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THE ROLE OF FACEBOOK IN PROMOTING THE COMMUNICATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS RELATED TO CHILDREN WITH CANCER

The aim of this work is to assess the use of Facebook as a social marketing tool by organizations dealing with children with cancer disease. The theoretical part contains information about non-governmental organizations, the characteristics of selected foundations from Spain and the function of social media. The empirical part of the work was carried out in October and November 2018 during the author's stay in Spain. Posts published by three Spanish foundations Aladina from Madrid, Aspanion from Valencia and Afanoc from Barcelona have been analysed. They are the three largest cities in Spain, which is why the foundations were chosen from them. The analysis included Facebook tools, which were the most used by foundations, then the type of published content and at the end was selected the best post. The results show that the main posts of the organizations are related to fundraising, while the most used tools were photos.

Keywords: social media, foundations, Spain, cancer disease, communication, fundraising.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cancer is the second leading cause of mortality in Spain. A report of the Statistics National Institute says that in 2017 year 26% of Spanish people inflicted with this disease die (2018). Unfortunately, in kids, this is the first leading cause of death in Spain. Every day in Spain, a child or a teenager dies because of cancer (Fundación Neuroblastoma, 2016). Each year, more than 1,000 new cases are diagnosed among children, of which about 200 cases are in Andalusia, 180 in Catalonia, 150 in Madrid, and 100 in Valencia. Moreover, even the remission does not guarantee that there will be no relapse. In Spain, the Spanish Registry of Childhood Tumors has been created to collect materials since 1979, and its aim is to diagnose cancer in children and learn about the causes. Regarding the frequency of occurrence of disease varieties, leukaemia is 30%, 13% are lymphomas and central nervous system tumours, 22% are several types of cancer, while the most dangerous neuroblastoma is 8.8% (Universidad de Valencia, 2014). In order to raise awareness about cancer, NGOs should educate the public in addition to fundraising activities. In social marketing, it is very important that all activities are focused on changing people's behaviour (Iwankiewicz-Rak,

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2013). Marketing tools for the needs of public sector organizations are modified. And so we can distinguish with this strategy:

- a. Developing an idea (create an offer) – in this part the most important thing is to notice the problem in society.
- b. Shaping society costs (price) – the price for the goods offered by the organization is related to which groups will join the help. In the initial stage, the organization is waiting for help from the state. Then come donors and volunteers.
- c. Availability of ideas (distribution) – in this aspect, the most important is to find the best communication channels that will allow reaching to the largest possible audience.
- d. Social advertising (communication) – the main goal is to bring about social change. Another is the development of the organization itself, gaining and maintaining trust, raising funds and attracting new people to work.

The purpose of the article is to analyze how organizations use Facebook for their marketing activities.

2. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Non-governmental organisations are one of the essential pillars of civil society. They are considered a key in the third sector with a structure balancing the state power and allow people to unite over issues important to them. (Kotnis-Górka, Wysocki, 2011). Non-governmental organisations have developed from civil society to be able to better handle matters that were avoided by public authorities. They have enabled people to build in the social, economic, and political spheres for the last several decades. To achieve it, it is necessary for non-profit organisations to continually implement new communication systems that will allow them to educate society (Castillo-Esparcia, 2017). On the role of the third sector, Lester Salomon says this:

“The diversity of this sector is so amazing that it encourages us to overlook the important similarities that exist in it. Developmental people do not want to be confused with those who only devote themselves to help” (Salomon, 2005).

The year 1980 was a breakthrough year for Spain in terms of the formation of society. This also translated into non-profit arrangements that were the most popular at that time (Gomez-Gil, 2005).

As far as non-profit organisations dealing with cancer in Spain are concerned, the Spanish Federation of Parents of Child with Cancer emerges first. Founded in 1990 by parents of children affected by this disease, the organisation unites and coordinates the work of 21 associations throughout Spain. The central principle of each of these associations is that the work should be carried out by parents of sick children. The Federation belongs to the International Childhood Cancer International association. The Aspanion foundation from Valencia, the third city in Spain, was selected for the study. Aspanion has been active in the Valencian Community since 1985.

From Madrid, an independent Aladin foundation was selected. The organisation that has been operating for only 13 years has changed a lot in cancer hospitals, in particular in the Madrid Hospital Niño Jesús.

From the Catalonia region, we have the Afanoc Asociacion, a group of parents who decided to set up an association that will support children and their families from Catalonia. The Afanoc affiliate has been operating in Barcelona since 1987. They also have branches in Lleida and Tarragona. They cooperate with the Federation of Parents of Children with Cancer.

Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia are the three biggest cities in Spain. They are also the most important centres in the provinces which they represent. It was necessary for this research to show how the organisations in these cities work for their residents. We would also like to explain if a proper foundation – like Aladina from Madrid, functions better than foundations which are affiliated in one association.

2.1. Communication of non-governmental organisations

For everything to go well in the process of raising awareness, promotion, donor sourcing, the conversation is the most important thing. The dialogue between organisations and donors and beneficiaries must be carried out in a clear and peaceful manner. Social networks and social media give much more possibilities to communication with the users for an organisation (Młodożeniec, 2013).

We know perfectly how important role media play in our lives. They are the principal intermediary in the transmission of more or less important information.

At the time of the emergence of a "hypermedia model of communication" (Pacut, 2016), that is the ability of many people to communicate with another group at the same time, it has modified the structure of economic processes, both on a macro and micro scale.

The use of new information and communication technologies, especially the Internet, is inevitable nowadays. In Spain itself, there is an increase in the use of the opportunities offered by the Internet. Such a serious issue as our health has found itself amidst this communication revolution. The health service has also made a tool out of the network to transmit messages daily (Lauckner & Whitten, 2015).

Social media means all these online platforms, thanks to which companies, organisations can inform potential recipients about their services. They are a new form of media to include users and interaction with them. (Dejnaka, 2013). The main features of social media include:

1. Published content can be widely used.
2. Freedom in creating and receiving information placed on social media.
3. Users of a given medium can share content.
4. They are built in a direct manner (Dejnaka, 2013).

NGOs know that their duties include ensuring that the information they publish concerns not only promotional aspects but also their activities and sources of financing. It is because they are under strict state control (Pacut, 2016).

In 2004, Tim O'Reilly began using the term Web 2.0. According to his theory, Web 2.0 sets new trends not only in technology but also in economic and social conditions. Altogether, they are to form the basis of today's Internet operation, of which users are the principal shareholders (Castillo Esparcia & López Villafranca & Carretón Ballester, 2015).

Health also has its answer to Web 2.0. Due to the popularity of using the network to acquire knowledge in the field of health, the term Health 2.0 or e-health appeared. Ignacio Basagoiti has the opinion that:

“The key aspect of the ‘revolution’ that the Internet assumes are problems in access to information and resources, drastically reducing inequalities caused by geographical and cultural barriers, but also organisation” (Basagoiti, 2009)

The authors of the article on communication in the network of patients with rare diseases in Spain refer to the statement in the White Book about oncology in Spain which states that each new patient is assigned consumer rights and access to a larger pool of health-related information through the Internet and traditional media (Castillo Esparcia & López Villafraña & Carretón Ballester, 2015). For better effect organizations focus on four aspects, which Bernoff calls POST:

- a. People – identification of recipients and what can be offered to them.
- b. Objectives – what kind of aims organizations want to achieve.
- c. Strategy – it is a plan to establish relationships with recipients.
- d. Tools – this will be used in social media (Gajda-Perek, 2013).

2.2. The purpose of the study

The study aims to investigate which methods of communication by selected organisations in Spain dealing with cancer-related diseases in children are best perceived by users. The study wants to answer these three questions:

1. What communication possibilities social media offer to organisations?
2. What types of messages are publishing on their profiles?
3. What post was the best and why?

3. METHODOLOGY

We have focused attention mainly on Facebook, which remains one of the most commonly used applications in the world. In Spain, about 86% of users only use Facebook (AIMC Report, 2017).

To be able to answer the above questions, messages published on Facebook were collected from the 1st of October to 30th of November 2018. The selected foundations operating in Spain are:

1. Aspanion – a foundation from Valencia, also having its branch in Alicante. It belongs to the Federation de Padres de Niños con Cancer
2. Aladina – a foundation from Madrid, but they help hospitals in the whole Spain
3. Associacio Afanoc – a foundation covering the territory of Catalonia. The headquarters is in Barcelona but the branches are also in Lleida and Tarragona.
4. For the first question, we analysed what kind of content is used by the foundations: videos, photos, hashtags, links to websites.

To be able to answer the second question, the method developed by Bender, Jimenez-Marroquin, and Jadad from 2011 was used. The researchers determined four types of information for the needs of the work *Seeking support on Facebook: a content analysis of breast cancer groups*. They were:

- a. Knowledge and awareness. In this case, organisations want to tell their recipients things about health, statistics about treatment, prevention, and translation of medical concepts.
- b. Support. What kind of actions they took for their charges and their families? The posts about the support are intended mainly for this group of recipients.

- c. Collecting funds. It is about every action made by the foundation where they can ask donors to support their charges. Particularly, collections for treatment, rehabilitation, to buy hospital equipment.
- d. Promotion. This applies to the foundation's activity itself, people who work there, volunteering, events, showing what hospital life looks like.

Fernandez-Campo and Campo added "other news" to this list, which refers to the content published on fan pages that is not related to any of the above types of information.

The last question applies to the best posts from the period when the study conducted. Choosing the best post depends on the number of likes, shares, and comments on the post.

4. RESULTS

Table 1. Characteristics of the foundation

Name of Foundation	City	How many "likes" they have?	Year of appearance on Facebook
Aspanion (https://pl-pl.facebook.com/aspanion/)	Valencia	10,000	2012
Aladina (https://www.facebook.com/FundacionAladina)	Madrid	153,000	2011
Associacio Afanoc (https://www.facebook.com/AFANOC/?ref=page_internal)	Barcelona	13,000	2010

Own source.

Table 2. Statistics of published posts

Name of Foundation	Number of posts in October	Number of posts in November	The best post: number of reactions/comments/shares
Aspanion	30	31	13 th of November, 376 reactions, 26 comments, 119 shares
Aladina	53	67	8 th of October, 2,200 reactions, 48 comments, 380 shares
Associacio Afanoc	9	12	29 th of November, 214 reactions, 20 comments, 58 shares

Own source.

We can see that foundation Aladina, which is a private organisation, is more popular than Aspanion and Associacio Afanoc. The result may indicate that this foundation is more active in social media than the other two, but also the fact that a separate unit must do much more to be able to support their charges. If we compare the three foundations in the context of the questions posed, it appears that they have a similar style of activity. Fundraising news are also the most important to them. In the following subchapter of work, we will introduce the results for each of the selected foundations based on an analysis of their activity on Facebook.

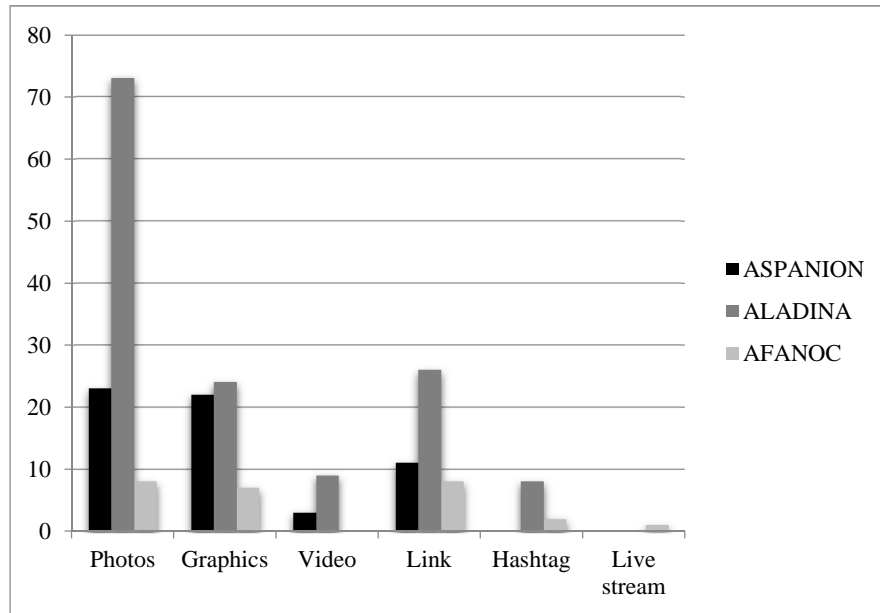


Figure 1. Tools used by foundations on Facebook

Own source.

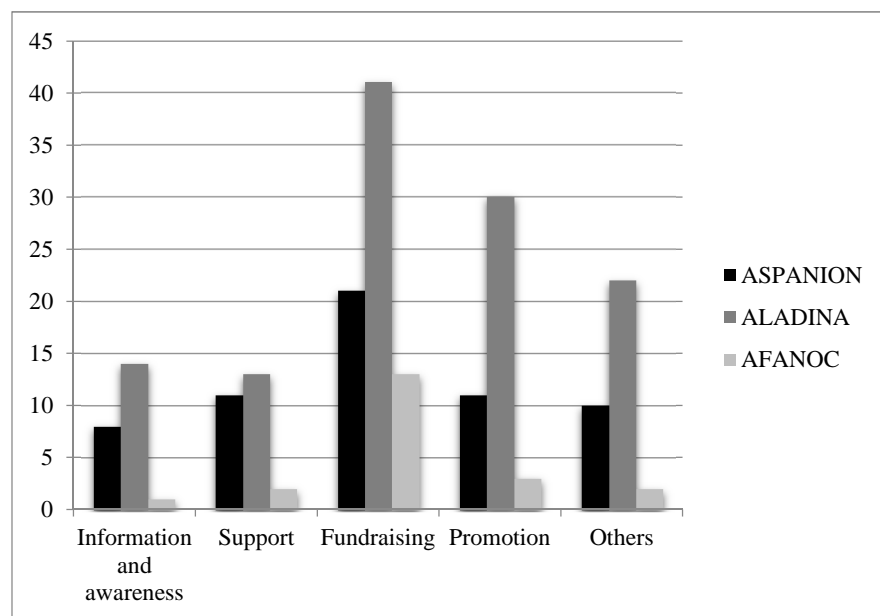


Figure 2. Type of messages on the Facebook profiles of the foundations

Own source.

4.1. Aspanion from Valencia

Foundation Aspanion in this period made 61 posts. We can see in table 1 that for Aspanion, the essential choice are photos and graphics. The visual part is very important but the videos are not as popular. Only 3 of their posts contain a video. Regarding the answer to question number two, the posts about fundraising are definitely salient to them. Twenty-one of the posts are about fundraising. Then we have 11 posts about support and promotion and 10 other posts. Unfortunately, there are only 8 posts containing information and spreading awareness.

As we can see, the best post has a lot of information. It is about a mural which adorned a hospital. The foundation says that:

“Today we remember with fondness this mural that we painted so that children with cancer from Hospital University and Politècnic La Fe de Valencia see it from the window every day.

The result has been a great painting of a boy with a superhero cape and a gold awareness ribbon on his back, symbol of the fight against cancer, with the motto »you are heroes«.

A beautiful initiative promoted by an affected father and supported by Aspanion Children With Cancer with Red Cross Valencia, Caixa Popular, La Rambleta, Monto Pinturas, Electroacústica, clem, ZEDRE-Art Mural I Urban Culture-València and Jocu labels.” – own translation

This post has 376 reactions, 26 comments, and 119 shares. It is a very positive post talking about people who want to change the reality of children in the hospital. The best part is the one that tells that children fighting with cancer are superheroes. If its recipients see a group of people who are doing something for others, they may also want to help.

4.2. Aladina from Madrid

Aladina has 120 posts. As we can see in table 1, photos are the most used of the tools. 73 of the posts have a picture. In the second place are links. 26 of the posts have links. 24 posts have graphics effects. Like in the Aspanion foundation, the videos are also not so popular. Only 9 posts used video. Aspanion knows that hashtags are viral in the social network. Therefore, they used them eight times.

Regarding the types of messages, like in Aspanion foundation, fundraising is an important thing on their profile on Facebook. We see in table 2 that 41 of the posts are about these issues. Next is promotion with 30 posts and in the third place, we have 22 other posts. If foundation Aladina is so popular, they can, or even they should post more messages spreading information and awareness. It is the same situation as in the organisation from Valencia that this kind of notes are omitted because only 14 posts are about this. Thirteen posts hold messages about support.

The best post is about a Spanish actor Santiago Segura donating 4.000 euro to Foundation Aladina. It was his prize from Masterchef Celebrity. Probably because he is a famous person, also the foundation tagged him, it is the reason why this post is the most popular. The foundation is thanking the artist for supporting children with cancer. People like it when a famous person helps other people, especially children. Also, the picture has been very positively received.

4.3. Associacio Afanoc from Barcelona

We must say that Associacio Afanoc is the least active organisation from the selected foundation. If we consider how large the Catalonia region is, it is downright incomprehensible. They created only 21 posts in this period.

Photos and links were used in 8 posts. Graphics appear in 7 posts. Hashtags only in 2. This is the first foundation which made one live stream post.

They do not write many posts, but among those that they published, about 13 are about fundraising. The second place is the promotion with three posts and then there are 2 posts regarding. They also have two other posts and just one about information and awareness.

It is surprising that the most popular post is about the prize received by the Afanoc foundation. It is a distinction for the organisation of activities for children who have cancer and their families. Two hundred seventeen reactions, 20 comments, and 58 shares. These results told us that the community could see how much good this organisation is doing for its region.

“We are excited to acknowledge our work with such a special award. We want to dedicate it to all those people who have done their part in the last 30 years to make AFANOC great and in this way continue working to improve the quality of life of children and adolescents with cancer and their families.” – own translation

These thanks have been directed both to those who established the foundation but also to the recipients who support the organisation’s activities in various ways. It is probably one of the factors that influenced such positive reactions of the readers.

5. CONCLUSION

The results tell us that a positive message has an impact on how liked post is among the readers.

We see in the first question that pictures are the most used tool by the foundations on Facebook. Organisations know that it is those elements that enrich the content that is important to the readers. The photos should show a group of happy persons or smiling kids.

In the second point, we can see that the foundations do not use the possibility of shaping awareness among their recipients. Fundraising and promotion are much more critical to them. It is understandable because they support their wards and their families, but they should also focus their attention on this aspect.

The last question tells us that when readers see how others help children, how it can affect the improvement of their state, they are more willing to share it with their friends and support the work of the foundation.

This research explains how important using social media is in communicating about cancer. Furthermore, the foundations have great opportunities to communicate about cancer with the largest group of recipients thanks to Facebook. They know how to communicate with readers, what form is the best. Apart from that, they have the ability to make the posts more visually attractive. In this way, they can become a significant support for doctors.

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