

Yeni Bir İletişim Alanı Olarak Sosyal Medya Kullanımı ve Konya Kadın Dernekleri Örneği

Use Of Social Media As A New Communication Tool: The Case Of Konya Woman Associations

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ÖZET

Gerek medyanın gerekse iletişim teknolojilerinin hayatımızda oynadıkları rol hızla genişlemektedir. Yeni iletişim teknolojileri insanlara, düşüncelerini ve eserlerini paylaşacakları olanaklar yaratmakta, paylaşım ve tartışmanın esas olduğu bir medya sunmaktadır. Sosyal medya ortamları geleneksel kitle iletişim araçlarından farklı olarak artan bir hızla etki alanı yaratmaktadır. Sosyal medya terimi, kullanıcıların birbirleriyle bilgi, görüş ve ilgi alanlarını paylaşarak etkileşim kurmaları için olanak sağlayan online araçlar ve web sitelerini içermektedir. Sosyal medyanın getirdiği iletişim olanakları kurum ve kuruluşların ulaşmakta zorlandıkları hedef kitlelere ulaşmalarını, kolay eyleme geçebilmelerini, mesajlarını yayabilmelerini sağlamaktadır. Kurum içi iletişimin hızlı ve katılıma açık olarak sağlanmasında yine sosyal medya araçları etkili olabilmektedir. Sosyal medya ortamlarından sosyal paylaşım ağları, kişisel iletişimleri sürdürmenin mekânı olmanın ötesinde, internetin yeni bir kamusal alanı olma özelliğini de yansıtmaktadır. Kamusal alan özelliği taşıyan sivil toplum örgütleri de sosyal medya ortamlarını kullanarak savundukları konuların tartışılmasını, mesajlarının yayılmasını, üyelerinin ve destekçilerinin harekete geçirilmesini sağlamaktadır.

Yeni medya ve iletişim teknolojilerinin yarattığı yeni düzen içerisinde, işletmeler de özellikle yeni sistemin gerektirdiği düzenlemeleri ve değişiklikleri kendi bünyelerine entegre etmeye başlamışlardır. Facebook, Twitter, Friendfeed, Flickr, bloglar gibi birçok sosyal paylaşım ağının bir bütünü olarak adlandırabileceğimiz sosyal medya kavramı da işletmelerin son yıllarda oldukça önem verdiği alanlardan biridir. İşletmelerin kendi organizasyon yapıları içerisinde sadece bu işle ilgilenen departmanlar kurmaları ve kendileri dışında gelişen olayların kontrol edilebilirliği noktasında etkin bir konum yaratma çabaları da bunun en somut örneklerinden biridir.

İnternetin doğası gereği kullanıcıların fikirlerini ve görüşlerini özgürce ifade edebildiği bir platformu yaratması neticesinde, işletmelerin de kendi ürün ve hizmetleri hakkında oluşan olumlu/olumsuz fikir birliği ya da görüş ayrılıklarından haberdar olma ve bunlara yönelik yeni iş planları ve stratejiler gerçekleştirme gerekliliği duyması, içinde yaşadığımız iletişim ve teknoloji çağının doğal bir parçasıdır. İşletmeler genel olarak dijital pazarlama adı altında yürüttükleri çalışmalar neticesinde hem müşterilerle olan karşılıklı iletişimlerini kuvvetlendirmekte ve onların görüşlerini öğrenme fırsatını yakalamaktadırlar hem de kendi markalarının değerliliği noktasında marka imajına yönelik olarak pozitif bir katkı sağlama şansına sahip olmaktadır. Ayrıca kendi iş süreçlerini, müşterilerle olan eşzamanlı bilgi alışverişi sayesinde revize etme imkanına kavuşarak, onların istek ve ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak ve tatmin etmek noktasında önemli bir avantajı ellerinde bulundurmaktadırlar.

Sosyal medya internet ile bir şekilde tanışan hemen herkesin içinde yer aldığı bir alan özelliği göstermektedir. Sadece kişiler değil, kurumlar açısından da bu alanın içerisinde yer almak bir zorunluluk haline gelmiştir. Bunun nedeni ise hedef kitle neredeyse, orada olmak zorunluluğudur. Burada “olmak” sadece sosyal ağda bir firma sayfası oluşturmak, internet reklâmı vermek, ya da bir web sayfasına sahip olmak anlamına değil, sosyal medya içerisinde yaşayan bir marka olarak bu alanda da pazarlama faaliyetleri yürütmek anlamına gelmektedir. Çünkü sosyal medya hedef kitle ile doğrudan iletişimin kurulabildiği bir alandır. Klasik marka – tüketici ilişkisinden oldukça farklı olarak bilgi vermenin dışında farklı birçok biçimde kurulabilen bu iletişimin de en önemli getirisi marka algısını ve bağlılığını kuvvetlendirmesidir. Üstelik sosyal medya geleneksel yöntemlerle kıyaslandığında birçok farklı avantaja sahip görünmektedir. Sosyal medyayı etkin kullanan bir firma için, potansiyel ya da mevcut müşterilerini tanımak, onların özelliklerini, tercihlerini belirlemek de daha kolay olmaktadır. Sosyal medya kişilerin birbirlerinin fikirlerini, tavsiyelerini dinlediği bir alan olarak da giderek daha fazla önem kazanmakta ve bu alanda kullanıcıların firmalar ile ilgili olarak paylaştıkları fikirler, deneyimler, görüşler diğer kullanıcılar için de belirleyici olabilmektedir.

Her ne kadar zaman zaman sınırları tartışılıyor olsa da sosyal medya kişilerin görüşlerini daha rahat ifade edebildikleri bir alan olma özelliği göstermektedir. Üstelik bu alanda kişiler sadece kendi öznel görüşlerini sunmakla kalmamakta aynı zamanda fikirlerini de paylaşmaktalar. Ürünlerle kendilerini bağdaştırabilmekte, kampanyalara bireysel olarak dahil olabilmekte ve böylece markalarla daha kuvvetli bağlar kurabilmektedirler. Sosyal medya iletişimin oldukça hızlı yürüdüğü bir alan haline gelmiştir. Bu özelliği bir dezavantaj gibi görünüyorsa da, özellikle içerik anlamında değiştirilebilirlik, yenilenebilirlik özelliklerinden dolayı diğer mecralara göre daha hızlı özellikler sergilemektedir.

Yeni iletişim teknolojileri aracılığıyla mesaj bombardımanının en üst düzeyde yaşandığı günümüzde insanlar, yeni arayışlara ve dolayısıyla da yeni iletişim ortamlarına doğru yönelmektedir. Günümüzde yeni iletişim ortamları, özellikle internet, modern iletişim sisteminin en büyük destekçisi olmaktadır. Özellikle 1970’li yıllarda başlayan ve 1990’lı yıllardan sonra hızla devam eden internet kullanımı, web sitelerinin yaygınlaşmasıyla kullanıcı sayısını artırmış, 2000’li yıllarda sosyal medyanın işlerlik kazanmasıyla her kesimden insanı ilgilendirecek noktalara ulaşmıştır. Sanal ortam kullanıcıları tarafından bir alışkanlık haline gelen sosyal medya kullanımı, her kesimden ve her kültürden geniş kitlelerin sosyal yöndeki taleplerine cevap vermektedir. Yeni iletişim ortamlarının

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gelişmesi, her kesimden bilgi iletişim teknolojilerine olan ilginin artması, sosyal medyanın gücünü arttırmakta, sosyalleşme kavramına da yeni bir boyut kazandırmaktadır. Sosyal medya sürekli güncellenebilmesi, çoklu kullanıma açık olması, sanal paylaşım olanağı tanıması gibi nedenlerden dolayı en ideal mecralardan biri olarak kendisini göstermektedir. İnsanlar sosyal medya aracılığıyla düşüncelerini yazmakta ve paylaşmakta, hatta bu düşünceler üzerinde tartışabilmekte ve yeni fikirler ortaya koyabilmektedirler. Kişisel düşünce ve bilgilerin yanı sıra, çeşitli fotoğraflar, videolar paylaşabilmekte gerçek dünyayı sanal ortamda yaşayabilmektedirler. Sosyal medyanın bu kadar sıklıkla ve etkin kullanılması dikkatlerin giderek bu alana yönelmesine sebep olmakta ve sanal dünyaya yeni bir kavramsal çerçeve çizmektedir.

Bu çalışmada, sosyal medya kavramı ve sivil toplum örgütlerinin sosyal medya kullanımıyla ilgili verilerin yanında, çalışmanın araştırma evrenini oluşturan sivil toplum örgütleri arasından seçilen ve Konya’da hizmet veren aktif iki kadın derneğinin iletişim faaliyetlerine ilişkin veriler sunulmuştur. Araştırma sonucunda örgütlerin geleneksel medyada yer alma çabalarına paralel sosyal medyada da yer alıp almadıkları sorgulanmıştır. Araştırmada elde edilen veriler, iletişim, kurumsal iletişim, hedef kitlelerle iletişim ve medya ilişkileri yönünden yorumlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Medya, Geleneksel Medya, Sivil Toplum Örgütleri, İletişim Teknolojileri, Kadın Dernekleri
Çalışmanın Türü: Araştırma

ABSTRACT

The role of media and communication technologies are changing rapidly. New communication technologies create new opportunities to people to share their thoughts and works, and they also provide a media where sharing and discussions took place. Unlike traditional mass media, social media creates a rapidly growing domain. The term social media covers online tools and web sites where the users interact each other by sharing their knowledge, ideas and areas of interest. With communication opportunities, which are brought by social media, the institutions and organizations can reach their target masses easily, and broadcast their messages smoothly. Social media tools are also effective in providing rapid and participatory intra-institutional communication. As a part of social media, social networking is not only an area of interpersonal communication, but it also reflects a new public space feature of internet. Non-governmental organizations also use social media to discuss their issues, spread the messages, and activate their members and supporters. In this study, besides the concept of social media and data of non-governmental organizations’ use of social media; data of communication activities of two women’s associations serving in Konya are presented. In the conclusion of the study, parallel to the associations’ efforts to take part in printed media, their existence in social media is also questioned. The obtained data is interpreted in terms of communication, corporate communication, communication with target masses and their media relations.

Keywords: Social Media, Traditional Mass Media, Non-Governmental, Communication Technologies, Woman Association
Type of Study: Research

1. Introduction

Social media and communication technologies have an increasing role in our lives. Internet, which was initially an American project for military purposes, is playing an active role as a huge global network with the support of non-governmental research institutions, governments and commercial establishments (Ürper, 2011;5). As we all know, a new communication era has been started and it not only has changed the method of communication, but also the nature of it. Rapid spread of new communication technologies, both expands further the understanding of “universal village” and lays the groundwork to turn what is universal into local. In this regard, with the rapid use of internet and its content extensions, people of all ages found themselves in a communication environment which they could never even imagine before 2000’s.

In his phrase “medium is message” Marshall McLuhan, meant that the society was shaped by the communication tools (technologies) rather than the content of communication. Mass media widely affects personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological and ethical fields of life so that there is almost nothing that they couldn’t reach, change and impact (Ural, 2011;59). With the usage of computers in 1970s and the internet in 1990s, first steps were taken towards strong changes in communication methods. Rapidly growing internet introduced us social media which almost covered the whole process of socialization in 2000s (Aytuna, 2011;41). The term social media covers online media and web sites where the users interact each other by sharing information, their ideas and interests. Social media, which is easy to use and open to share communication environment on internet, combines technology and social venture with words, pictures, videos and audio files.

New communication technologies introduce to people a debate-based media where they can share their ideas and works. This user-based virtual environment, so-called social media, brings masses together and increases the interaction among them. Studies show that people are spending more and more time, meeting their needs and establishing a new life in this virtual reality. Sometimes it is observed that the boundary between this virtual world and the real world is uncertain.

2. The Concept of Social Media

Social media is a realm where information, different ideas and experiences are shared throughout community oriented web sites and internet is rapidly embedded in our lives (Weinberg, 2009;1). Social media, which is a mobile-based way of communication, has no time and space limitations. “Technology and telecommunication have a structure which provides social communication via words, visuals and voice files. People share their stories and experiences in a framework within this context” (<http://tr.wikipedia.org>, 2010).

With social media applications, people create real and natural dialogue environments. It also allows sharing different contents to make the thoughts more effective (Evans, 2008;5). In a narrow perspective, social media is one of the web-based facilities where the internet meets people with each other in a virtual environment. In a broad sense, it can be defined as a web-based facility which allows individuals to create open or semi-open profiles in predetermined borders and shows the list of people who shared connections with different individuals. Social media is a commonly used term for web sites and online tools which create interaction by allowing their users to share information, interests and ideas. The features of social media can be listed as: its resource is interactive with the help of technical mechanisms in the communication process, it allows special message exchanges for every individual and for an individual, it eliminates the necessity to have an ability to send and receive messages in an appropriate time (Dikmen, 2011;160-161). Despite there is term “media” in it, social media has different features from traditional media. The most important difference which forms its authenticity is that any people can create the content of social media, make comments and contribute to the contents (Scott, 2010;38). With social media, individuals are no longer the followers or readers but the actors who directly disseminate the information. With the help of social media, people find an opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences around the world.

It is possible to list the most commonly used social media environments as follows (Dikmen, 2011;162-164):

Social Web Sites: Social web sites are social networks where internet users with common interests get acquainted with each other, establish interaction and communication, share ideas and information and debate ideas. Facebook is a well known example for social web sites. The percentage of people having profiles in social networks increased to 48% in 2010 whereas it was 34% and 28% in the years 2009 and 2008 respectively.

Blogs: Blogs are defined as web-diary. The most important thing in a blog is its content. Its actual and sincere contents make the blogs more valuable. Personal, institutional or thematic blogs are media environments which are frequently updated, have an informal and simple structure and no privacy option, and open to comments of people.

Micro Blog: Differs from traditional blogs with its spontaneous and short content sharings. The most popular micro blog service is Twitter, where the entries are limited with 140 characters. Micro Blogs allow people to share what they are doing with others, and they are especially used by professionals for sharing information and news.

Wikis: Wikis are interlinked web pages and the content of it can be easily formed. It has various areas of application such as encyclopedic knowledge repositories, social networking sites, corporate online networks, information management systems, and personal organizers.

Forums: Forums are online discussion platforms on certain subjects or interest areas, and it may cover compliments, suggestions and complaints about products and brands

Content Communities: They are web sites which produce and share contents in specific subjects. Flickr (Photograph sharing web sites), Youtube (video sharing web sites), Jamendo (music sharing web sites) can be listed as content communities.

Podcasts: It is a technique of releasing digital media files to be displayed on portable media players or computers.

Virtual Game Environments: They are the environments where the people play games alone or with other people in a crowded virtual environment.

Social Bookmarking Websites: It provides the internet users to share the web sites or web pages with other people. The internet users follow the shared contents by voting or commenting. By this way, articles, pictures or videos which interest people come to forefront among millions of different contents.

Social media is important since it has impacts on community's behavior. Moreover, social media has some advantages to affect people's attitudes, for instance users can get very rapid feedbacks. However it is hard to define those advantages very clearly because of the rapid development of social media. Rapid spread of social media makes also it difficult to follow and control. Advantages of social media can be listed as follows: control is in the users' hands, participants can establish contacts with their social and business environments, it allows to agencies and businesses to improve their marketing activities, facilitates measurements and segmentations. The disadvantages are: communication is not as clear as expected, data exchange is only among the members and social network server, contents cannot be easily shared, noise component of communication increases and therefore marketing and communication messages can be lost, confused or the feedbacks can be failed (Çakır, 2011;178-179).

Social media has the following features (Vural and Bat, 2010;3348).

Participants: Social media encourages the participants and get feedback from every user.

Clarity: Mainly, social media services are open to feedback and participants. These services encourage people for voting, commenting and data sharing. They rarely put prevention to access.

Conversation: While traditional media broadcasts contents, social media enables two way conversation.

Community: Social media allows community to form rapid and effective formation, so the communities share their interests like photos, political values and favorite TV shows.

Connectedness: Most types of social media perform tasks associated with connection; they enables to form a link related to peoples' interests, researches and other web sites.

The difference between social media and traditional media can be listed as follows (<http://tr.wikipedia.org/>, 2010)

Access: both traditional media and social media technologies enable everyone to access to masses.

Accessibility: For traditional media, production is made either by private companies or governments; whereas social media tools generally can be used by everyone with a low or zero cost.

Usability: Traditional media production mostly requires specialized abilities and trainings. However, it is not valid for most of social media, in other words, everyone can be in production.

Renewal: In traditional media communication, the time difference can be much longer when compared with social media where impact and responds immediately occur. However, traditional media is also adapting social media tools.

Lastingness: Traditional media cannot be changed after production (i.e. an article in a journal cannot be changed after it is published and distributed); whereas, in social media comments and re-arrangements can be done instantly.

3. Non-Governmental Organizations and Social Media

NGOs have a regulatory role between government and society. They determine collective targets within the framework of this role and try to impact the policies of governments and private companies to reach their goals. In Turkey, NGOs are functioning under the names of associations, foundations and trade unions. For they require memberships, professional organizations are regarded as controversial for being NGOs (Biber, 2006;32). With the process of globalization, NGOs have new functions: they become the basic and principle actor for social changes; they increasingly widespread with different structures and they started to take the first place in the agenda.

In order to mould public opinion, NGOs use various public relations methods such as traditional media relations, advertisements, meetings, signature campaigns and lobbying activities. Media support has an important role for the success of NGOs. Sometimes very successful studies don't reach to public attention since they fail to withdraw media attention. Even sometimes studies may be given in media in a negative or exaggerated way or they may be completely ignored (Ataseven, 1997;32). When planning public relations efforts, NGOs should investigate the reasons of lack of interest from society and include

ways to overcome it (Biber, 2006;50). Technological opportunities brought by social media channels, has a feature to eliminate those handicaps and constraints.

Communication opportunities brought by social media are felt not only in individual, but also in corporate sense. Social media is a vehicle for NGOs to reach their target audience, easily interact with people and spread messages to audience which they have difficulty to contact. In order to struggle with the indifference of media, NGOs create their own profiles in social web sites and directly communicate with media members. Social media tools are effective in providing organization's internal communication in a fast and participatory way. In web sites and interactive web sites, the members can communicate with each other, share their views and suggestions and rapidly disseminate the NGO's messages. NGOs use social media to make announcements, give details about activities, organize signature campaigns, and to mold public opinion about the subjects related to NGOs activities. Therefore, in this aspect, it can be said that social media environments reflects its feature as a new public space besides the individual communication. Social media environments offer new opportunities, which have not been achieved before, to NGOs to overcome the indifference of people and media to their activities.

4. A Research on The Use of Social Media on Ngos

In this study, internet and social media applications of NGOs are examined by current situation analysis and telephone interview method.

Actively operating two woman associations in Konya, namely KIKAD (Konya Businesswomen Association) and KAGIDER (Turkish Women Entrepreneurship Association) - Konya Branch in Konya were selected from the universe of NGOs. The associations' web sites are examined and the news, links and messages in the web sites are followed. Moreover, telephone interviews with the executives of these two associations are made and open-ended questions are asked. At the end of the study, parallel to the trials of being existence in written and visual media, the associations' existence in social media is questioned. The data obtained from this study is interpreted in terms of corporate communication, communication with target audience and media relations.

4.1. Research

Under the current situation analysis, the above mentioned two women association's social media usage and the results of telephone interviews with the managers of the associations are listed below:

4.1.1. Konya Businesswomen Association (KIKAD)

Konya Businesswomen Association is established to strengthen the status of women in business world, increase the number of women entrepreneurs and reinforce the existing women entrepreneurs. In the web site of the association (www.kikad.org), various activities, notifications, meetings personal information and news about association members exist. There are no social media applications of the association. Communication and interaction are made only in its existing web site.

4.1.2. Turkish Women Entrepreneurship Association-Konya Branch (KAGIDER)

Turkish Women Entrepreneurship Association is established on September 2002 in Istanbul by 38 women entrepreneur as a NGO to operate in all over Turkey. With its 200 women entrepreneur members working on various sectors, KAGIDER continues to grow. It aims at developing women entrepreneurship and leadership in Turkey. In their web site (www.kagider.org), there are projects, activities, activity calendars and an interaction platform called "*biz@biz*" which provides internet based communication with members, potential members, and all the people who wish to get information about association.

In order to support the current situation analysis of the study, questions about social media are asked to the executives of the associations. Vice president of KIKAD and Head of the KAGIDER Konya Branch informed that they don't have social media applications but expressed their desire to implement it as soon as possible. Two administrators particularly expressed the necessity of social media applications. Vice President of KIKAD once again emphasized the importance of social media with these words:

“Social media will help us to increase the number of members and volunteers, reach the individuals easily, establish more effective communication, take participatory decisions, and communicate with press and to organize the activities more effectively.”

4.2. Findings of the Research:

Data obtained from the research is interpreted in terms of corporate communication, communication with target audience and media relations.

4.2.1. Corporate Communication

It is seen that communication applications are carried out via traditional media in NGOs subjected to research. Both associations have no specially designated manager dealing with public relations or corporate communication. Therefore, there is no directly responsible person for social media applications. Within the scope of the research, it is seen that there are no social media applications in both NGOs; however, the associations have elements of corporate identity (vision, mission, visual materials like logo, etc) and general targets. The shared links, wall writings and notifications in the web sites carry the same message.

4.2.2. Communication with Target Audience

Both NGOs' web sites are prepared professionally and include messages that encourage visitors to become member of the association and to participate in the associations' activities. Moreover, in the main pages of two associations' web sites, the arrangements are done such that the visitors can easily communicate with the associations' officials. It is observed that, although they are not existed in social media, both NGOs are more sensitive than many other private businesses in stakeholder communication. In the web pages of NGOs, RSS, e-bulletin, dialog box, and online participation applications, which help to increase the communication quality, are existed.

4.2.3. Media Relations

NGOs don't use social media environments for providing news flows as they do in traditional mass media channels. In Facebook and Twitter, NGOs don't share press releases and photographs, which they put in their web pages and send to journals, magazines, radios and TVs. Relations with media are carried out by using traditional communication channels.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Although social media applications have a recent history, it has a wide usage among individuals and organizations. Renewal of internet technology in each day and therefore the increase in areas of its use are inevitable opportunities for communication. Hence, two NGOs within this study should benefit from social media environment, because in this way, they can create various actions with the support of social media, they can create viral effect by using media channels and about their communication activities and they can ask the opinions of the users of social media and get their views and recommendations. Projects carried out within the organization can be shared through social media and the comments of the followers can be obtained. Facebook, Twitter and other social media environments can help NGOs to reach various profiles from different backgrounds. Social media can create a communication environment between the organization, volunteers of organization and the followers. Social media can also facilitate communication with local media members.

In mobile based social media, it is possible to share words, visuals and audio files with no time and space constraints. Therefore, it is possible to say that sharings and dialogues of individuals in internet form social media. Social media, which is a new type of online media, encourages its participants to communicate each. Moreover, it allows two-way communication besides dissemination-based communication. Since it allows fast and effective mass communication, sharings becomes easy and therefore interconnected communication becomes possible.

On the contrary to traditional media, social media is used with zero cost, the accessibility is easier, usage is also easy and it is not constant since it is easy to be renewed. Rapid feedback is very important for the users in social media. Moreover, social media has also some disadvantages, one of them is it is hard to follow and control information since it is rapidly disseminated.

Finally we can say that with the above mentioned uses of social media and its communication channels have a dynamic to reproduce communication.

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