An application to determine the efficacy of emoji use on social marketing ads

Volkan Yakın¹   **Oya Eru²**

Abstract

Social marketing can be described as non-profit organizations' marketing activities. With social marketing activities, it is aimed to create awareness of the campaign issues for create a useful behavioral pattern in society. As for business organizations, promotion is an important part of marketing activities in nonprofit organizations too. With the usage of the Internet in the marketing area, new channels have emerged to perform promotional activities. Social media can be described as one of these new channels. The most important reason of usage of social media as a promotion channel by nonprofit organizations is the possibility to reach more people on a tight budget. Also, social media provides to create an interactive communication, to measure campaign results and to transmit campaign messages to the right audience. Recently the newest concept using as a promotional tool can be described as emoji. Many companies including nonprofit organizations have started to use emojis in their advertising campaigns. The aim of this Study is to aimed to measure the attitudes towards emoji usage in social marketing campaigns and to guide companies who are going to use emojis in their advertising campaigns in the future. Not to encounter studies about measuring the effectiveness of emojis in marketing literature, expresses the importance of the study. In the study, experimental design method has been used and a survey has been applied to the selected sample. According to the results of the study, it has been concluded that emojis are effective for social advertising campaigns. Participants expressed that, usage of emojis in advertising campaigns is suitable for social campaigns. And using emojis in advertising campaigns explains the Project successfully. They expressed that the transmitted message of campaign is informative and effective. And also participants expressed that these kinds of campaigns are attractive, creative and innovative.

Keywords: Social marketing, social media, promotion, emoji

1. Introduction

As well as in profit-oriented firms, promotional activities constitute a significant part of marketing activities also in nonprofit firms too. In case, with the Beginning of using in the marketing activities of the Internet, new promotion channels have been emerged. The possibility of reaching the target group everywhere at every moment with the beginning mobile usage of the internet, the growth in smart phone usage and the increase in social media usage has made online environments to become an important promoting tool for nonprofit organizations, especially due to their limited budgets.

Nowadays, the newest concept to be used as promotional tools can be described as emojis. Many organizations around the world, including non-profit organizations, are starting to use emojis in their advertising campaigns. The recognition of emoji as a common language all over the world and being seen as the easiest way to express emotions can be explained as two main reasons why companies use emoji in their promotional campaigns. The aim of this study is to explore

¹Asst. Prof.Dr., Abant Izzet Baysal University, Gerede School of Applied Sciences, BOLU/TURKEY, volkanyakin@gmail.com

²Asst. Prof.Dr., Abant Izzet Baysal University, Gerede School of Applied Sciences, BOLU/TURKEY, oyaeru@ibu.edu.tr; oya.eru@gmail.com

attitudes towards nonprofit organizations' advertising campaigns created with emojis and lead to other organizations who are considering using emojis in future advertising campaigns.

2. Conceptual framework

The marketing activities of non-profit organizations are evaluated within the scope of "Social Marketing". The concept of social marketing was first described by Kotler and Zaltman (1971). According to this, social marketing; can be defined as "the design, implementation and control of programs influencing the acceptability of social ideas, including product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research considerations" (Aytekin and 2015 adapted from Kotler and Zaltman). Social marketing tries to influence social behavior for the general benefit of the community (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996). Social marketing also benefits from elements such as sustainability, physical evidence, human, public, partnership, politics and funding as well as marketing mix members (Özcan, 2015, Weinreich, 1999). A significant part of Social Marketing campaigns are promoting activities. According to Kotler and Lee (2011), promotional activities include persuasive communication techniques that emphasize the benefits, features, cost and accessibility of a product or service. These techniques include messaging, news, applications on media channels, and other creative and applicable promotional elements.

With social media, corporations can achieve multi-faceted goals such as establishing individual contacts with the target consumer mass, establishing brand loyalty, transferring corporate message, and creating to the right marketing decisions with consumers' feedbacks (Köksal and Özdemir, 2013). Using social media is an effective way for non-profit organizations' advertising campaigns (Weinreich, 2007). By using social media, companies can reach more people with lower budgets, establish an interactive communication with people, spread campaigns to wider masses, reach the right audience and measure them (Onat and Alikılıç, 2008). The circumstances above, explain why nonprofit organizations can use social media for their marketing campaigns. In addition to this, it can be stated that people start to move away from traditional advertising channels. People are in constant demand for control of media consumption and want to access and display immediately of relevant content which is suitable for them (Mangold and Faulds, 2014). Therefore, when evaluated in this respect, social media can be considered as a more suitable advertising medium for social marketing. The most innovative advertising campaigns created using social media are ad campaigns created with emojis.

Emojis can be described as icons that simply express emotions and thoughts developed by Shigetaka Kurita to reduce restrictions on text messages (Golden, 2015). It is believed that the most important reason why emojis start to be used in advertising campaigns is to be accepted as a common alphabet which means the same thing all over the world and reflect people's emotions. Huang et al. (2008) also state that emojis provide a more enjoyable and positive communication experience and allow personal interaction. Other reasons for using emojis are that a large part of the online population is using emoji and helping to communicate among people Emogi Report (2015). According to the researches carried out, it has been determined that the use of emoji in promotional activities increased by 777% compared to previous years (Tao, 2016).

3. Methodology

Experimental design method has been utilized for the application of the research. For this purpose, it is inspired by WWF digital advertising campaigns. Relevant campaigns have been

redesigned to fit the purpose of the research. In Application part, it is aimed to measure the attitudes towards emoji usage in social marketing campaigns by showing two separate advertising banners to two separeted group. One of the banners used in the research was designed as an advertisement poster asking participants to send tweets with #helpme hashtag by using emoji and the other banner was also designed to send an SMS by texting HELPME (short message).

The pilot study conducted for this purpose was tested the suitability of the scale to be used in the study. Questionnaires consisting of 27 questions and three chapters were applied to Gerede School of Applied Science students by convenience sampling. There are 686 students in the School of Applied Science . The survey was distributed to 400 students. After unsuitable surveys were taken out, 346 surveys were taken into consideration. Research is limited to students' opinions and questions. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS package program. The findings and the results of the analyzes can be seen below.

4. Findings

The findings about the survey can be seen below. There are two groups of participants. First group is consist of participants who answered the questions about SMS advertisement campaign.

4.1. SMS group

Table 1 Demographical tata

Gender	F	%	Department	F	%
Female	79	45,7	Banking and Finance	42	24,3
Male	94	54,3	Banking and Finance Evening	46	26,6
Total	173	100,0	Marketing	19	11,0
Age	F	%	Marketing Evening	22	12,7
16-25	173	100,0	International Trade and Logistics	44	25,4
Total	**173**	**100,0**	**Total**	**173**	**100,0**

It is seen that most of the participants were male students. All of them are between 16-25 age years old. 26,6 of them are students of Banking and Finance Evening department, %25,4 of them are International Trade and Logistics department students, %24,3 of them are Banking and Finance students, %12,7 of the participants are Marketing Evening department students and %11,0 of them are marketing students.

It can be seen on the table that most of the participants spent time on internet 3-4 hours per day and %20,8 of them spent time on internet 5-8 hours per day. Most of the students, follow social media 5 year and over. Also it can be seen on the table that % 52 of the students connect to internet via smart phones. Most of the students use their smart phones for connecting to internet. According to the analyzes, it can be said that a large majority of the participants spend 1-3 hours a day on the social media, they have different social media accounts. And most of them ever donate before.

Table 2 The usage of internet and social media

Time spent on Internet	F	%	Following Social Media	F	%
Less than 1 hour a day	13	7,5	Less than 1 year	14	8,1
1-2 hours per day	43	24,9	1-2 years	12	6,9
3-4 hours per day	72	41,6	3-4 years	48	27,7
5-8 hours per day	36	20,8	5 year and over	99	57,2
9-12 hours per day	9	5,2	Total	173	100,0
Total	173	100,0	**Using mobile phone for**	F	%
Connecting device	F	%	Speaking	52	30,1
Desktop Computer	3	1,7	Texting	31	17,9
Laptop	8	4,6	Connecting to internet	86	49,7
Smart Phone	90	52,0	Video calling	4	2,3
Tablet	1	,6	Total	173	100,0
Laptop and smart phone	68	39,3	**Time spent on social media**	F	%
Desktop and smart phone	3	1,7	Less than 1 hour a day	33	19,1
Total	173	100,0	1-3 hours per day	95	54,9
Social media ownership	F	%	4-6 hours per day	38	22,0
I just have Facebook account	15	8,7	Over 7 hours a day	7	4,0
I just have Twitter account	5	2,9	Total	173	100,0
I have different social media accounts	153	88,4	**Ever donate**	F	%
Total	173	100,0	Yes	63	36,4
			No	110	63,6
			Total	173	100,0

4.2. Emoji group

The second group of the selected sample is consist of students who answered the questions about Emoji advertisement campaign. And the data about the answers of the Emoji group can be seen below.

Table 3. Demographical data

Gender	F	%	Department	F	%
Female	91	52,6	Banking and Finance	49	28,3
Male	82	47,4	Banking and Finance Evening	40	23,1
Total	**173**	**100,0**	Marketing	32	18,5
Age			Marketing Evening	8	4,6
16-25	172	99,4	International Trade and Logistics	30	17,3
26-35	1	,6	International Trade and Logistics Evening	14	8,1
Total	**173**	**100,0**	**Total**	**173**	**100,0**

According to the answers of participants, it can be seen that most of them are consist of female students. Most of them are between 16-25 years old. %28,3 of the students are studying at the Banking and Finance Department, %23,1 of the students study at Banking and Finance Evening Department, %18,5 of them study at Marketing Department, %17,3 of the students study at International Trade and Logistics and %8,1 of them study at International Trade and Logistics Evening Department and rest of them study at Marketing Evening Department.

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Table 4 Usage of internet and social media

Time spent on Internet	F	%	Time spent on social media	F	%
Less than 1 hour a day	11	6,4	Less than 1 hour a day	34	19,7
1-2 hours per day	42	24,3	1-3 hours per day	84	48,6
3-4 hours per day	62	35,8	4-6 hours per day	41	23,7
5-8 hours per day	45	26,0	Over 7 hours a day	14	8,1
9-12 hours per day	13	7,5	Total	173	100,0
Total	**173**	**100,0**	**Social media ownership**	**F**	**%**
Connecting Device	F	%	I just have Facebook account	23	13,3
Laptop	10	5,8	I just have Twitter account	5	2,9
Tablet	1	,6	I have different social media accounts	131	75,7
Mobile Phone	99	57,2	I have no social media account	14	8,1
Laptop and mobile phone	63	36,4	**Total**	**173**	**100,0**
Total	**173**	**100,0**	**Using emoji in text messaging**	F	%
Following social media	**F**	**%**	Yes	166	96,0
Less than 1 year	11	6,4	No	7	4,0
1-2 years	11	6,4	Total	173	100,0
3-4 years	58	33,5	**Frequency of using emoji in text messaging**	**F**	**%**
5 year and over	93	53,8	Very Frequently (in almost every text)	47	27,2
Total	**173**	**100,0**	Frequently (in most texts)	60	34,7
Reasons of using emojis	**F**	**%**	Sometimes (in a couple of texts)	49	28,3
Expressing my feelings better	75	43,4	Rarely (only a few texts)	10	5,8
For a simple and fast communication	24	13,9	Never	7	4,0
For Innovative communication	1	,6	**Total**	**173**	**100,0**
Global language	3	1,7	**Emojis make text messages better to understand**	**F**	**%**
Expressing better and simple	40	23,1	Yes	148	85,5
Express better and global	7	4,0	No	7	4,0
Express better and innovative	12	6,9	Not sure	18	10,4
Simple and innovative	4	2,3	**Total**	**173**	**100,0**
I don't use emoji	7	4,0	**Ever donate**	**F**	**%**
Total	**173**	**100,0**	Yes	59	34,1
			No	114	65,9
			Total	**173**	**100,0**

According to the data above, it can bee said that, %35,8 of the participants spent 1-3 hours on internet per day and %26 of them spent 5-8 hours on internet per day. Most of the students also spent 1-3 hour per day on social media. Like other group, students who called as emoji group

mostly use their smart phones to connect internet (%57,2). Most of them follow social media 5 year and over and most of them have different social media accounts. When it is asking that if they use emoji in text messaging, %96 of them stated that they use emojis in text messaging. Also they stated that they use emojis in text messaging frequently. And when looked at the data, students stated that emojis help to express their feelings better. And they stated that emojis are the simplest and fastest way of communication. %85,5 of the students expressed that emojis make text messages better to understand. According to the data, %65,9 of the students also ever donate too.

4.3. Mean and standard deviation

For measure the attitudes towards to advertisement message, 13 expressions asked to the participants. The mean and standart deviation of the participants' answers can be seen below.

Table 5 Attitudes towards to advertisement message

	SMS Group		Emoji Group	
Attitude Expressions	Mean	S.deviation	Mean	S.deviation
I think all social campaigns should be made in this style	3,5376	1,0756	3,8324	1,00620
I think this message is appropriate for the social campaign	3,7803	0,93278	4,0289	0,91135
This campaign is explaining the project successfully	3,6243	1,04708	3,8150	0,97671
I influenced by this message	3,2775	1,12240	3,6705	1,01792
I think this campaign is informative	3,7457	1,04216	3,9653	0,95781
This message is a helpful message in terms of describing the campaign	3,7688	0,96072	4,0462	0,81280
I like this style campaigns for social cases	3,6243	1,10121	3,9422	0,99832
This message encourages me to donate	3,1908	1,21211	3,6474	1,15005
This campaign is a good campaign.	3,7514	1,09521	4,1098	0,88565
This campaign is an interesting campaign	3,4162	1,08380	3,8208	0,99839
The message given by the campaign is clear	3,9364	0,99505	4,1908	0,89801
The campaign is an innovative campaign	3,3006	1,02404	4,0925	0,82307
The campaign is a creative campaign.	3,1445	1,08206	4,0	0,81123
N: 346		***1. Strongly Disagree**	**5 Strongly Agree**	

According to the data above, it can be said that students find emoji campaign more interesting, more innovative and creative. Also according to the results, when the two groups are compared, the students whose advertisement campaign banner about emojis find the advertisement messages clearer, think that all social campaigns should be made in this style, This message is a helpful message in terms of describing the campaign. Also they influenced more than other group.

4.4. Hypotheses and results of hypothesis tests

5 basic hypotheses for the research were identified. Hypotheses were analyzed by SPSS sowtware program. The developed hypotheses and the analysis results are as follows.

H0-1a The attitudes of the students towards the emoji campaign do not differ according to their gender

H-1a The attitudes of the students towards the emoji campaign differ according to their gender

Table 6 Results of H1a

	N	Mean	S.deviation	t value	p value
Female	91	3,9606	,69593		
Male	82	3,8882	,65945	0,701	0,485

According to the table, it can bee seen that there is no difference about the attitudes according to gender.

H0-1b The attitudes of the students towards the SMS campaign do not differ according to their gender

H-1b The attitudes of the students towards the SMS campaign differ according to their gender

Table 7 Results of H1b

	N	Mean	S.deviation	t value	p value
Female	79	3,6816	,74922		
Male	94	3,4321	,82734	2,062	0,041

According to the table, it can be said that there is a difference about the attitudes of the students according to gender.

H0-2a The attitudes of students towards the emoji campaign do not differ significantly according to whether they previously donated for a social campaign.

H-2a The attitudes of students towards the emoji campaign differ significantly according to whether they previously donated for a social campaign.

Table 8 Results of H2a

	N	Mean	S.deviation	t value	p value
Female	59	4,0071	,63696		
Male	119	3,8845	,69717	1,128	0,261

According to the table, it can be said that there is no differences whether they previously donate for a social campaign.

H0-2b The attitudes of students towards the SMS campaign do not differ significantly according to whether they previously donated for a social campaign.

H-2b The attitudes of students towards the SMS campaign differ significantly according to whether they previously donated for a social campaign.

Table 9 Results of H2b

	N	Mean	S.deviation	t value	p value
Female	63	3,4676	,90262		
Male	110	3,5909	,73568	-0,975	0,331

According to the results, it can be said that there is no differences whether they previously donate for a social campaign.

H0-3a The attitudes of the students towards the emoji campaign do not differ according to the time they spent in social media.

H-3a The attitudes of the students towards the emoji campaign differ according to the time they spent in social media.

Table 10 Results of H3a

	N	Mean	F Value	p Value
Less than 1 hour a day	34	3,7206	2,439	0,066
1-3 hours a day	84	3,8929		
4-6 hours a day	41	4,1037		
More than 7 hours a day	14	4,1071		
Total	173			

P value is bigger than 0,05 so it can be said that there is no difference according to time spent on social media.

H0-3b The attitudes of students towards SMS campaign do not differ according to the time they spent in social media

H-3b The attitudes of students towards SMS campaign differ according to the time they spent on social media

Table 11 Results of H3b

	N	Mean	F Value	p Value
Less than 1 hour a day	33	3,5664	0,474	0,701
1-3 hours a day	95	3,5749		
4-6 hours a day	38	3,5182		
More than 7 hours a day	7	3,2088		
Total	173	3,5460		

According to the results, it can be seen that there is no difference time spent on social media.

H0-4a The attitudes of students towards the emoji campaign do not differ according to the time they spend online

H-4a The attitudes of students towards the emoji campaign differ according to the time they spend online

Table 12 Results of H4a

	N	Mean	F Value	p Value
Less than 1 hour a day	11	3,5909	1,238	0,297
1-2 hours a day	42	3,9464		
3-4 hours a day	62	3,9825		
5-8 hours a day	45	3,8519		
9-12 hours a day	13	4,1346		
Total	173			

According to the results, it can be seen that there is no difference according to the time students spent online.

H0-4b The attitudes of students towards the sms campaign differ according to the time they spend online.

H-4b The attitudes of students towards the sms campaign differ according to the time they spend online.

Table 13 Results of H4b

	N	Mean	F Value	p Value
Less than 1 hour a day	13	3,5385	1,194	0,315
1-2 hours a day	43	3,6547		
3-4 hours a day	72	3,5566		
5-8 hours a day	36	3,5299		
9-12 hours a day	9	3,0171		
Total	173			

According to the table, it can be said that there is no difference according to the time they spend online.

H0-5 There is no significant difference in the attitudes of students towards emoji and SMS campaigns.

H-5 There is a significant difference in the attitudes of students towards emoji and SMS campaigns.

Table 14 Results of H5

	N	Mean	S.deviation	t value	p value
Emoji Attitude	173	3,9263	,67789		
SMS Attitude	173	3,5460	,80012	4,880	0,000

According to the table, there is a significance difference in the attitudes of students towards emoji and SMS campaigns.

5. Conclusion

As a result of the studies carried out in other disciplines related to emoji, there are findings that, such as the fact that people perceive the expressions in emojis as real human emotions and that emojis are the simplest and fastest way to express emotions (Golden, 2015) (Churches et al., 2014).

Although the use of emojis in digital marketing in similar researches is increasing day by day, the fact that no studies were found in the marketing literature to determine its effectiveness has been the most decisive factor in the realization of this research. According to the results of the research, it was determined that there is a meaningful difference between the attitudes of the students towards the emoji advertisement campaign and the attitudes towards the SMS advertisement campaign. Students expressed that they found the advertising campaign created by using emoji more creative and innovative. The use of social media by profit-oriented or non-profit organizations like people is increasing day by day. Through social networks, hundreds of thousands of people interact at any moment. Therefore, using social media to reach customers, followers, volunteers or donors has become an important tool.

Today, social networks can be expressed as the simplest and fastest spreading of information. From here, it would be appropriate for companies or non-profit organizations to use social media to reach the target audience for promotional campaigns Created campaigns reach more people and with lower costs thanks to social media. Also, thanks to social media, awareness and recognition of institutions, products or brands is increasing.

Another benefit provided by social media is to encourage followers to become participants. The use of appropriate emojis in the messages that will be given in the social media campaigns will support the campaign message.

The most important features of emojis are that they can reflect emotions and pass those emotions to the other side. If visual content is often thought to leave a greater emotional impact than words, the benefits of adding emoji to campaign messages can be understood. It is believed that the results obtained with this study will lead to non-profit organizations when it is observed that non-profit organizations often use social media marketing due to their low marketing budget. Nonprofit organizations that want to build an interactive relationship with donors or volunteers can benefit from emojis on the digital footsteps of their campaigns when they design an innovative, sincere campaign. A large part of the participants in the survey stated that they did not donate. When the age ranges of the participants are taken into account, it can be said that they are the group with the most use of social media and emojis because they are in the Z genaration. Therefore, incorporating emojis into digital campaign messages can help organizations to reach young people, trigger them to donate and make them volunteer members. Emojis will also make campaign messages of non-profit-making organizations world-wide, since they are perceived as a universal language.

This study examined the attitudes of non-profit organizations to use emoji in their advertising campaigns. In other studies, different researches on the use of emoji for profit-oriented companies can be carried out.

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