office, I took its photos and the English martyrdom too, and to show the differences in us and in them, the next day I saw all the grasses have been mowed."

Who Manages The Social Media Accounts?

In NGOs the social media accounts are mostly managed by a person who is generally playing an important role in the activities of NGOs, whether a president or from the

upper management. Furthermore the other managers of NGO especially the board also have authorization to manage the social media page. Also members and volunteers who don't have a managing position in the NGO but have competency and knowledge regarding social media use and information Technologies provide support in creation and management of the social media page.

"There are 1-2 more authorized people but usually I handle the posts, they don't post that much. Yes, they are in our board. They leave it to me, because I have more information on day to day activities. They send me the photos and such and I share it."

"I gave all the people on the board administrative rights, apparently you can make all of them admins the board I mean, I opened the account, call it an organizer, the others are authorized, all can intervene or share, post, all 7 people can manage it."

"There are other friends too. I mean from the board, up to 4 people. From the board, there is me and also our president."

"Usually three people manage it. Including me. With three of us we handle it."

"Because of a decision we reached in our board me and another from the disciplinary committee who is a computer teacher. Here for example even the president doesn't know the password to the account. Only me and the friend who is knowledgeable about computers."

"To the Facebook account I enter to better make use of the limited time, and the manager."

"Of course three of us use it. Without the authorization from three of us, and in certain subjects without the boards' approval we can't let other people use it. All users are in the board."

"I manage my own account; other accounts are managed by our finance secretary. I mean he shares what I share momentarily."

"Yes but at the moment when I'm not able to do it we also get help from the students."

How Often NGOs Check and Post on Social Media?

Frequency of NGOs' posts in social media shows difference for a variety of reasons. Some of them are using these tools actively for 24 hours a day and create interactions momentarily. Most of them check their accounts every day and try to post something at least once. The most important reason affecting the frequency and number of the posts is the frequency of events and activities. Because they are using social media to announce activities and events and inform their members and stakeholders regarding these, frequency of social media uses changes regarding the existence of an event. Also the characteristics of the target audience also cause differences in post frequency in certain periods. NGOs targeting teachers and students are mostly active during the months education is going on but during the holiday periods there is a decrease in social media activities. Furthermore the regular jobs or time constraints of people who are managing the social media accounts of NGOs also affect how active they are on social media. People who are too busy in their professional life are not able to find the time however people who have desk jobs or managing their own businesses are able to create more time for social media.

"Yes, I check it, only when I'm not sleeping. I have to check the account."

"I check it 24/7, even if I wake up at three o'clock in the night, I look around to see if there is a new message, new comment, if they are requiring answers, even if I'm sleepy I answer it."

"I momentarily see the posts and shares from the phone. For example I look you logged on to Facebook, saw the progress on the mosque construction, you liked it and commented on it. I momentarily see it on my phone."

"I mean I'm up until 3, 4 o'clock at night. There are other friends, a security guard, sometimes until morning, sometimes earthquakes, rain, snow we post or share it. Some friends check it every 10 minutes. Our president has a desk job, right now with the festival coming he always posts something."

"I at least post twice every day."

"Well it wouldn't be wrong to say I nearly post once every day."

"We check it daily but the most active is Facebook, after that there is twitter. When the school season is open we share something every day at least once."

"Definitely once, I check it every night to see if something has been missed, to see if something hasn't been posted or shared that day, how are the likes, if there are messages or comments, we check all of these."

"Generally when there will be or there is an activity if we have an event, we post it 3-5 days prior. There may be a poster we prepared, an invitation, we announce it and when we completed the activity we post photos of it, present the news. Averagely every 15 days. But sometimes 5 in a month sometimes none, it depends on the events."

"Our target audience is mostly students. When there are events aimed at them, classes and courses, its more frequent, but in the summer period, the three month season the posts decrease, if you ask the frequency its once a week or once every two weeks."

"We are sharing events as we do them, for example we have completed a workplace agents training Wednesday in Gelibolu and shared that, yesterday we were in Ayvacık and shared it. I mean if there is an important development we share the news of the headquarters too."

1.1. Why Is Social Media Important And What Does It Contribute?

NGOs express that social media is very important and they view is an indispensable tool. NGOs mostly use social media to announce their activities and events. In this context the reason of social medias' importance comes from the ability to reach numerous people from different segments. Furthermore NGOs note the cost efficiency of social media use regarding time and finance costs. However some also have doubts about social media, thinking of it as an imaginary world and the benefits won't be as much as it seems. Also even though social media comes with many benefits, some think it will bring disaster if an unexpected circumstance occurs.

"It turned into our food and water. Really I'm serious and not joking about this. You advertise, people see you, know you, it is important because of this. Otherwise why those big corporations would spend so much effort on social media. We count three of them Instragram, Twitter, Facebook, there are still a lot more."

"I mean accessibility. You can reach the whole audience momentarily in social media. Like I said before SMS is not an effective tool nowadays. We have a SMS system I send messages there but most people don't read it but everyone every day every minute check the agenda on their smartphones, you realize this."

"We advertise really well in social media."

"Reaching our members would require so much time and energy, even our money. Why? You need to find the mobile phone number, call it etc. it used to take so much time also

would cost us but on social media you can easily reach more people and direct them. It makes us quicker too of course."

"It provides conveniences, for example when we start a campaign, now we don' have to print posters, we don't need them. We still prepare posters but we do these on digital platforms, we share them on social media. Others share the poster we shared. We don't hang them around at all these days. If someone wants to hang our posters we tell them to take them out of our social media pages and print them."

"Social media being free is a big impact. Because when you are a NGO, in certain parts paying for some things, I mean even printing 50 posters is sometimes difficult."

"But we can say that catching attention is easier, for example when general headquarters sends a poster, we still take it to the school and hang it on the notice board but mostly it people don't pay attention to it, however when you share it on Facebook people notice it."

"With one post I can immediately reach 100 students. Because students as you know use social media much more actively. They notice right away. Even if share it in the day they come to the event that evening."

"It is important for me. Because I can't reach everyone. But with this Facebook we reach more people. Because people we don't know are on the internet, they see it. They comment or like it, share it with others."

"Social media has a big impact; there was a disabled friend in Ayvacık, %99 disabled. Has no income, his family is in need, parents are disabled too. We went there and took photos, shared it on social media, there was a huge response, generally I mean, not all of them from Çanakkale all from out of town, from İstanbul, from Kocaeli motorcycle groups came, some people brought electronic wheelchairs, stationery writing reading materials, there were even international corporations proposing to rebuild their house."

"In creating and moulding public opinion, instantly there is a rain of news from left and right about this, eventually officials hear it, and they take precautions. In a word it has an enforcement power, in the context of public opinion."

"At the moment it is like this, there are people who see us on Facebook and call us to make donations."

"It is a big imaginary world, it is too far from reality but we can't deny this, to organize, it is a big comfort, people can get organized somehow on social media. But for example when you decide on a meeting, create an event, the guy notifies he will attend but when you look you see that he is in Istanbul, I mean it is impossible for him to come and attend from there."

1.2.   How Are NGOs Communicating With Stakeholders?

From the data gathered from the interviews it can be said that when communicating with close stakeholders NGOs don't use social media tools very much, instead of this they prefer Whatsapp to communicate with the management and members, also as another way of communication it is established that NGOs use collective sms to send messages to stakeholders.

"We have a Whatsapp group, whatever we do, and generally we don't share but certain people post, we chat for the association, how to do this, how to do that…"

"We use Whatsapp fort hat, Whatsapp groups, again we use Facebook too. When something happens we tag it, everyone, even if they are not with us, we tag the board, local leaders, and then their friends see the event too. When you visit the town of Çan

you tag the Çan association president, Çan association board when you do that people who are not our members see it too."

When it comes to communication NGOs use SMS as well as Whatsapp too.

"For the announcements to the members we prefer Whatsapp and SMS generally. But if the event is open to the general public and everyone who is a member or not invited then we use social media."

"Now we bought a SMS system. We write our messages and with it we can send it to everyone at the same time."

1.3.   Do NGOs Respond To Incoming Messages?

An important finding from the data is that NGOs are not oblivious to messages and comments and respond as much as possible. This situation reveals that social media is a communication tool that helps the community.

"From our members or Facebook users who are not our members comment on our posts or send us messages on Facebook and ask questions. We respond to the messages for example there are a lot of questions about being suspended."

"Sometimes there are people who want to volunteer in our activities. What can we contribute to them, how can we attend, or where do we need to meet these questions get asked. Or when the semester starts for a university student, problems with housing, or asking about the places to go in Çanakkale when people can't find our phone numbers they message to us on Facebook. We respond on that platform."

"Of course there is interactive communication. For instance I sent a post and someone things it is inappropriate. To say we'll protest about something, like dress codes or a strike today, user sends us a message privately and tells us it is not appropriate and we chat privately. You don't announce it to the public and you persuade them privately. Of course he/she questions the reason we do it for instance a strike but they do it privately. Not it comments."

1.4.   What Do NGOs Share On Social Media?

NGOs joined the interview post photos, videos and texts however it is found that photos are more frequent and sharing of videos are less frequent.

On the other hand the content of posts are revealed as announcements, notices, event news, special day celebrations, calling attention to something. NGOs mostly post about events on social media.

"Our posts and sharings are mostly posters or messages from our headquarters. It can be an announcement, an event, a press conference or for instance we share videos when the general manager of the association is on TV. There aren't a lot of videos, not very much."

"Actually every Friday I send a routine post with a visual aid, wishing a good Friday. Visual include a mosque, a Turkish flag and I share my message with that every Friday. When there are certain days like Republic Day of Turkey, Teacher's Day, we post our messages with visual content. Or when the association president or I give an interview in a local newspaper or say something to the press I share those. Of course it includes a visual aid like a picture or a photo and there is a text under it."

"National and religious holidays are not very often but our posts are mostly about the activities of the association. There are videos and photos and of course they include texts."

1.5.   What Are The Obstacles In Social Media Use For NGOs?

The obstacles preventing NGOs using social media in a more effective way can be categorized in four dimensions; personnel and know-how shortcomings, time constraints, technological insufficiency, and hesitations.

1.5.1. Personnel And Know-How Shortcomings

Social media accounts are mostly run by people who have a lot of responsibilities in the organization and don't have training, knowledge and experience regarding social media. Professional social media use usually requires training but managers mostly know what they know trough personal means. They want to do more but they don't have the knowledge to do it. Motivation is also an issue in this obstacle. Even if they have the means to learn more about it, they don't have enough interest and motivation to learn more about internet and social media use. At least it can be said that they are aware of the problem but they don't know how to reach the full potential.

"Well I'm not knowledgeable about these subjects. For instance I'm still newly learning about internet, and that is thanks to my children."

"Even I'm not enough, if I had the means, if I was positioned permanently I could do ten times what I do usually and do it better."

"Yes the resources are limited. To say I can create a social media team. There can be someone responsible for the page and in Çanakkale, someone responsible for advertising and promoting, someone who keeps up with the current, and someone who responds to messages, someone to design and share posters and brochures and share them. I mean you can create a team like this but still it is about resources."

"Of course you need to be interested in it and need talent, about social media, to use it effectively."

"You need an employee for this. When you don't have the resources to employ someone, you have to handle it personally like this. To be frank I can't say we use it with full potential."

"If there was someone who could use it more actively in a more efficient way whom we are already searching for but we have the same problem with the website too. I can't always be on the internet; we can't make the announcements from there. We are gonna start a communication network, if there will be even a decision mechanism is going to decide it, announcing it, providing necessary information, the person to use social media, using it actively, are gonna send the information to the one who uses it more effectively. And momentarily he is gonna relay it to our Facebook page, Whatsapp group and website. He is gonna be responsible for these and we are still searching for such a person."

"We have been talking about this for the last two months; we are searching for someone to use it more effectively."

"If there are people who are more informed about electronic products and social media who are well versed in media use, more capable in these things. We are not very capable, just know and do as much as we can to handle our affairs."

1.5.2. Time Constraints

Because the people who manages the social media accounts in NGOs do this as a volunteer activity alongside their daily jobs creates problems. Finding the time to control and manage the social media account becomes a difficulty. These time constraints create obstacles in effective social media use. Managers can't find enough time to educate themselves in social media use. Also they are not able to spend

enough time to check new posts or messages on social media. Furthermore the time constraints prevent them from analysing the current status of the social media page (number of followers, image of the NGO etc.). And of course they can't design the social media pages in a more effective way because there isn't enough time as a resource.

"In Turkey associations depend on voluntarism. Like you see at the moment I'm working. I'm at work. I have to fulfil my responsibilities regarding the NGO in my non-work hours. I need spare time, extra training."

"I mean surely, if we do some things it could be better, but we don't have the time, everyone is busy with their jobs."

"At the moment we have a professional president and he only works at the union, he is employed at the union. Other than that other friends have classes to teach, all of us on the board are teachers, we all have limited time so we can't post and share."

"Because the president is by himself there isn't enough time, to post instantly and share frequently."

"Firstly I'd renew all our pages, from visual aids to flow of posts. I'd add last minute news of teachers, I'd make it possible for them to download necessary documents required in their occupation, but we can't turn these possibilities into reality, because I don't have time."

"For me it is like this, you think about everything, and you have to think about that too. When you are visiting a school you have to remember to take pictures, and you have to share it instantly, when you miss this step people warn you because you didn't check in or post at their school, sometimes we forget because of the busyness but people warn us, after that we share it."

"It seems as if it can be better, or there can be an employee regarding this, big firms has social media experts, our general headquarters have one too I suppose, in the end how could the general headquarter handle everything."

1.5.3. Technological Insufficiency

Not having enough physical and technical infrastructures obstruct the NGOs when trying to use social media more effectively. Moreover the deficiencies of stakeholders also create obstacles or limits for NGOs in reaching their target audience. Most NGOs have small budgets and some of them even don't have budgets. They attempt to fill this gap by taking advantages of volunteers. They don't have the resources to buy personal computers or rent offices. Even if they had these resources it doesn't mean their stakeholders have these means too. Not all members or people they are trying to reach use smartphones or computers.

"There is a lot of work to do in our occupation (teachers), we work a lot and not earn much. Most people work two jobs if you understand what I mean. There are still those don't have android phones, there are so many like this, in this age there are still a lot of teachers who don't own a computer."

"Economic situation and training prevents the use. I mean a father buys his son the latest model of a phone but he still uses a crude one."

"For instance a website, we would regularly have to pay for it."

1.5.4. Hesitations

Social media creates a lot of advantages for NGOs, but also causes certain unfavourable situations too. Because of this NGO managers have certain fears and hesitations about using social media and especially certain social media tools. The

potential conflict between the posts on social media and the image and goal of the organization, possibility of posts offending some people or institutions, possibility of some posts going beyond ones' aim and create misunderstandings are the most important ones of these. Some managers are afraid that they will say the wrong things by mistake and it will be used against them. Because of these reasons managers sometimes tend to avoid using social media freely.

"We have pressures because of the conditions of the country is in, we really adjusted ourselves about this. Because we felt obligated, I mean even an ordinary picture or a text is sometimes perceived as an insult, sometimes it has justification, you are not free to do whatever you want, I mean everyone has to determine the moral ethical line and not cross it. There should be certain standards."

"I see it as important but also see it as dangerous too. Because you can offend people. Sometimes you act too hastily and make matters worse while trying to help."

CONCLUSION

Social media use is critical for all organizations in the 21st century and for NGOs as well. It has a lot of advantages and offer such as reaching stakeholders quickly, getting instant feedback from followers, gathering people for a particular issue, sharing information easily, collecting donations and getting volunteers, and advertising. NGOs use social media to benefit from its advantages, when they realize these opportunities

Analysis shows that most of the NGOs check their social media pages immediately when there is a notice. It can be said that the common use of smartphones and constant connection to internet plays a crucial role in this situation. Managers mostly pay importance to social media and try to use it whenever they can. They are aware of the opportunities and threats in social media use.

The most important barriers preventing NGOs from using social media effectively are; lack of professional personnel specialized in social media, lack of time, lack of funding (smartphones, computers etc.), and fear of being misunderstood. Local NGOs especially avoid Twitter in because of the examples of misunderstood celebrities and officials in Twitter and they prefer Facebook for their social media activities. And the ones using Twitter are using it with professional expertise via their national headquarters. National NGOs with branches all over Turkey usually design training programs for correct social media use.

NGOs use social media for sharing information regarding events, celebrations of important days and legislations that have an impact on their target audience. Their posts are mostly supported by visual elements such as photos and videos. They also regularly use written content to share information. Although most of the NGOs don't fully benefit from use of it, they consider themselves sufficient with current use. Nevertheless most of them plan to find a professional or volunteer expert in the next few years to organize their social media activities.

The study has some limitations. This study is conducted on NGOs operating in Çanakkale only. Beside managers from limited number of NGOs are interviewed. This limits the generalizability of the results to whole social media use of NGOs in Turkey.

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