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Lessons from an online social marketing campaign: Promoting reading on Facebook

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Younger generations' reading habits are being subject to a fundamental change, with this activity taking a back seat behind other leisure activities. Several recent social marketing campaigns have focused on promoting reading. By content analysing the Facebook posts related to a Hungarian campaign, we seek to investigate the online manifestations of the campaign's effects and to examine to what extent one is able to reach and engage Generation Z with a social marketing campaign on Facebook. Through performance and regression analysis, we have confirmed that promoted posts perform better than organic ones and that they cannibalise their performance, thus deteriorating the constructed activity indicators. Furthermore, sponsored impressions overall contribute to increasing total reach, while having a significant negative effect on organic reach. The type of posts does not determine the impressions, e.g. posts with audiovisual content did not perform any better in persuading a target group than simple text messages.

Keywords: social marketing, Generation Z, consumer behaviour, Facebook marketing.

JEL codes: M31, M37.

Introduction

Technological change highly affects people's communication habits and time spending (e.g. reading). These habits manifest themselves differently for different groups of people. It can, however, be stated that technology has a particularly prominent effect on younger, born-digital generations.

The main goal of the present study is to examine the effects of technology on such a (formerly) mundane activity as reading, among youngsters. Younger generations' reading habits are being subject to a

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fundamental change (e.g. Mokhtari et al. 2009), with this activity taking a back seat behind other leisure activities. A number of recent social marketing campaigns have focused on promoting reading. In Hungary, for instance, a campaign called "Movie in Your Head" was carried out at the beginning of 2014 by the Hungarian Creative Arts Nonprofit Ltd., the Petőfi Literary Museum, the Klebelsberg Institution Maintenance Centre, and the Hungarian Reading Association. Since there were only a few scientific analyses on this topic (e.g. Hoffman–Fodor 2010), our aim was to examine the effects of an online social media campaign on young people's attitude towards reading.

By content analysing the Facebook posts related to the aforementioned campaign, we seek to investigate the online manifestations of the campaign's effects and to examine to what extent one is able to reach and engage Generation Z with a social marketing campaign on Facebook, the largest social networking site.

In our theoretical review, we first portray younger generations, then we examine the role of social media in their lives (with special attention to Facebook), and we review the related field of social marketing. Finally, we investigate how youngsters' reading habits are evolving with the advent of the Internet and social media.

After a thorough review of the campaign in question, we present a content analysis of the related Facebook posts. Building on this first research phase, in a second part we present a quantitative analysis.

Literature review

Introducing Generation Z

The rapid development of technology strongly affects people's communication and time-spending habits. For example, new pieces of information are hardly ever looked after in paper-based sources (e.g. newspapers, encyclopaedias), but almost exclusively using online search engines which flood us with a large, sometimes oppressive amount of data. People no longer write letters by hand but send emails and keep in touch with their acquaintances using social media. Moreover, reading books on the Internet and/or on portable electronic

devices (such as smartphones, e-readers or tablets) is becoming a viable alternative to traditional paper-based books. Besides, by using connected portable devices, readers are offered ubiquitous access to the world wide web, leading to the phenomenon of multitasking, i.e. the possibility to perform multiple tasks synchronously.

Technological change, however, affects each consumer in a different way (Prensky 2001). It can be affirmed that this influence is most visible among younger generations who were born digital (Rosen 2010).

Young consumers can be described in two ways: first, as members of Generation Z, and second, as digital natives. While the two categories highly overlap, the latter stems from the generational theory, i.e. positing that birth dates and the social, historical, and technological environment that one grows up in are fundamental (Howe–Straus 1991), whereas the former adds communication technology and people's relationship with technology to the picture.

According to generational theory, Generation Z is composed of individuals born between the middle of the 1990s and the end of the 2000s. They can best be characterised by the terms "instant" and "online" and by an extensive relationship with technology (Kirschner–Karpinski 2010). For this latter feature, they are also often referred to as the Internet Generation, Generation I, or iGeneration (Rosen 2010). Even though it is a common belief that this generation not only uses new technology but it is also aware of novelties, research shows that, despite a massive presence and use of technology in the everyday life, this generation still lacks the ability to efficiently exploit the prowess of technology (Bullen et al. 2009) due to a general lack of information literacy (Thompson 2013).

This generation can furthermore be characterised by the phenomenon of multitasking (i.e. the concurrent performance of multiple tasks) (Prensky 2001) and a shortened sequentiality, meaning that they tend to be quicker in turning from one task to another, preferring rapidity over accuracy (Levickaité 2010). This phenomenon is explained by the fact that human nature is incapable of handling

multiple tasks simultaneously with the same efficiency, but it is able to learn how to quickly alternate between tasks. People therefore are only capable of genuine multitasking when the tasks in question are highly automated and where creative problem-solving is not involved. In any other case, alternating between multiple tasks (and/or media) might lead to weaker overall performance (Beastall 2008).

Beyond the generational approach, consumers can be divided into two separate groups: digital immigrants and digital natives (Prensky 2001). The main differentiating attribute between the two groups is the different processing of information. On one hand, digital natives are those consumers who are surrounded by technology since their birth. They are the group that is using technology constantly and that is following new trends. On the other hand, we consider digital immigrants those users who have adopted new technologies, but will always have a digital "accent" (e.g. contrary to digital natives, they won't automatically turn to the Internet when in need of a piece of information).

Digital natives are used to rapid information flow (Prensky 2001) and to using connected devices as well as social media, which have become a norm in this age group's life. They can be characterised as interactive, flexible and connected, preferring immediacy and synchronous communication, reinforced by multitasking (and particularly by using digital and traditional media in conjunction with one another) (Bittman et al. 2011).

Socialising over the Internet through social media has become an integral part of their lives (Kirschner–Karpinski 2010), all the more so since, as Myers and Sundaram (2012) show, social media use often reflects a process of self-discovery and identity creation in their age group. Indeed, according to Pew (2013), young Internet users (aged 12–17) actively use social media (while another 21% are weekly users). More precisely, 52% of the 12–13 year-olds and 73% of the 14–17 year-olds are daily users. Not only do they visit these sites frequently, but they also operate as content creators and are therefore active users of social media (Thomas 2010). They can be characterised by a generally

Table 1. Characterisation of digital natives

Attributes	Young consumers
relationship to online content	active use; content creation; presumes
relationship to information	need for quick access to information
information processing	parallel
presence of multitasking	conjoint processes
online activity	emphasis on rapidity, interactivity, flexibility
relationship to digital devices	systematic use; monitoring and adopting novelties
amount of digital devices used	generally higher
communication process	immediate; synchronous
communication type	visual, audio, audio-visual content put forward; textual content relegated
media usage	parallel use of multiple channels
determining activity online	social networking, connectivity

Source: authors' own design

positive image of and an openness towards the phenomenon of social media and a growing information-sharing activity. The most frequented social spaces in 2012 were Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (Pew 2013).

The importance of Facebook, the largest social media site among the above-mentioned ones, as a unit of analysis is indisputable. According to Burke et al. (2011), activity on Facebook can be classified along users' levels of activity, i.e. [1] directed communication with individual friends (e.g. chatting, commenting, liking, tagging, messaging, viewing of acquaintances' "walls"), [2] passive consumption of social news (e.g. reading acquaintances' updates, viewing of photos, reading of news), and [3] broadcasting (e.g. posting content for others' consumption).

The most popular social media space among young users was Facebook, with an average of 300 contacts; the more friends youngsters have on an online platform, the more they can be characterised as socially active (Pew 2013). Additionally, it is worth noting that youngsters generally have narrower networks of acquaintances than adults (Pew 2015).

Usage intensity (measured primarily by frequency of use and time spent on the site) can be an indicator of an individual's level of involvement in a social media site's activity and of the presence of this latter in individuals' lives (Ellison et al. 2007). According to Ellison et

al. (2007), the intensive use of social networking sites and Facebook in particular parallels with the construction process of social capital; the more one uses social networking sites, the more social capital they will have, as shown by the number and depth of acquaintances.

According to Putnam (2000), one can distinguish between two main components of social capital: [1] bonding social capital and [2] bridging social capital. Bonding social capital refers to shared backgrounds and strong personal ties, typical between friends and family members. These contacts can be characterised by the presence of emotional support and reciprocity. The strong ties can be traced back to a greater amount of time spent together, the presence of emotional intensity and intimacy, as well as reciprocal "services" (Granovetter 1973).

The Internet intensifies the formation of bonding social capital, as the cost of entering virtual communities is considerably reduced, making it possible for users to form a wide network of originally weak ties (Lee et al. 2014), with possibilities of further involvement and group reciprocity, e.g. within neo-tribes (Cova–Cova 2002).

Bridging social capital can be characterised by relatively weak social ties, which is a reference to a higher level of utilitarian information sharing (e.g. useful consumer information or new viewpoints) within these groups, along with a lack of emotional support (Granovetter 1982). An example of bridging social capital is keeping in touch with former colleagues or classmates, which altogether contributes to widening one's social horizons and accessing information (Lee et al. 2014). Weak social ties in digital media thus imply individuals with networks of more distant acquaintances, often formed around specific environments and thus even offering access to specific knowledge, experience, or ideas (Hsu-Hsien 2011).

Youngsters have access to both social capital components on social media and Facebook, even though, in their case, stronger ties seem more prevalent. This is supported by Pew's (2013) results, showing that younger people's networks of acquaintances on Facebook are mostly made of schoolmates, friends, and family. At the same time, one can

also note a minor presence therein of weak ties related to teachers, celebrities and people they have never met in person.

As seen beforehand, younger generations' online activity is centred around connectivity and community. According to Lee et al. (2014), a number of activities related to the use of Facebook's platform (e.g. liking or commenting) are connected to the phenomenon of social capital. Those who comment more rarely are more likely to favour bonding social capital whereas those who like posts more often are more likely to build bridging social capital – even though liking and commenting are not mutually exclusive activities on social networking sites.

Social marketing on the Internet

Social marketing was first defined by Kotler and Zaltman (1971) as the method of planning, executing and controlling programmes aimed at influencing the acceptance of different social theories; it considers product design, pricing, communication, distribution, and market research as well. This original concept was focused on products, but it expanded later on. There are several problems that could be solved by social marketing: values that serve the interests of the society, such as health, security, environmental protection or any socially important subject, must be transmitted (Kotler–Lee 2008). The purpose of any social marketing campaign is the voluntary acceptance, refusal, change or abolition of a behaviour by a certain group of people, thus achieving higher utility for themselves or for the whole society. One of the most important elements of a campaign is to emphasise the benefits of the new behaviour, thus the necessities, desires and preferences of the target group have to be known (Kotler–Lee 2008).

Further research (Andreasen–Kotler 2003; Lefebvre 2009) extended the theory with coordination and control. Thus, social marketing is described as the activity of planning, organising, coordinating and controlling – using the framework of the marketing discipline – to influence social behaviours in order to handle social issues and causes to the benefit of target audiences and the wider society.

The field of social marketing can be subdivided into two operational perspectives: [1] institution-oriented and [2] problem-

oriented. In this article, we use a problem-oriented focus, whereby the social marketing activity can be defined as "the marketing activity assigned (among numerous stakeholders and through various tasks) to solve a given problem" (Piskóti 2012). In this case, social marketing can take various forms, e.g. health protection campaigns, protection of cultural values, or education improvement. Promoting reading among young generations pertains to this latter category. According to Piskóti (2012), "the goal of social marketing is to formulate constructive solutions in order to trigger the expected change in social behaviour, and to demonstrate to target groups that the benefits of the change outweigh the efforts required to reach it." Relevant phases are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Phases of social marketing

Phase	Measures to perform
1. Preparation; Initiating the programme/action	Defining the tasks at hand: what to achieve and until when; what is the problem to be solved; what are the odds.
2. Identifying tasks; Analysis of the situation at hand	Corporate identity; mission; positioning of the programme; stakeholder groups; identifying existing communication channels; feasibility study: external/internal perceptions of the problem, opinions, cooperation projects, opponents, weaknesses, opportunities, potential issues, hypotheses, structured questions (mind-mapping), SWOT analysis, defining the final goal
3. Objectives and Strategy	Defining marketing objectives; defining a basic strategy; budget; schedule; responsibilities
4. Tactics and Planning	Tactical planning of events; planning of ideas, creations, communication measures; monitoring criteria; action plan; briefing; testing; detailed cost planning; media planning; etc.
5. Preparing the execution of the programme	Conclusion of contracts; production and distribution; committing media and service providers; operational planning; quality assurance
6. Execution of the programme	Programme execution; monitoring; feedback; change management

Source: authors' own design based on Andreasen (1994); Piskóti (2012); Rundle-Thiele (2015)

There are three different methods to achieve behavioural change: members of the target groups could be educated, motivated or being

offered a suggestion for a structural change (Donovan and Henley 2010). The suitable method depends on the seriousness of the social issue we want to change.

Method and data

Research aim and hypotheses

Our study is based on the Facebook posts of the "Movie in Your Head" Campaign, carried out in Hungary in 2014. We analysed Facebook statistics for n=120 posts. Our main aim was to discover the effectiveness of this social media campaign. Therefore, we focused on the following research question:

RQ: What kind of posts is most effective in reaching members of Generation Z?

We have formulated the following two hypotheses:

H1. The promoted posts have more efficient reach than organic (unpromoted) ones.

H2. The type of posts determines the impressions. Posts with audiovisual content perform better in persuading our target group than simple text messages.

Introducing the "Movie in Your Head" Campaign

The campaign called "Movie in Your Head" was carried out in February-March 2014 by the Hungarian Creative Arts Nonprofit Ltd. (Magyar Alkotóművészeti Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft. – MANK), the Petőfi Literary Museum (Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum – PIM), the Klebelsberg Institution Maintenance Centre (Klebelsberg Intézményfenntartó Központ – Klik), which is in charge of managing Hungary's public education institutions, and the Hungarian Reading Association (Magyar Olvasástársaság – HunRA). The campaign – that aimed at promoting reading among 8–16 year-olds – included an introduction to Hungarian authors, the promotion of contemporary Hungarian literature, promoting reading among disadvantaged young readers, and altogether, keeping in touch with the reading public.

The campaign started on February 6, 2014, with the main focus on Facebook. There, anybody could like the profiles created for the

characters of two famous Hungarian novels (*The Paul Street Boys*[4] and the *Eclipse of the Crescent Moon*[5]), which are compulsory school readings. An interesting feature of the campaign was to present the events of the two books not only in a series of comments made by the fictional characters on their social profiles, but also in blog posts[6] written through the eyes of these characters[7]. In this study, we only focus on posts related to the book *The Paul Street Boys*.

Categorisation of Facebook posts

Posts on the above-mentioned Facebook pages served as the basis for analysis. Four distinct content categories were identified, namely: status updates, embedded videos, links, and photos. The first posts introducing each page (and character) were left out of the analysis.

The units of analysis were the various elements that composed each post (textual content, photos, links, emoticons). We were able to distinguish two main dimensions: cognitive-dominant and affective-dominant contents. A unit of analysis was defined as cognitive if it communicated a fact or a piece of information (e.g. words referring to places or characters in the novels) and as affective if it expressed some kind of emotion (either directly or indirectly – e.g. words of emotion or the use of emoticons).

A manifest analysis followed, during which all cognitive and affective elements within each post were counted and the post itself was categorised. Four categories were distinguished during the analysis: rather cognitive, rather affective, both, and none (Table 3). These categories were created during a pre-coding phase, where we found out that the sample did not contain any purely cognitive or purely affective posts. Limit values were then set during multiple pre-coding phases for mixed entries to be classified into a category. When determining limit values, an important consideration was that the majority of posts

[4] Molnár, F. 1907. *A Pál utcai fiúk.* Budapest: Franklin-Társulat.

[5] Gárdonyi, G. 1901. *Az egri csillagok.* Budapest: Légrády Testvérek.

[6] See: http://www.moziafejedben.blog.hu.

[7] As such, *The Paul Street Boys*'s Geréb is given a platform to explain his betrayal of the Paul Street gang and his joining the Redshirts gang.

should not be categorised as "none" (this category being irrelevant for further analysis).

As a result of the content analysis, the cognitive-affective matrix was elaborated for all book characters, based on the posts showing on their Facebook pages. This way, all relevant posts could be identified for our subsequent study, whereas posts that did not contain any affective or cognitive elements were eliminated from further study.

Table 3. Cognitive/affective categorisation of analysed posts

Rather cognitive Posts that contain at least three cognitive elements.	**Both** Posts with at least three cognitive and three affective elements.
None Posts with less than three cognitive or affective elements.	**Rather affective** Posts that contain at least three affective elements.

Source: authors' own research

Analysis of the sample

Data gathered during the content analysis phase was analysed with the SPSS statistical software. Altogether, 112 Facebook posts were studied in connection with *The Paul Street Boys*. A large share of these posts were status updates (38), embedded videos (35), and links (24) (Table 4). During the campaign, a total of 15 photos were shared with the public. Six characters from the novel were created separate profiles, of which (based on their actions in the novel) three can be described as positive characters, two as negative, and one as neutral (first negative, then positive).

Table 4. Descriptive characteristics of the sample (n=120 posts)

Type of post	Count	%
Status update	38	34%
Photo	15	13%
Link	24	21%
Video	35	31%

Source: authors' own research

Out of the 100 posts included in the final sample, a total of 31 contained some kind of external reference (e.g. "Long live Nemecsek, long live the Grund! Read Ernő's post at: http://moziafejedben.

blog.hu/2014/03/01/meg_utoljara_eljen_a_grund" [Geréb's character profile page, March 1, 2014.]). A comparable number of posts were categorised as affective or cognitive (18 vs. 20) and 22 posts could not be characterised as either affective or cognitive. Most cognitive posts (14 out of 20) were related to status updates, while embedded videos were the most numerous among affective posts (9 out of 18). External references were mostly featured by links and videos (11 and 12 posts) (Table 5).

Table 5. Sample composition along content analysis dimensions (n=100 posts)

Type of post	Content analysis dimensions					Total
	Cognitive	Both	Affective	None	External reference	
Status update	14	1	3	14	5	37
Photo	2	1	1	1	3	8
Link	3	0	5	2	11	21
Video	1	7	9	5	12	34
Total	20	9	18	22	31	100

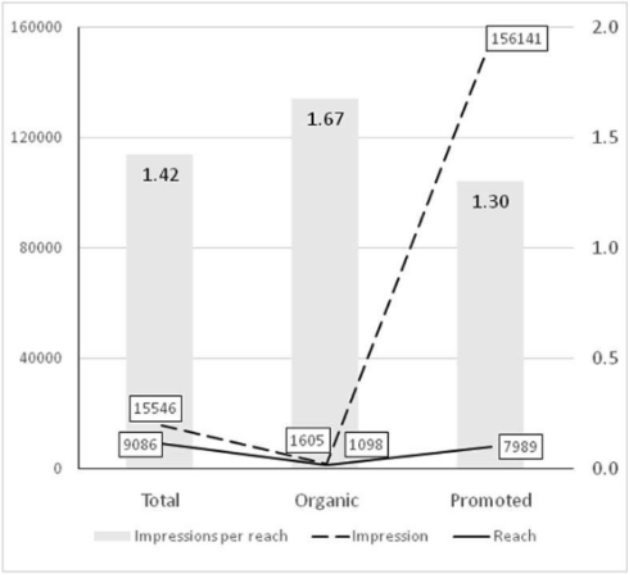
Source: authors' own research

Results and analysis

A key issue in planning a social media campaign is whether to use paid appearances to supplement organic posts. In order to reflect on this issue for the campaign in question we divided the posts analysed in the sample based on whether they were promoted (10 posts in the sample) or not (100 posts).

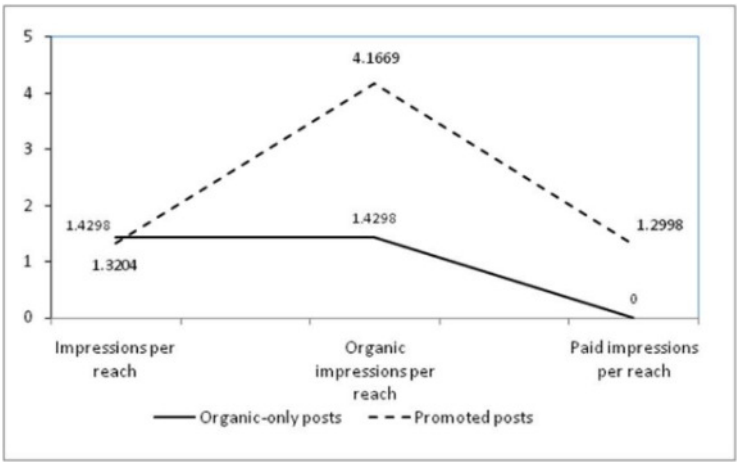
When studying the sample as a whole (Figure 1), it is clear that paid appearances perform better: one unit of reach required 1.3 impressions for promoted posts, whereas 1.67 impressions were required for organic posts.

By examining the two subgroups separately, it became evident that promoted posts' organic reach was significantly lower: in these cases, 4.17 organic impressions were needed, on average, for an organic reach, while only 1.43 impressions were needed for one user reach in the case of un-promoted posts (Figure 2). In the two subgroups, the efficiency indicator related to total reach shows no significant difference. According to this result, promoted posts do cannibalise the performance of organic posts, thus deteriorating the constructed activity indicators.



Source: authors' own research

Figure 1. Reach and impression indicators



Source: authors' own research

Figure 2. Average impressions per reach, in the case of paid and organic-only posts

In a following phase of our study, we aimed to analyse in detail the relationships related to total and organic reach and the efficiency indicators. The main research question here was whether total and organic reach and overall efficiency are affected by subjective, psychological aspects (modelled here by the categorisation of posts as affective, cognitive, etc.) and by other contextual aspects (e.g. time/day of publication, sponsored/non-sponsored posts).

To answer this research question we proceeded to a linear regression analysis, using backward stepwise elimination. According to pre-fixed criteria, only those variables with a level of significance of at least 0.1 were kept in the model.

When examining total and organic reach as independent variables, the same pool of independent variables turned out as important on a 0.05 significance level. The level of organic impressions had, in both cases, a positive effect on the reach. In contrast, we notice the opposite effect in the case of sponsored posts: sponsored impressions overall contribute to increasing total reach, while having a significant negative effect on organic reach. This result shows once again – in concordance with our analysis of variance – the cannibalising effect of paid posts on organic impressions. Among the studied psychological indicators, on a 0.1 significance level, cognitive pieces of information have a considerable negative effect on total reach, while both cognitive and affective posts have a significant negative effect on organic reach. This result confirms the hypotheses made in previous studies (DeStefano–LeFevre 2007), according to which interpreting cognitive content requires a greater effort from the user and therefore decreases its performance.

The day of publication was equally shown to have an effect on total reach: posts that appeared on weekdays contributed to an average additional reach of 509 users.

When considering total and organic impressions as dependent variables, the analysis shows a very different picture. Cognitive content has once again a significant effect on the number of total impressions needed to reach a user, with an average of 0.134 additional impressions

needed for one unit of reach with this type of content. Once again, weekday posts show a higher performance level, with, on average, 0.066 fewer impressions needed in the case of weekday sponsored posts. However, the explanatory power of the model is rather low and one can therefore conclude that a number of additional relevant attributes might affect the indicator.

When studying the number of organic impressions per reach, only one variable turned out to have a significant effect: sponsored posts are expected to require, on average, 3.055 more impressions to reach one user. With this variable, the model's explanatory power reaches 53.6%.

Table 6. Results of the regression analysis (n=100 posts)

Independent variables	Total reach		Organic reach		Total impressions per reach		Organic impressions per reach	
	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.
Constant	-282.063	.463	4.257	.898	1.442	.000	1.430	.000
Organic impressions of the posts	.752	.000	.733	.000	N.A.		N.A.	
Paid impressions of the posts	.484	.000	-.002	.000	N.A.		N.A.	
Promoted post (Dummy)	13875.513	.000	-480.813	.000	N. sig		3.055	.000
Cognitive (Dummy)	-610.635	.081	-61.570	.070	.134	.004	N. sig	
Both (Dummy)	N. sig		-76.836	.104	N. sig		N. sig	
Affective (Dummy)	N. sig		N. sig		N. sig		N. sig	
None (Dummy)	N. sig		N. sig		N. sig		N. sig	
Publication - morning, afternoon, evening	N. sig		N. sig		N. sig		N. sig	
Publication – weekday, weekend	509.029	.097	N. sig		-.066	.092	N. sig	
Adjusted R^2	.999		.956		.078		.536	

Source: authors' own research

Both performance analysis and regression confirm our H1 hypothesis: promoted posts perform better than organic ones, furthermore, do cannibalise the performance of organic posts, thus deteriorating the constructed activity indicators.

In the next phase, we examined performance, activity and effectiveness indicators based on "type of post" and "content type" indicator groups.

In the case of links, the average value of reach per unit of action is

significantly higher than for other post types (avg_{link}=26.9). Status updates perform best under this indicator (avg_{status}=11.7) and they also receive, along with photos, the highest number of user comments (avg_{status}=2.2, avg_{photo}=2.1) (Table 7). Therefore, we reject our H2 hypothesis, namely that the type of posts determines the impressions. Our study does not confirm that posts with audio-visual content perform better in persuading a target group than simple text messages.

Table 7. Effect of the type of post on various indicators (significant results)

Type of post		Avg. reach per unit of action	Avg. comment
Status update	Mean	11.7	2.2
	N	38	34
	St.dev	13.3	1.4
Photo	Mean	18.4	2.1
	N	15	5
	St.dev	11.9	0.8
Link	Mean	26.9	1.3
	N	24	13
	St.dev	30.3	0.4
Video	Mean	13.7	1.4
	N	35	25
	St.dev	9.4	0.8
Total	Mean	16.5	1.8
	N	112	77
	St.dev	18.1	1.1
Sig.		0.01	0.01
Eta		0.32	0.32
Eta^2		0.10	0.10

Source: authors' own research

The effect of content type is presented in Table 8. The average number of likes was higher for posts of a dominantly cognitive nature; that is, cognitive posts were more likely to generate a higher number of likes among engaged users than other types of posts. The average number of user actions per user was the lowest for those posts that did not have a cognitive or an affective touch and therefore seemed not to have engaged the target group. The average reach needed for a user interaction was the highest for posts with external references and the

lowest (and thus more effective) for posts with both cognitive and affective elements (avg_{both} =5.5).

Table 8. The effect of content type on various indicators (significant results)

Type of post		Avg. like	Avg. user actions per user	Avg. reach per user interaction
Cognitive	Mean	1.2	1.0	9.1
	N	20	20	20
	St.dev	0.4	0.1	5.8
Both	Mean	1.1	1.0	5.5
	N	9	9	9
	St.dev	0.2	0.0	3.6
Affective	Mean	1.1	0.8	14.5
	N	18	18	18
	St.dev	0.3	0.3	15.9
None	Mean	1.0	0.6	17.0
	N	22	22	22
	St.dev	0.1	0.4	17.8
External reference	Mean	1.0	0.9	20.7
	N	31	31	31
	St.dev	0.1	0.2	21.6
Total	Mean	1.1	0.9	15.1
	N	100	100	100
	St.dev	0.2	0.3	16.9
Sig.		0.04	0.00	0.05
Eta		0.31	0.50	0.30
Eta^2		0.10	0.25	0.09

Source: authors' own research

Conclusions

Facebook has changed its algorithm and business policies several times recently. Therefore, several factors have to be considered when planning Facebook-based social marketing campaigns: the type of posts (e.g. status updates, photos, etc.), emphasising cognitive or affective content, and the role of paid reach. Our results show that status updates, paid appearances and rather cognitive content could generate the highest reach. Reading promotion is a socially desired social marketing activity, thus this kind of campaigns and projects should focus on these features during the planning phase.

We have confirmed that Facebook has pushed content towards the paid approach: both our performance analysis and regression have confirmed that promoted posts perform better than organic ones; furthermore, they cannibalise the performance of organic posts, thus deteriorating the constructed activity indicators. Moreover, sponsored impressions overall contribute to increasing total reach, while having a significant negative effect on organic reach.

The content of the posts is another determining factor. It seems that cognitive posts were more likely to generate a higher number of likes among engaged users than other types of posts. The average number of user actions per user was the lowest for those posts that did not have a cognitive or an affective touch and therefore seemed not to have engaged the target group. Affective, emotional content could raise awareness, but it is unable to induce long-term attitude change, therefore contents purely relying on affective elements are not able to make users take action. Furthermore, our study has confirmed that the type of posts does not determine the impressions. Our data does not support the hypothesis that posts with audio-visual content perform better in persuading a target group than simple text messages.

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