

The Role of Museums in the Process of Creating A Brand City: The Case of Ankara*

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Abstract

It is crucial to evaluate the usage practices of social networks in sustaining the urban brand. In this study, we discussed how museums as social memory spaces are subject to social media posts. The study is noteworthy because it gives an opinion about social media posts of museum visitors and determines the approach to museums in the formation of an urban brand. Accordingly, we examined the Instagram posts of social media users related to museums in Ankara via content analysis. We found that the posts shared were mainly photos. Museums were the greatest data source for the corporate Instagram accounts according to sharing frequency and they were all foundation and private museums. Examining the purposes of sharing, we determined a multidirectional social media use in the dimensions of communication via announcement, publicity and informing. Analysing the use of hashtags related to museums in the process of creating a brand city revealed that museums highlighted themselves, their activities and the city where they are located. The experience of visiting the museum creates the opinion that there is an impression of the brand value of the city where the museum is located. As a result of the study, we found that it is necessary to organize a campaign based on a specific motto to be shared by corporate accounts of museums, personal accounts of visitors, and Instagram content creators to strengthen the positioning of Ankara museums related to the city.

Keywords: Brand City, Instagram, Ankara, Museum, Hashtag.

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Öz

Bu çalışma kapsamında toplumsal bellek mekânları olarak müzelerin sosyal ağ paylaşımlarına konu olma durumu ele alınmıştır. Çalışma, müze ziyaretçilerinin sosyal ağ paylaşımları hakkında fikir vermesi kent markasının oluşmasında müzelere yönelik yaklaşımı tespit etmesi ve bu sosyal, kültürel varlıkların marka kent yaratmasına katkı sağlaması noktasında önemlidir. Bu doğrultuda sosyal ağ kullanıcılarının Ankara'da yer alan müzeler ile ilgili Instagram paylaşımları içerik analizi tekniği ile incelenmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda paylaşım görsellerinin fotoğraf ağırlıklı olduğu; müzelerin kurumsal Instagram hesaplarının paylaşım sıklığına göre toplanan verinin en büyük kaynağı olduğu; bu müzelerin tümünün vakıf ve özel müze statüsünde olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Paylaşılan postlara bakıldığında hem tanıtım hem de bilgi vermek amacıyla çok yönlü bir sosyal medya kullanımı tespit edilmiştir. Marka kent yaratma sürecinde müzelerle ilgili olarak hashtag kullanımlarının incelenmesi ise müzelerin kendilerini, etkinliklerini ve müzenin bulunduğu kenti ön plana çıkardığını ortaya koymuştur. Müze gezme deneyimi, aynı zamanda müzenin bulunduğu kentin marka değerine yönelik de bir izlenim yaratmaktadır. Çalışma sonucunda, Ankara müzelerinin kent ile ilişkili bir şekilde konumlandırılmasını güçlendirmek amacıyla, müzelerin kurumsal hesapları, ziyaretçilerin kişisel hesapları ve Instagram içerik üreticilerinin Instagram hesaplarından paylaşılacak belirli bir motto odaklı kampanya yapılmasının gerektiği anlaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Marka kent, Instagram, Ankara, Müze, Hashtag.

Introduction

Cities have their own unique identities, which are a vital part of making them recognizable, differentiating themselves from competitor cities and attracting the attention of tourists or residents (Jun, 2019). Historical, cultural and archaeological values are also reflected in the process of creating a brand city, along with elements such as religious centers, institutions carrying out scientific activities, art, sports and cultural activities, commercial organizations, and natural beauties, which have a role in the formation of this element. Museums, which are an indicator of the richness of a city's cultural heritage, are among the elements of the brand city concept with the works and products they own and exhibit.

There are 100 metropolitan cities with more than 4 million inhabitants in the world. With a population of more than 5 million, Ankara ranks 98th in the world metropolitan area (Demographia, 2021) and second on the list of Türkiye's most valuable metropolitan brands with a brand value of approximately 36 million dollars (Brand Finance, 2019). The city, which has historical roots stretching back to the Hittites before the Republic, is in a race with other cities to become a brand city that is perceived positively with its cultural resources, history, educational opportunities, employment opportunities and social life opportunities.

Ankara, which has a predominant place in the field of museology as being the city where the first museum building of the Republic of Türkiye was built, was visited by approximately 3,5 million people in 2020, despite the effect of the pandemic (Giritlioğlu, 2021). The city is the subject of the posts of domestic and international tourists on social media with its sports, trade, art and cultural organizations, religious and historical structures and centers, educational institutions, touristic natural beauties and cultural heritage, as well as museums, which are places where cultural heritage

and art products are preserved and exhibited. In the posts, the museums of Ankara are brought to the fore with their various aspects. In this study, it has been assumed that posts about museums have the potential to contribute to positioning museums as significant landmarks of the city.

The widespread use of social networks in recent years has also changed the way individuals interact with each other (Phan & Melissa, 2018). This situation has initiated a radical cultural change in the way that some people choose the places they will visit to share their cultural experiences on social networks. With its interaction feature, social networks deeply affect marketing campaigns, as well as the creation, interpretation and exhibition processes of art, and cultural institutions and visitors (Sokolowsky, 2017). This new order raises the question: What does this sociocultural change mean for museums and museum visitors?

The photos shared on social networks no longer function simply as supporting elements to memories; apart from presenting a clear visual narrative about concrete objects, they also enable the audience to create abstract concepts that can only be visualized in their minds (Zingone, 2019). These images serve as a tool through which social relations and experiences are transferred from material cultural areas to social network databases (Carah, 2014, p. 139). From this point of view, social networks can also play a role in encouraging museum visits in addition to creating excitement and expectation about an exhibition (Stylianou-Lambert, 2017). Social networking sites have gained importance, which can be reflected in the prominence of museums as a brand city element, with the potential to affect their users' relationship with art and the experience of spending time in culture and art spaces. This importance necessitated the use of urban branding communication tools. When we look at the communication processes of brand cities, new methods of communication, including all forms of social media are used together with traditional tools. For digitization to succeed, which is a challenging task for each and every museum, serious and well-organized actions are required. In this sense, it is possible to consider the presence of museums in social networks as an advantage that enables them to reach large masses. Research on investigating the role of museums on city branding as a product of its cultural heritage is limited (Souza & Magalhães, 2019). This study aims to make a contribution to the literature by examining museum visitors' thoughts about the status of a city's museums as shown on social networks, determining how the relationship between the museum and the city is established, and how they both are perceived.

City Branding and The Role of Museums

The traditional approach to urban brand design underlines the necessity of formulating brand values, brand purpose and positioning, and of setting out a vision (Govers, 2015). Hanna and Rowley (2015, pp. 88-90) state that there are ten efficient components in the management of the city branding process. These components are; brand evaluation, brand infrastructure, stakeholder engagement (management), brand leadership, brand architecture, brand identity, brand expression, word-of-mouth, brand communication and brand experience. According to Florek and Kavaratzis (2014), when it comes to city brands, brand equity captures many differences and elements of the performance of the space for various stakeholders and also indicates the source of the success of the

place brand. Merrilees et al. (2012), on the other hand, emphasize how a city brand can become an efficient tool that allows separate types of urban stakeholders, all with specific and varied expectations and desires, to learn about, have interactions with, and form connections to the city. Hanna and Rowley (2015) argue that urban brands' digital presence is now becoming more important due to their experiential nature.

Present and potential stakeholders' dynamics of urban surveys and explorations, decision making processes related to a city and interaction with the city take place more rapidly within new and digital urban environments. Properties required for digital realization of the strategic urban brand management also determine the key components of the digital urban presence. They are channels, noise, community, rumor, co-creation and communication. In this way, digitalization takes roles such as creating a participatory environment in the city; contributing to urban transformation and urban planning; becoming a discussion forum, educational environment, center of attraction, culture, or experience in the city; pursuing social rights and individual rights of citizens; supporting the respect for cultural diversity and keeping in touch with the city.

Branding process of a city is useful for not only knowing how the city desires to express itself, but also for seeing how a variety of socioeconomic groups, also known as stakeholders perceive the city and urban management (Peker, 2006, p. 21). Building a city brand is generally related to connotations and perceptions based on visual, verbal, and behavioural spatial expressions (Zenker, 2011). Paris is perceived as the city of "love", Milan as "fashion", Cannes as "festival", whereas Las Vegas is perceived as a "live, complex, competent, contemporary and friendly" city (Uşaklı & Baloğlu, 2011, p. 126). Similarly, there are examples of associating a place with a cultural value. Like Gaudi's Barcelona and Zola's Paris. Associating cities with cultural icons thus and so is seen as an attempt to manipulate a creative character (Evans, 2003). A noteworthy resource of association which will diversify the cities and make them a brand is museums. They represent the history of a city and contribute to creating a future identity.

It is possible to examine urban branding applications in five periods of development. Considering these periods of development which are arrayed as primitive, enhancer, enterprising, formalized and brand oriented, the management and publicity of cities had involved governments and notables before the 19th century, rivalry with other cities had increased until the end of the 20th century and thus, investors, employees and tourists too affected the image of cities. In addition, most factors related to cities such as history and natural beauties, cultural features, tourism activities, shopping opportunities, fairs, ceremonies, festivals and sport activities, religious centers, scientific research and international commercial organizations are among determining factors that affect the process of creating a brand city (Huang et al., 2013; Köker et al., 2013, p. 55). Cultural heritage of the city plays a crucial role in relations with urban and national powers. Positive cultural heritage in the national context can make the city a regional, national or international tourism attraction center. Being visitor-centred and providing visitor diversity is a predominant structural element for sustainable and attractive museums. This visitor orientation requires developing strategies to increase visitor numbers and ensure repetitive visits. These strategies make it necessary to consider cultural needs (Di Pietro et al., 2014, p. 5745). For this reason, these cities, which have rich historical and cultural

heritage, use these features intensively in becoming brand cities. All cities that have historical artefacts have potential in this regard. Cities that have one of the seven wonders of the world, such as the Egyptian Pyramids and the Great Wall of China, are mostly branded with the names of these works (Eroğlu, 2007, as cited in Yaşar, 2013, p. 3). Besides these great artefacts, specific important artefacts that are the symbols of cities are exhibited in museums. The Sun Disk which connotes Ankara and Anatolia and is exhibited in the Anatolian Civilizations Museum can be an example to the aforementioned artefacts.

According to Talboys (2011), museums are nonprofit and permanent organizations which are of scientific, artistic and cultural quality, have a social responsibility and where artefacts with brand equity are protected and exhibited and culture is conveyed (as cited in Karadeniz, 2017, p. 27). They serve the mission of handing the artefacts and products they protect down the next generations and persuading more people to see the artefacts.

Communication comes to the fore as the main topic related to technology for positioning attractive areas for visits, important artefacts to be seen, and assets that must be protected, thus digital tools are included in the museum communication process. The methods used by museums to satisfy the expectations of society, attract visitors and form an interaction between them have opened the museum and technology relationship up for discussion. A paper by Chris Bruce (2006, p. 130) entitled “Spectacle and Democracy: Experience Music Project as a Post-museum” suggests that museums have sought after a variety of methods and topics in order to increase the number of visitors and enter a more digital and interactive age for the past twenty years. A study conducted by Manna and Palumbo (2018) determined that digital technologies and web based services particularly increased the interest of young people in museums and the opportunity of interaction made it possible to establish a creative relationship.

After this involvement, Fernandez-Lores, Crespo-Tejero and Fernández-Hernández (2022) compared websites, virtual communities and social networks according to their traffic generation power over a sample of 17 international museums. As a result of Fernandez-Lores et al’s research has found that virtual online communities and social networks are of vital importance in increasing the number of museumgoers. In recent years, the active presence of many people on social networks owing to the rapid development of new communication technologies has also provided a basis for using social media platforms in a way to contribute to the brand city communication. Therefore, museums gain ground on specific social media platforms and contribute to urban communication in order to protect and maintain their presence and be separated from others via sustainable communication (Soydaş & Üstünbaş, 2020, p. 383). A number of museums have created online social media profiles in order to publicize their exhibitions and other programs, make it easier to participate in cultural activities, and to keep in touch with visitors (Russo et al., 2009). The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has published the “Social Media Guidelines for ICOM Committees” (2019) to share successful practices in this regard. It seems possible that this two-way communication in social media, which is subject to the expectations of museums in terms of the roles of the visitors and encouraging stable and significant changes in the relations between visitors and museums, can bridge the gap between the digital and physical environment (Koke & Ryan, 2017). In this way, social

media followers are likely to turn into visitors, visitors into members, members into donors, and donors into outspoken advocates of a museum (Gelles, 2017). Considering from the perspective of museums, it is possible to transform visitors from passive observers into active participants and even into online marketers by documenting, reorganizing and sharing their experiences and having communication in this regard (Holdgaard & Klastrup, 2014; Villaespesa, 2013). Additionally, social media may enable the audience, namely content creators to have a direct interaction with curators who function as moderators (Kelly, 2009), museum administration and other visitors of museums. It is possible to shape the image of museums on social networks by encouraging museums and galleries to offer visitors fine images and short information about the artefacts from the museum collection and instant photos of the daily life in the museum (Lazaridou et al., 2017). The dialogue opportunity offered by social networks and real-time, direct and uninterrupted communication can elevate the communication experience with the museum to a more participatory level.

Instagram as A Social Network for Museums

Social networks are used as a means of communication aiming to encourage the dialogue between museums and online communities (Capriotti & Kuklinski, 2012). Although Instagram has started to attract attention for research carried out specifically for museums, limited views have been obtained from the studies carried out in this field so far. Museumgoers can use Instagram to link their experience of visiting museums with their own personal narratives, through adding images and graphics, sharing their location, and recording their memories in an aesthetic and playful form (Budge, 2018; Villaespesa & Wowkowych, 2020). In a qualitative study carried out at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, it was found that visitors saw photography as a way of enhancing the enjoyment of their visit, that it provided a point of entry to exhibitions, and led to more interaction (Stylianou-Lambert, 2017). Another case study conducted at another art gallery in Australia showed that Instagram posts can make it easier to promote and recommend exhibitions to others (Suess, 2014).

A study on the Instagram posts of science museums has found that there is a lack of scientific images and scientific hashtags and nearly one third of the posts do not contain anything scientific (Jarreau et al., 2019). In particular, 1073 Instagram posts were examined in a study on the Instagram posts of science museums. Therefore, it is an issue that needs to be investigated with what details and how visitors re-share the experiences they have gained during their museum visits on Instagram. A research project carried out at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia forms one example (Budge & Burness, 2018). Within the research, 390 images were compiled for interpreting the interaction of the visitors with the exhibited objects, afterwards, the images were divided into categories with a semi-automatic method as images with only objects, images with people and objects together, images with only people and others. In an analysis of the official profiles of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Louvre, 30 Instagram posts were selected from each museum, and were then divided into macro-categories titled places, objects and people. It has been observed that the posts in the places category of the Louvre Museum and the posts in the objects category of the Metropolitan Museum of Art are predominant (Zingone, 2019). Villaespesa and Wowkowych (2020) used photo screening

and semi-structured interviews to examine Instagram and Snapchat stories uploaded by visitors to Brooklyn Museum in a study of social media usage with respect to museum visits. The study found that the features of this temporary media are an element of the motivation behind the posts. As in traditional photography, the temporary content on social media is usually motivated by catching an artefact that is found to be esthetically fine, documenting an emotion, sharing an experience or creating a self-identity.

In another study, Instagram hashtags belonging to 2016-2018 exhibitions in Korea were examined. Over 80,000 hashtags that referenced the names of exhibitions were extracted from Instagram posts created by users, and they were subsequently classified under the headings of informative (e.g. exhibition title, venue, local information, and general art-related hashtags), participatory and exposure (e.g. #selfie and #picstagram), and other hashtags (e.g. #Weekend and #date) that were manually edited in past studies. For the reasons listed above, as well as the wide availability of useful user-generated metadata via hashtags, it was more appropriate to focus on Instagram for the research (Rhee et al., 2021). Hashtags are not only a means of configuring a content created by users on social media. They also create a virtual environment where communication/chats blooms/bloom (Rauschnabel et al., 2019). In addition, they are a tool of creating an active mass around a specific subject and theme.

Methodology

The research is crucial in that it deals with museum-themed posts on social media by framing them with city branding. Within the study, the content analysis technique was used and the data were evaluated with a descriptive approach.

In the research, instead of an analysis of the usage practices of a museum directly, answers were sought for the following questions, with the desire to reach a finding on the status of museums in social media to create a city brand;

- What is the sharing status of Ankara's museums on social platforms as physical spaces that can contribute to the city's brand value?
- What are the differences in the content according to the source of the posts?

Data Collection Techniques: To collect the research data, Instagram, which is the second most popular social network after YouTube in Turkey, where visuality is at the forefront, was used. The data was collected on the way Ankara museums are discussed in social networks to be evaluated within the framework of the role of brand city image. By searching on Instagram with the hashtag #ankaramüzeleri, 1822 posts shared from 2016 to December 1.12.2021, and 970 posts were found with the hashtag #ankaramüze. These posts were saved on the computer by the researchers. 317 posts containing both hashtags, and advertising posts made by hotels, restaurants, car rentals etc. were excluded. 1234 posts over the #ankaramüzeleri hashtag and 345 posts over the #ankaramüze hashtag were taken as the examined unit.

The data were evaluated by classifying them with the content analysis technique for qualitative research. For analyzing the content of the posts, a coding scale was designed, the messages were

categorized and made suitable for making meaningful inferences. According to this table, the posts are classified as appropriate for the research (related to museums) and not included in the study (containing the relevant hashtag, but visually and textually off-topic). 1579 posts relevant to the research topic were coded as photos and videos, and the distribution status of content production according to the source (museum/social media content creator/newspaper, author, phenomenon/museum visitor) was determined. The categories were created manually by the coders during coding by looking at who shared the posts. The images posted by the museum officials and visitors were evaluated by the subject and content of the texts.

The validity and reliability of the data, which means high consensus during coding, were determined by the Miles and Huberman (1994) model (as cited in Baltacı, 2017). According to this model, 200 posts were coded by the researchers within the pilot study. The number of posts on which a consensus was reached on the coding for categorization was divided by the number of posts included in the pilot study, and it was determined that there was 89% consistency among the researchers.

Findings

During the examination of 1579 Instagram posts, firstly, the posted images were classified as photos and moving images (video) (Table 1). As a result of this classification, it was understood that the posts consisted of photographs intensively.

Table 1. Results of The Type Instagram Posts

Type of posts	Number of posts	%
Photo	1425	%90
Video	154	%10
Total	1579	%100

90% of the posts examined during the research consist of photos. These photos are about posters of events held in museums (40%), museum buildings (5%), selfies or souvenir photos from a museum tour (10%), permanent artefacts in the museum collection and photographs from exhibitions (35%). A predominant source of these photos is the official museum accounts (65%).

10% of the posts are in the video type. 50% (78 posts) of these videos are shared by official museum accounts, 29% (44 posts) by museum visitors and 21% (32 posts) are posted by other social media content creators.

Table 2. Results of The Source of Instagram Posts

Source of Posts	Number of posts	%
Official Museum account	1058	%67
Content Creator	162	%10
Museum Visitor	359	%23
Total	1579	%100

Considering the distribution of posts by source (Table 2), the most active source is the official museum accounts (% 67). 23% of post were shared by museum visitors' personal Instagram accounts and 10% were shared by other Instagram content creators. Museums with active use of social media to create a network and communicate with their target audiences have the status of private museums.

Table 3. Results of Instagram Posting Purposes

Posting Purpose	Official Museum Account		Museum Visitor		Content Creator		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Announcement	268	25%	46	13%	73	45%	387	25%
Informing	84	8%	186	52%	42	26%	312	20%
Promotion	414	39%	107	30%	29	18%	550	35%
Others	292	28%	20	6%	18	11%	330	21%
Toplam	1058	100%	359	100%	162	100%	1579	100%

When the purpose of Instagram posts is evaluated (Table 3), the results say that 35% of all posts are promotional about the works, collections, innovations and events within the museum. In the second place according to the purpose of posting, there are announcement posts (25%) consisting of the museum opening, innovations in communication tools such as digital guides, online events and virtual tours, ticket status for museum workshops, event postponement and cancellation. The purpose of 20% of the posts is to provide information about visitors, content creators, museums, their history, works, location information and physical attributes such as gardens, cafes, museum sales points and the field of museology. Posts outside of these three purposes (21%), on the other hand, consist of messages in which special days are celebrated, important names are mentioned, and posts consisting of poems, proverbs, and maxims.

Table 4. Results of The Topics of Instagram Posts

Topic	Official Museum Account		Museum Visitor		Content Creator		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Museum Work/collection	217	21%	161	45%	50	31%	428	27%
Museum Building (Historical Structure, Museum Cafe, Museum Garden, Museum View)	43	4%	146	41%	26	16%	215	14%
Museum Workers	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Museum Communication	29	3%	0	0%	7	4%	36	2%
Visiting Experience and Recommendation	23	2%	136	38%	34	21%	193	12%
Museum Event	417	39%	19	5%	21	13%	457	29%
Museum Entry opportunities/Fees/ Information about art and artists	27	3%	34	9%	36	22%	98	6%
Others	113	11%	18	5%	21	13%	152	10%
Total	1058	100%	359	100%	162	100%	1579	100%

Considering the distribution of Instagram posts collected through the two primary hashtags in Table 4, it is understood that following the topics regarding activities such as concerts, exhibitions,

panels, and online events constitute 29% of all the posts and are at the forefront. Followed by posts on works and collections (27%) and Museum Building (Historical Structure, Museum Cafe, Museum Garden, Museum View) (14%). Posts on Visiting Experience and Recommendations make up 12% of all posts. Posts about commemorating and celebrating special days are 10% of all posts, and museum entry opportunities and promotional posts about art and artists are 6% of all posts. While no posts related to museum workers were detected, a limited number of posts linked to museum communication (2%) mentioned digital tools, the possibility of visiting museums with virtual tours, and museum activities held online.

When we look at the subjects of the posts according to the source, museums are actively using social media by creating content about various activities from concerts to workshops for potential and current visitors, virtual tours or virtual panels, programs that promise a different museum experience to visitors, and educational opportunities in the museum. It is pointed out that the museum is in Ankara in the posts made from the official museum accounts containing expressions such as *“Now is the time to visit a museum in Ankara,” “It is near the Ankara Castle,” “The museum has a magnificent view of Ankara due to its location. Do not forget to look at the view from the windows while visiting our museum,” “We are waiting for those who want to wander around the historical texture of Ulus at our museum at the weekend”*. The institutional accounts of the museum also highlight their buildings. They draw attention to details such as the history, architectural features, and scenery of the museum buildings, as well as its garden, cafe, conference hall, training workshops and shopping areas within the museum.

The things that museum visitors prioritize are the magnificence of the artefacts and collections in the museum area, the history of the museum, and the view of the museum building. Furthermore, museum visitors have mentioned many factors, from the location of the museum to its view, from the most well-known work to the validity of the Müzekart, along with recommending others to visit the museum. In their posts, visitors call to visit museums and associate Ankara with the museum with expressions such as *“There is no one in Ankara who does not stop by this museum,” “There are a lot of places to see in Ankara. You were never told about it before,” “I visited the Ankara Painting and Sculpture Museum, one of the symbolic structures of our city,” “I won’t let go of my guests who come to Ankara without a tour of this museum,” “Who knows what you are missing by postponing a visit to the museum”*.

Instagram content creators, on the other hand, created and shared contents about causeries held in museums, news of exhibitions or what to do in the museum, events such as museum openings, and posts that inform or promote museums. They have chosen Ankara and Ankara’s museums as a source for their content to gain followers or create interaction with sentences such as *“We came up with a worth-saving post about Ankara museums. Have a good trip already,” “Ankara can’t miss this concert at the Museum,” “Hidden treasures of Ankara,” “Free museum recommendation for those who are in Ankara and want to go, especially those who want to take their children for a walk” “This post is for those who say ‘As if there is a place to visit in Ankara!’”*

It has been determined that hashtags are used extensively together with visuals and written texts through the available 1579 data obtained. Accordingly, hashtags with a frequency of use that repeat at least twenty times, except for the two primary hashtags from which the study data were collected, were determined. Besides, they were examined according to the source of the posts.



Figure 1. Hashtag Analysis on The Posts of Official Museum Accounts

The museum that stands out with hashtag usage is the Gökyay Chess Museum. They have highlighted their name, as well as Turkish and English chess words, by using the # sign as adjacent keywords. Since the museum is located in the Hamamönü district, which is a historical district in Ankara, they used the district name as a hashtag in all their posts, positioned themselves as a significant brand of that district and associated it with themselves. With the assessment made over the hashtag, it was determined that the museum accounts position themselves at the centre of the community they are trying to create.



Figure 2. Hashtag Analysis on The Posts of Museum Visitors

Hashtags shared by museum visitors have also been evaluated as data regarding the museum and city brand. The visitors most frequently used the word Ankara as a hashtag in their posts. The visitors

establish a strong relationship between the museum and the city thus the museum is pointed out as a must-see place in Ankara. This shows that Ankara has a remarkable place in the posts of visitors.



Figure 3. Hashtag Analysis on The Posts of Instagram Content Creators

Lastly, when the hashtag usage of content creators is examined (Figure 3), the hashtag #ankaraetkinlik is in the first place. It is clear that workshops, events, concerts and special day events planned and announced in museums are considered crucial for providing interaction for content creators and are specially mentioned with their events in social media posts.

Conclusion

By examining the posts in the data set, the study attained results regarding the perception of social media users about Ankara museums for the city branding process. Although there was no generalizable information and the data was limited to the target population created through two primary hashtags, the results were as follows: Museum-themed posts comprise predominantly of photos. Institutional museum accounts are more active. Visitors and content creators need to be more active. The Instagram posts analyzed are mainly a part of works, collections and events in museums. These prior posting topics are followed by the museum building, visiting experience and museum communication with a limited number of posts. However, museums are institutions where society has a say, and interaction and dialogue with society gain importance due to being open to cooperation and partnerships. All posting topics aim to brand museums as noteworthy and must-see places in the city, and an increase in suggestion posts is necessary for this branding to consolidate.

According to the results, Instagram was pivotal in creating the image of Ankara as the capital of culture and art through museums. For this reason, the emphasis is placed on the promotion and announcement of museum works, collections and events. The official accounts of the museum create content related to the agenda with special days and celebration messages. The deficiency that is present here is the recognition of visitors as passive consumers of culture and art. In the age of participation and interaction, it is necessary to communicate interactively with museums and enable them to be active visitors. The museums' use of social media as a uni-directional source of

information, promotion and announcements limits the communication process, which is the brand component of the city.

All stakeholders, from decision makers to city residents, who contribute to the vision of city branding strategies, can play an active role and participate in the branding of the city through cooperation and participation (Kavaratzis, 2004; Henninger et al., 2016). It is remarkable that there are no posts about museum workers and sector employees related to the field of activity of the museum. Hence posting should be done by focusing on the employees. This requirement is suggested as a corporate communication practice that can contribute to the improvement of communication with its stakeholders by enabling museums to create a perception of closeness with their target audience. Here, sharing social network content with employees in different roles such as corporate communication and public relations department, manager or curator has the potential to provide significant benefits. In museums with prominent social roles, the museum staff will be able to contribute directly to the branding of the museums and indirectly to the fact that the museums as brand spaces are the attractive elements of the city in which they are located, which will have a share in the city's becoming a brand by assuming the duties of the representative of the institution in communication management, the mediator or facilitator of communication. Because museums should no longer be adopted as places where it is enough to visit once, that do not renew themselves in exhibition and presentation, and do not make any effort to reach the society or consider the demands of the society; On the contrary, they should adopt continuous renewal, creating content or activities for the needs or expectations of the society, sharing experience and reflecting cultural diversity. At this point, museum staff gain importance by fulfilling the function of a bridge between the institution and its circle, especially from the public relations perspective. This will ensure that the time spent in the museum and the interpretation of the museum by experiencing will become predominant, in addition, community participation will increase the gains the society has acquired from the museum.

It was discovered that during coding, although it was not among the research assumptions, a large number of hashtags were used in the data. Hashtagging is topic tagging that allows following the subjects on the agenda (Lee & Xu, 2018, p. 203) and contributes to the spread of information on a particular topic (Zhao et al., 2016). The use of hashtags to respond to the search for information on the same topic is explained by Sütçü and AYTEKİN (2013, p.1865) as inviting social network users to talk about the subject. Thus, at this stage of the research, the assumption that the detection of hashtag usage may be aimed at creating a community related to the sharing topic emerged, and the researchers analyzed the data containing hashtags. It has been understood that the museums themselves, the content producers, the activities of the museums (exhibition, collection, works, history, physical features, concert, workshop, etc.), and the visitors highlight the city where the museum is located and various parts of the city with the use of hashtags.

Newmann (2014) states that videos are a tool that liberates and democratizes the mass media, making it the media of the people. Evaluating the results with this approach, we see that democratization of the videos is realized at a partial level and visitors do not prefer to produce

video content as much as photographs, plus the functions such as participation and discussion are dominated by photography rather than other technologies as a visual media tool.

Event posters and announcements posted from the museum accounts and the photos of the artefacts in the museum collection show that the museum administration pays attention to the experience with in-museum activities and to the artefacts that can be seen while touring the museum. Fact that the source of the posts is the corporate structure demonstrates the brand visibility of museums, presentation of their identities, their physical characteristics, inclusion of their identities in the corporate culture and the adoption of digital channels as an important driving force for differentiation. This adoption relates museums to an effort to create a network in the virtual environment for the branding of a place by bringing together various parts such as cultural heritage, image, and symbolic meaning.

Museums are presented as a destination for the city-country-region by being presented in audio-visual channels as promotional material through the official museum accounts. Good social media content serves to position institutions such as museums, which undertake the task of meeting social and cultural needs that do not have a sales target, as a reliable quality and valuable resource related to their subject or field. To announce the brand value of the city with a single slogan or hashtag and to create a community there has the potential to enable all museums to see themselves as a part of the city, to accept museums as institutions with a high brand value that makes it meaningful to be in the city, and to embrace them as a location where content creators can gain more interaction. The 2004 “I amsterdam” campaign is a well-known example. It was chosen as an inclusive slogan that functions as an umbrella and can be identified with everyone (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2006). #MuseumInstaSwap is an example of a motto used in museum communication. In 2015 in London, ten museums shared pieces from their collections on Instagram for four days using the hashtag #MuseumInstaSwap (Museuminstaswap, 2021). A common motto, hashtag, or slogan to be created will make the city the subject of museums, museum visitors and content creators. This will lead to the development of a strong connection between the city and the museum in the minds of those targeted.

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