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ABSTRACT

Social media has become a necessity for people. The fact remains that, the increase in the number of users of social media platforms and the fact that they spend a lot of time on social media cause some differences in the influence of users, in the desired direction of thinking and the need for verification. Recently, Instagram is among the platforms most used by university students. Starting from this, this study investigates how universities in TRNC use Instagram accounts in the context of communication. In line with this goal, the research, the posts shared by the five universities in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which have the most Instagram followers, in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year, were analyzed by content analysis method. The posts were handled in 5 categories: news - announcement, promotion, culture, art, sports, social responsibility and special day. As a result of the study, the Instagram accounts of the universities were analyzed.

Keywords: University, social media, TRNC.

INTRODUCTION

The developing age and technology rapidly increase the power and effectiveness of social media, and personal views on social communication are changing day by day. Especially in recent years, with the development of communication technology, educational institutions have started to use social media networks actively in their corporate communication activities, as in many institutions (Çarkaroz, 2018). In today's rapidly developing technology, social media is among the virtual channels where the most time is spent. Along with the rapidly developing technology, social media is of great importance in the formation and development stages of institutions and brands. Institutions have started to implement new marketing strategies with social media channels in order to market their products or services and reach their target audiences (Alan, 2018). Social media platforms are used by many people for various purposes such as socializing with their friends, getting information and having fun. In this context, many large corporations use this developing technology in the most efficient way in order to attract attention, raise awareness and raise the image of the institution, increase sales and revenues, determine the target audience, create brand awareness and create the reputation of the brand. Social media is actively used as a promotional tool in the education sector, as in all sectors. Today, universities have started to use social media actively for marketing, preparing marketing campaigns, connecting with the target audience and promoting universities (Akyol, 2015). Thanks to social media, universities reach their target audiences directly and in the fastest way. Social media is one of the important promotional tools in order to make an easy-to-apply and financially more economical promotion. The effective use of social media platforms for marketing communication, especially in an environment of intense competition, has become an important factor in the success of the organization. Therefore, it can be said that the successful use of social media platforms in the marketing communication dimension also plays a role in the success of the education sector, where competition is intense (Vural 2010). Instagram, which is among the social media, is a platform widely used by university students. Researches and studies support this (Kurtyğit, 2021). Among the fourteen undergraduate students interviewed, eleven users, six women and five men, state that they use Instagram for four hours or more in a day. Six of these participants, four women and two men, state that they spend eight hours or more on Instagram during the day. Two female users among the participants state that their use can go up to twelve hours during the day (Metin, 2021). In this context, it has become an indispensable platform for universities to use Instagram effectively and for a long time by university students. Using Instagram effectively is very important to stand out in the competition between universities. In this study, it is aimed to reveal how

private universities in the TRNC use my Instagram accounts in the context of promotion and communication, and what types of posts they make.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concepts

New Media and the Concept of "Social Media"

Updates in developing communication technologies surprise people every day. In addition to being surprised by these changes, people quickly adapted to innovations. The transformation of home phones went down to our pockets, and the transition to a new era, which was developed and updated, was achieved with the transformation of mobile phones, from desktop computers to laptops and even tablets and phones. However, especially in the last 10 years, the changes and technological innovations have become the most important points of people's lives and an indispensable addiction. People who use and adopt traditional media frequently have adopted the developing technologies in new media faster than traditional media. One of the most important reasons for this is that the traditional media has started to prepare the infrastructure of the new media (Öztürk, 2015).

The formation, development and popularity of new media are the results and qualities of many innovations in the past. With the development of the new media, time and space barriers have been removed, and it has created the opportunity to quickly access information from any part of the world at the other end of the world. "Social media", which is included in the new media, has had an important point in people's lives, especially in the last 10 years (Kurtyğit, 2021). Thanks to the opportunity to be present in wide environments, social media provides the opportunity to communicate face-to-face with people living at one end of the world, and share photos, texts and videos. The possibilities brought by this provided a clearer and clearer understanding of the "global village" theory put forward by Mc Luhan. As new media tools, there are CD-ROMs, computer games, websites, e-mails, blogs, interactive television, mobile media, podcasts, Instagram, Facebook, Tweeter, Youtube etc. Social media platforms are also included under the umbrella of social media. Social media continues to gain innovation and popularity every day. Social media has enabled people to find new friends, communicate with their friends, and share many messages with many people at the same time. In this way, people use social media in a popular and effective way to reach the events and news happening in the world instantly (Öztürk, 2015).

Instagram

Instagram is a social media application that reached 200,000 users in its first week in 2010. Videos for Instagram users integrated with "Android and Windows" Mobile operating systems after 2012, e.g. Offers opportunities to take photos, apply filters and share photos. Instagram 2012.85 Platform was acquired by Facebook for 11 million USD (Kurtyğit, 2021). Instagram is already starting to take off amongst teens, showcasing its awesome products like vacation trips and exciting experiences like dinners or luxury clothing, especially for those who love to showcase their most beautiful and creative photos. However, unlike Facebook, it belongs to a smaller peer group. In other words, an internet-based application that allows users to share their own and uniquely created content as a post. The fashion industry, which saw this as an opportunity, later started to use this platform. The fashion industry, which saw this opportunity, later started to use this platform. Over time, it has become a popular application by all segments (Gündüz, 2018). According to Statista's research, Instagram, this has more than 700 million users, ranks 7th in social networks. According to these data, the rate of Instagram usage has increased by 500% in the last 5 years (Tepret, 2018). One of the most important features of this channel is the ability to like and comment on posts. Thanks to this feature of Instagram, you can communicate through this platform and provide feedback. Instagram is a platform widely used by university students. Researches and studies support this (Kurtyğit, 2021). Among the fourteen undergraduate students interviewed, eleven users, six women and five men, state that they use Instagram for four hours or more in a day. Six of these participants, four women and two men, state that they spend eight hours or more on Instagram during the day. Two female users among the participants state that their use can go up to twelve hours during the day (Metin, 2021). In this context, it has become an indispensable platform for universities to use Instagram effectively and for a long time by university students. Using Instagram effectively is very important to stand out in the competition between universities.

Universities and Social Media

The Concept of "Social Media" and Universities Social media is defined as online environments and platforms that enable web 2.0-based communication and post sharing. These contents shared on these platforms where the management is the user can be updated or changed again (Seçkiner, 2017:817). Social media is the environment where people have fun, communicate and actively participate and socialize. " (Çakaröz, 2018). Social media are internet-based channels that bring together various institutions, groups or believers in a virtual environment. People generally use social media to obtain information, communicate with their relatives, and learn about the things they are curious about. Institutions, on the other hand, use social media to reach their target audience and

they take part in social media to bring themselves to the fore (Alan, 2018). (Çakaröz, 2018) In scientific studies, it is seen that candidate students examine social media channels, especially Facebook and Instagram accounts in their school preferences (Seçkine, 2017: 818). They actively use social media to create trust and to make people feel safe (Çiftçi, 2018). In addition, universities share events such as event announcements and important news, and they are in constant communication with students and prospective students. They can announce their social events and all the announcements about the university and students through their social media accounts. Due to the interactive nature of social media, it is very important for university students to share their experiences on social media, for the positioning of potential students and for the promotion of the university. Social media is widely used by almost everyone and everywhere during the day. For these reasons, making announcements and important reminders on social media platforms and answering questions from social media accounts will increase communication between all parties and increase the effectiveness of communication (Çakaröz, 2018). In a study by the University that measured the impact on candidates' preferences, 26% of students have social media. 20% of OSYM and advisor support, 19% of their own efforts and 16% of universities. As a result, it was revealed that they made their choices using promotional tools (Çakaröz, 2018). As a result of the research, the effect of social media on university preferences reveals the importance of university and social media use. With the effective use of accounts, universities can take themselves one step forward.

Recognizing the corporate communication levels of universities through social media platforms; It is thought that it will contribute to the field due to the determination of the current situation of universities in the use of social media. In addition, the absence of such a study on Northern Cyprus universities reveals the originality of the research.

TRNC Universities

University Name	Foundati on Year	District the center is located	Type	Rector	Network Page
Island Kent University	2016	Famagusta	Special	Prof. Dr. Fuat Bayram	adakent.edu.tr Archived on 20 August 2018 at the Wayback Machine .
Mediterranean Karpas University	2012	Nicosia	Special	Prof. Dr. Sheriff Alpay Ataol	akun.edu.tr Archived 20 December 2013 at the Wayback Machine .
Arkin University of Creative Arts and Design	2017	Kyrenia	Foundat ion	Prof. Dr. Asim Vehbi	arucad.edu.tr Archived 24 July 2018 at the Wayback Machine .
Ataturk Teachers Academy	1937	Nicosia	State	Prof. Dr. Huseyin Uzunboylu	aoa.edu.tr Archived 8 February 2009 at the Wayback Machine .
Bahcesehir Cyprus University	2017	Nicosia	Foundat ion	Prof. Dr. Zafer Agdelen	baucyprus.edu.tr Archived 20 August 2018 at the Wayback Machine .
Eastern Mediterranean University	1979	Famagusta	State	Prof. Dr.. Necdet Osam	emu.edu.tr Archived 22 February 2010 at the Wayback Machine .
Girne American University	1985	Kyrenia	Special	Prof. Dr. Holy Ozturk	gau.edu.tr Archived 9 July 2008 at the Wayback Machine .
University of Kyrenia	2013	Kyrenia	Special	Prof. Dr.. Ilkay Salihoglu	girne.edu.tr Archived on 11 March 2020 at the Wayback Machine .
American University of Cyprus	2014	Nicosia	Special	Prof. Dr. Gokce Kececi	auc.edu.tr Archived 8 September 2016 at the Wayback Machine .
Cyprus West University	2015	Famagusta	Foundat ion	Prof. Dr. Omer Camci	cwu.edu.tr Archived 20 August 2018 at the Wayback Machine .

Cyprus Science University	2013	Kyrenia	Special	Prof. Dr. Ahmed Bulend Goksel	csu.edu.tr Archived 15 November 2019 at the Wayback Machine .
Cyprus University of Health and Social Sciences	2016	Guzelyurt	Foundat ion	Prof. Dr. Elif Çepni	kstu.edu.tr Archived 29 November 2020 at the Wayback Machine .
Cyprus University of Social Sciences	2015	Nicosia	Foundat ion	Prof. Dr. Mustafa Tumer	kisbu.edu.tr
European University of Lefke	1990	Lefke	Foundat ion	Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali Yukselen	lefke.edu.tr Archived 15 June 2009 at the Wayback Machine .
Netkent Mediterranean Research and Science University	2010	Nicosia	Special	Prof. Dr. Tayfun Turgay	netkent.edu.tr Archived 20 August 2018 at the Wayback Machine .
Onbeş Kasım University	2014	Nicosia	Special	Prof. Dr. Mehmet Bulent Uludag	onbeskku.edu.tr Archived on 16 December 2019 at the Wayback Machine .
Rauf Denktas University	2015	Nicosia	Special	Prof. Dr. Hasan Ali Knife	rdu.edu.tr Archived 20 August 2018 at the Wayback Machine .
International Final University	2015	Kyrenia	Special	Prof. Dr. Abdullah Y. Oztoprak	final.edu.tr Archived 20 October 2017 at the Wayback Machine .
International Business Vocational School	2011	Nicosia	Special	Bulent Cetinkaya	bms.edu.tr Archived 14 September 2017 at the Wayback Machine .
Cyprus International University	1997	Nicosia	Special	Prof. Dr. Halil Nadiri	ciu.edu.tr Archived 18 May 2019 at the Wayback Machine .
Near East University	1988	Nicosia	Special	Prof. Dr. Umit Hassan	neu.edu.tr Archived August 26, 2011 at the Wayback Machine .

In line with the data obtained, there are 21 universities and universities equivalent institutions providing active service in Northern Cyprus. 11 of them are located in Nicosia, 5 in Kyrenia, 3 in Famagusta, 1 in Lefke and 1 in Güzelyurt.

RESEARCH

Purpose of Research

The aim of this study is to reveal how universities in TRNC use social media in the context of communication and what kind of posts they make.

The posts made by each determined university on their Instagram accounts in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year will be analyzed by content analysis method. Posts will be handled in 5 categories: "Announcement-News", "Sports", "Culture, Art", "Promotion", "and Special Day “-” Social Responsibility".

Scope and Limitations of the Study

In the research, while the posts made by the universities in TRNC on their instagram accounts were discussed, due to the fact that visual content is shared and it is a popular social media platform in the last period of our age, Instagram was included in the research scope and different social media platforms were excluded from the study framework. The research deals with the five universities with the highest number of followers among the universities in the TRNC. With the idea that universities have shared too much, within the scope of the study, the shares they made in the fall semester from the 2021-2022 academic year were examined.

Method

In this study, qualitative research method will be used. It is possible to define qualitative research as “research in which qualitative data collection techniques such as observation, interview and document analysis are used, and a qualitative process is followed to reveal perceptions and events in a natural environment in a realistic and holistic way” (Karataş, 2015: 63). Content analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, will be used. Content analysis, which is one of the qualitative research methods, is to measure the variables in the obtained data and to systematically analyze unbiased (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000, pp.135–136).

Population and Sample

The universe of the research is TRNC universities. The sample, on the other hand, was determined as 5 universities with the most followers on Instagram as a purposeful sample. These universities are Near East, International Cyprus, Eastern Mediterranean, Girne American and Netkent Mediterranean Research and Science Universities.

Analyzes and Findings

In the research, primarily, the number of Instagram followers of the relevant institutions was examined. It is seen that Girne American University has the highest number of followers, while Eastern Mediterranean University is the second. It has been determined that the International Cyprus University has the least number of followers. The data obtained are as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Follower Account Information of Universities

University Name	Follower	Followed
Near East University	26.4 B	70
Eastern Mediterranean University	38.1 B	1125
Girne American University	49 B	40
Cyprus International University	18.8 B	48
Netkent Akdeniz Research and Science University	21.2 B	2

Secondly, the posts made by the universities were examined under five categories in the research. These are News Announcement, Culture-Art-Sport, Social Responsibility, Promotion, Special day. The data obtained are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of Shares by Categories

University Name	News Announcement	Culture Art Sport	Social Responsibility	Promotion	Special day
Near East University	7.8	1.9	2	6.3	9.7
Eastern Mediterranean University	11.2	10.5	3.2	9.6	8.8
Girne American University	0.67	14.3	0.2	0.3	3.6
Cyprus International University	212.9	303.4	123	435.2	521
Netkent Akdeniz Research and Science University	0	0	0.2	0.1	0.2

As shown in Table 2, it was determined that the university that shared the most in line with the five titles determined was Cyprus International University.

Table 3 . Average Number of Likes by Categories

University Name	News Announcement	Culture Art Sport	Social Responsibility	Promotion	Special day
Near East University	7.8	1.9	2	6.3	9.7
Eastern Mediterranean University	11.2	10.5	3.2	9.6	8.8
Girne American University	0.67	14.3	0.2	0.3	3.6
Cyprus International University	212.9	303.4	123	435.2	521
Netkent Akdeniz Research and Science University	0	0	0.2	0.1	0.2

It is seen in Table 3 that the university that shared the most shares, as in Table 2, received the most likes.

Table 4. Average Number of Comments by Categories

University Name	News Announcement	Culture Art Sport	Social Responsibility	Promotion	Special day
Near East University	555.9	521.3	453	463.3	563.7
Eastern Mediterranean University	543.3	521	654	532	760.8
Girne American University	444	480.3	843	241	558.7
Cyprus International University	212.9	303.4	123	435.2	521
Netkent Akdeniz Research and Science University	352	121	98	432.3	43.2

In Table 4, the rate of receiving comments by the universities was examined under the specified categories. In the data obtained, it is seen that Near East University is the university that receives the most comments, while Cyprus International University, which shares the most and receives the most comments, is the university that receives the least comments.

Table 5. Ratios of Total Likes Received in Shares Made in the Fall Semester of 2021-2022 by Number of Followers

University Name	Number of Likes	Following	Likes/Followers
Near East University	32,450	26.4 B	1.22
Eastern Mediterranean University	44,356	38.1 B	1.1
Girne American University	21,432	49 B	0.4
Cyprus International University	20,432	18.8 B	1.08
Netkent Akdeniz Research and Science University	8,345	21.2 B	0.3

When we look at the ratio of the total likes received for the shares made in the 2021-2022 Fall period according to the number of followers, it is seen that Near East University is 1.22, Eastern Mediterranean University 1.1, Girne American University 0.4, Cyprus International University 1.08, Netkent Akdeniz Research and Science University 0.3. The data are shown in Table 5.

Table 6. Ratios of Total Comments Received in Posts Made in the Fall Semester 2021-2022 by Number of Followers

University Name	Number of Likes	Following	Comment/Follower
Near East University	520	26.4 B	0.11969
Eastern Mediterranean University	853	38.1 B	0.0223
Girne American University	123	49 B	0.0025
Cyprus International University	232	18.8 B	0.0123
Netkent Akdeniz Research And Science University	10	21.2 B	0.0004

In Table 6, the ratio of the total comments to the posts made in the 2021-2022 Fall period, according to the number of followers, has been examined. These rates were determined as Near East University is 0.11969, Eastern Mediterranean University 0.0223, Girne American University 0.0025, Cyprus International University 0.0123, Netkent Akdeniz Research and Science University 0.0004.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

When the tables are examined, it is noteworthy that Girne American University has the highest number of followers in terms of the number of followers of the universities, while the number of followers is 49B. Eastern Mediterranean University is next with 38.1 followers, followed by Near East University with 26.4B, Netkent Mediterranean Research and Science University with 21.2B and finally Cyprus International University with 18.8.

It is observed that Eastern Mediterranean University and Near East University share the most. It has been observed that Netkent University shares very little. It is observed that universities give importance to special days and fulfill these responsibilities. We see that universities share little or no social responsibility. In this regard, universities should increase their social responsibility sharing. In general, it is seen that the sharing of special days and news - announcements by universities is high and in the foreground. When the general average of the likes received by the posts is examined, it is observed that the followers like the posts about the special day and responsibility much more in terms of number. Incoming likes are accepted as a success rate, so more importance should be given to sharing in the field of social responsibility.

It is observed that the highest average of likes is generally seen in special day posts. Along with this, due to the fact that universities share less posts in the social responsibility category, very little feedback has been received in the rate of comments as well as the likes of these posts. It is directly proportional that it has a very good rate of appreciation, especially with the effect of good news shared in the news and announcement category. In terms of the average number of likes per post, we see that Near East University and EMU stand out compared to other universities. On the other hand, it is obvious that Girne American University has a good rate of appreciation following NEU and Eastern Mediterranean University. The appreciation and commentary feedback received by the Near East in the field of art is at a high level with the value that this university gives to artistic sharing and art. Netkent University maintained its titles of falling behind in terms of social media sharing, also in the rate of appreciation. As a comment, we are faced with a situation where universities are below what is expected in general. Near East University has succeeded in leaving all universities behind with the average of comments it has received. It has achieved success with a good rate per share, especially in announcements and news shares. Another point that draws attention is that Netkent Akdeniz Research and Science University receives very few comments. Universities need to make more remarkable posts that will appeal to their target audience. They can get more feedback with different content.

There are data according to the follower rate of the total comments received by the posts made during the 2021-2022 fall semester. All universities in this area are in very bad shape. All universities should create and use different content in order to interact and receive comments. They should share posts with different content on my Instagram accounts, and they should review their social media plans and get more interaction.

CONCLUSION

All communication activities such as explaining the institution to the target audience and the long-term presence of the institution in the field are related to corporate identity (Yeniçikti, 2016). Universities can spread their core values, principles, views and missions on social media and express themselves more clearly (Bingöl, Tahtaloğlu, 2017). This aim is to determine the level of use of Instagram, one of the social media platforms of Northern Cyprus universities.

Competition in the education sector is increasing day by day in the TRNC. The fact that there are too many universities is one of the factors that increase this competition. Especially in terms of promotion and communication, my Instagram platform has an important place for universities. The majority of the young audience, which is the target audience of the university, uses Instagram and spends a long time. In the

researches, prospective students always check the social media accounts of the universities without making their university choices. For this first impression, university students must have an institutional structure, share regularly and reach a certain popularity. Universities share the links of their corporate web pages, event information and announcements on their social media accounts, making it possible for the target audience to reach the university directly, and this ensures the interaction between the target audience and the university (Yılmaz, 2015).

In this context, universities should receive professional social media services. It is important to create a certain sharing calendar and produce content that appeals to young people. With social media, it is necessary to value the values of the society and culture in which they live and to show this in their sharing. Many of the universities with a large number of foreign students do not share about the special days of their foreign students. Also, many of them do not use foreign languages. It is a pity that posts about social responsibility are at the bottom of the category. In general, the share in all categories would be expected to be higher. Particularly, the very few comments on feedback are the major shortcomings of universities in terms of interaction. As a result of the analyzes made, all but one of the private universities in the TRNC have official Instagram accounts. When we look at the number of followers of the corporate Instagram accounts of universities, Girne American University is the only university with the highest follower rate and a verified sign with a blue tick. Eastern Mediterranean and Near East University follow with a good number of followers. Although Girne American University has the highest number of followers, it has been concluded that the rate of likes is very low and the number of shares is low. It is recommended to focus on sharing.

It is necessary to ensure the effective and correct use of these communication channels in order to eliminate the distance between the university and the target audience and to reach them at any time. Therefore, how universities use social media and their presence here are important. It is recommended that universities should know the dynamics of social media, be aware of their current situation and be able to see the deficiencies. It should design social media pages for the university's goals and objectives. It can be suggested that universities pay attention to the privileges offered by social media tools and use these opportunities in their academic and sectoral development.

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