Charity Social Media Marketing and Its Influence on Charity Brand Image, Brand Trust, and Donation Intention

Yusuf Bilgin[1] · Önder Kethüda[2]

Abstract This study aims to identify the outline of charity social media marketing (SMM) and to determine to what extent it influences the charity brand image, brand trust, and donation intention. The data were gathered from followers of internationally operating Turk charities on social media. The theoretical model and hypotheses were tested by using structural equation modeling. Charity SMM is composed of awareness, interaction, timeliness, informativeness, customization, and advertisement dimensions. Awareness is the only dimension of SMM that has a significant direct influence on donation intention. Timeliness, informativeness, and advertisement significantly influence charity brand image, whereas brand trust is influenced by informativeness and customization. Besides, Charity SMM, as a whole, influences donation intention both directly and indirectly through brand image and brand trust. Therefore, charity brand image and brand trust are crucial for charities to promote donation intention through SMM. Therefore, charities are strongly recommended to focus primarily on developing their brand image and gaining trust in current and prospective donors.

Keywords Social media marketing · Charity brand image · Brand trust · Donation intention · Nonprofit organization

✉ Önder Kethüda
onderkethuda@duzce.edu.tr; dr.onder.kethuda@gmail.com

Yusuf Bilgin
yusufbilgin@bayburt.edu.tr

[1] Department of Business Administration, Bayburt University, Bayburt, Turkey

[2] Department of Business Administration, Düzce University, Düzce, Turkey

Introduction

Charities have been operating to improve needy people's living standards through aids and cash assistance (Ilyas et al., 2020). The revenues of a charity consist of monetary donations, non-monetary but tangible gifts, and investments like other non-governmental organizations. Most charity activities are carried out by volunteers (Sargeant et al., 2006). Like charities, many nonprofit organizations such as hospitals, universities, cultural centers, art centers, and environment and animal protection societies depend on donations and volunteers. Therefore, charities have faced intense competition with these organizations (Bennett, 2005) and difficulties financing their activities (Quinton & Fennemore, 2013). In such a competitive environment, charities need to use marketing communication tools efficiently and effectively to retain current donors and volunteers and find new ones.

Social media is one of the most convenient communication channels that charities can use to interact with donors and volunteers. Social media facilitates interactions between users, i.e., individuals and organizations. Thereby, social media offers unique opportunities for charities to strengthen relations between donors/volunteers and organizations by increasing interactions. Social media enables charities to post informative or attention-grabbing content quickly, affordably, and continuously (Seo & Park, 2018; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Therefore, social media is evaluated as an essential part of the marketing activities of charities that aim to develop communication with donors and volunteers (Simon & Tossan, 2018).

Two reasons justify charities' use of social media in their marketing communication. Firstly, social media is a convenient platform that enables charities to conduct direct marketing activities to connect with prospective donors and

volunteers. Social media removes the time and space limits in the interactions between charities and donors/volunteers (Mersey et al., 2010). Social media enables charities to post content aiming for awareness, informativeness, promotion, advertising at low costs, and receiving feedback from donors and volunteers (Bennett, 2017; Hanna et al., 2011). Furthermore, increasing interactions between charity and donors or volunteers on social media likely outcomes in repeating donations and being volunteered repeatedly. Social media can also contribute to the charity's image, trust in charity, and public perceptions (Gregory et al., 2020).

Secondly, social media enables users, current and prospective donors, and volunteers to comment and post content related to the organization's mission, vision, activities, credibility, and image, independently of the charity. Users can post, reshare, or comment limitlessly on virtual platforms, and organizations are not likely to intervene in this user-generated content (Kohli et al., 2015). These interactions between users without organizations' intervention positively affect users' trust in the organization, brand image, and user preferences (Bilgin, 2018). Furthermore, an organization's posts on social media also positively influence customers' perceptions, trust, and preferences (Chen et al., 2011).

Literature review reveals comprehensive works focusing on SMM for nonprofit organizations (Di Lauro et al., 2019; Feng et al., 2017). However, no research identifying the scope of charity SMM and its influence on branding charities and donors' funding behaviors was found in the literature. This paper aims to contribute to the literature related to charity SMM. Firstly, this paper identifies the dimensions of charity SMM and then examines its influence on the charity's brand image, trust in charity, and donation intention. Furthermore, this paper tests the influence of charity brand image and brand trust on donation intentions. In this context, firstly, a conceptual framework has been drawn regarding charity social media marketing. Contemporary literature covering charity brand image, brand trust, and donation intention was explored, and hypotheses were formulated. The methodology section clarified information about the population and sample and the data collection and analysis processes. Finally, after presenting the analysis results, discussion, conclusion, suggestions, limitations, and further research directions are argued.

Charity Social Media Marketing

Social media is a unique platform for nonprofit organizations and government agencies to interact with their target audiences (Kim & Ko, 2012). Social media is highly functional for charities to spread their messages to the target audience and communicate with potential donors and volunteers (Cahalane, 2013). Lawrance (2013) states that social media is an effective way of finding donors, increasing donations, sharing success stories, communicating with organizations with similar goals, recruiting volunteers, and showing how the charity's activities have been changing the lives of needy people. Social media can also contribute to the charity's brand value, a crucial element for donations. Lagrosen and Grundén (2014) argue that most charities do not know how to use social media as a marketing communication tool despite these benefits.

SMM includes posts of written and visual content that encourage consumers to choose the product and brand on virtual platforms as a part of a marketing plan. It is vital to outline charities' social media activities to use social media effectively (Paulin et al., 2014). Kim and Ko (2012) define dimensions of SMM as entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word of mouth communication in a pioneering study on SMM of luxury fashion brands. These components became the basis for further research (Ebrahim, 2020; Godey et al., 2016; Yadav & Rahman, 2017). However, SMM may differ according to the characteristics of the sectors. Sano (2014) categorizes SMM in service sectors such as insurance, travel, and finance as interaction, trendiness, customization, and perceived risk. Seo and Park (2018) argue that SMM in the airline industry is evaluated in five dimensions: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and perceived risk. Bilgin (2018) notes that social media marketing dimensions are interaction, trendiness, advertisement, and customization. Cahalane (2013) highlights that social media helps charities to increase awareness about needy people. In line with the relevant literature about social media marketing (Bilgin, 2018; Cahalane, 2013; Kim & Ko, 2012; Quinton & Fennemore, 2013; Schets, 2010; Seo & Park, 2018), in this research, charity SMM has been categorized into six dimensions: awareness, interaction, timeliness, informativeness, customization, and advertisement.

Awareness

Creating awareness is an essential component of charity SMM (Quinton & Fennemore, 2013). Creating awareness includes informing the followers of the issues that aid organizations need to find support and attracting attention from prospective donors to needy people. Cahalane (2013) stated that social media is not seen as a fundraising tool but a means of creating awareness for charities. The written or visual posts shared on platforms with millions of users are suitable for charities' awareness-raising activities (Schets, 2010).

Interaction

Interaction stands for sharing information and exchanging ideas between charities and donors or between donors through social media (Godey et al., 2016). Unlike traditional communication channels, social media facilitates organizations' interaction, cooperation, and content sharing with their target audiences and enables real-time communication with users (Kim & Ko, 2012). Interaction covers allowing users to share information, ideas, views, and opinions with others on charities' social media.

Timeliness

Timeliness refers to updating the information regularly and sharing the latest and up-to-date information about activities, i.e., keeping the social media account updated. Sharing real-time information makes social media an essential source of information for followers. In this regard, timeliness is critical for charities to keep their communication with donors alive and provide them with the latest information on needs and activities (Godey et al., 2016).

Informativeness

Informativeness represents providing accurate, practical, and comprehensive information about the charities' activities to the target audience. Social media is an effective channel to show donors what has been achieved with donations and inform them about the activities carried out or planned for the future (Di Lauro et al., 2019; Tian et al., 2019). Images, videos, and needy people's reactions are used on charities' social media profiles for informational and motivational purposes. These content types can enable potential donors to empathize with needy people and help them establish an emotional bond with the charity (Lawrance, 2013).

Customization

Customization refers to what extent charities communicate with donors on social media individually and how well they take care of their interests, curiosities, and concerns individually (Bilgin, 2018; Seo & Park, 2018). Besides, charities can post customized content and provide customized services to a particular donor group. They can also send personalized messages directly to a particular donor (Zhu & Chen, 2015). Donors' liking, sharing, sending links, and uploading photos and videos to social media regarding customized posts or services are highly valuable for credibility, trust in a charity, and publicity (Lawrance, 2013).

Advertising

The advertising stands for attention-grabbing and motivating social media ads launched by charities to target potential donors and volunteers. Social media ads can target people with particular demographics characteristics. Those ad campaigns are more straightforward to measure their performance and cheaper than traditional ad campaigns in traditional communication channels (Hamouda, 2018). Therefore, advertising constitutes an essential part of SMM (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Charities can carry out effective advertising campaigns by providing individual stories to their followers about how donations have touched needy people's lives (Schets, 2010).

Research Hypothesis

The Relationship Between SMM and Charity Brand Image

The brand image includes emotions, ideas, and attitudes that consumers have about a brand. Keller (1993:3) defined brand image as "the perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory." In line with this definition, charity brand image can be defined as the perceptions reflecting brand associations in people's minds for a charity brand.

Social media communication channels are essential tools for for-profit or nonprofit organizations to interact with their target markets and carry out their branding activities (Paulin et al., 2014). Charities create their brand profiles on social media like other organizations. They post content related to who they are and what they do for current followers and other users quickly, affordably, and continuously. Social media enables charities to publish advertisements for target audiences with particular demographics characteristics at a low cost (Hanna et al., 2011) and post content to increase charities' brand awareness. Furthermore, a high number of followers and likes and reshares of the posts on social media might be perceived by donors as an indicator of how successful a charity is.

In summary, social media helps charities create and develop a positive brand image and brand value in potential donors' and other users' minds (Bennett, 2017). Research findings show that social media marketing activities are highly functional in creating a positive brand image in for-profit organizations (Bilgin, 2018; Godey et al., 2016; Kim & Ko, 2012). Based on this, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1 Charity SMM has a positive effect on the charity brand image.

The Relationship Between SMM and Brand Trust

Brand trust refers to the belief that a brand fulfills its promises based on the consumers' past experiences and interactions with the brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2006). Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2001) stated that brand trust consists of brand reliability and brand intention. Brand reliability is the consumer's belief that a brand fulfills the promised value. Brand intention is the degree to which the consumer believes that when unexpected problems arise regarding consumption, the consumers' interests will be kept before the business interests. Accordingly, brand trust refers to the donor's belief that a charity will align with its promises and fulfill its commitments (Sargeant & Lee, 2004). In other words, brand trust can be defined as the level of belief that a charity fulfills the function of community service properly, based on past experiences.

Social media is ideal for charities to facilitate accountability by providing a platform to give information to donors about how or where their donations are used. Sargeant et al. (2006) state that trust in charities is related to the feedback provided to donors about the needy people who benefited from their donations. On the other hand, social media's interactive nature allows interactions not only between a charity and its donors/volunteers but also among donors/volunteers (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Social media interactions among consumers are often uncommercial, boundless, and without organizational intervention (Kohli et al., 2015). Moreover, social media allows organizations to establish personalized communications with consumers (Bilgin, 2018). Therefore, social media interactions are excellent starting points for charities' viral marketing campaigns to gain donors' trust (Bennett, 2017). Customized communication and service through social media help differentiate charity brands and improve trust and loyalty (Martin & Todorov, 2010). Charities can gain donors' trust in the organization by presenting them feedback through social media posts or personalized messages regarding purposes at which donations are used and what has been achieved with donations (Bennett, 2017; Martin & Todorov, 2010). Consequently, charities SMM influences trust in charity brands positively. In line with this, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2 Charity SMM has a positive effect on brand trust.

The Relationship Between SMM and Donation Intention

Donation intention reflects a potential donor's willingness and effort to donate to a charity. Planned behavior theory argues that the intention determines the behavior (Knowles et al., 2012). In this line, donation intention is a necessary antecedent of donating to charities (Kashif et al., 2015). For this reason, studies in the literature focus on donation behavior along with donation intention (Chen et al., 2019).

Charities aim to raise awareness, trigger interactions with donors or among donors (e-word of the mouth), gain new donors and volunteers, and increase donation amounts through social media marketing activities (Quinton & Fennemore, 2013; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Social media is a platform that facilitates the information sharing, promotion, and advertising activities of organizations toward target audiences (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Charities also use social media to enhance their interactions with target audiences (Cahalane, 2013) and increase the charity project's popularity affordably and efficiently (Liu et al., 2018). Charities can influence potential donors by posting the narrated stories of needy people's lives and how donations changed their lives (Lawrance, 2013). Das et al. (2008) note that informing donors about how their donations help needy people affect their donation intentions. Social media is one of the fastest and affordable communication channels for charities to communicate with donors and get donations in cases of unplanned and urgent need of funds such as floods, earthquakes, fires, wars (Davison, 2016). In such cases, social media can help charities influence donors' behaviors (Merchant et al., 2010) and build more extensive and more robust support communities through online activities (Paulin et al., 2014). In summary, social media are a functional tool for charities to influence current and prospective donors' intention to donate (Bennett, 2009; Liu et al., 2018). In this line, the research hypothesis formed is as follows:

H3 Charity SMM has a positive effect on donation intention.

The Relationship Between Charity Brand Image and Brand Trust

The image formed based on donors' experiences and interactions with the charity is an antecedent of brand trust (Meijer, 2009). It is widely accepted that brand image is an essential factor affecting brand trust in organizations (Bennett & Sargeant, 2005). The research focusing on the relationship between brand image and brand trust in charities is quite limited (Hou et al., 2009; Sargeant et al., 2008). However, studies conducted on for-profit

organizations provide evidence that brand image positively affects brand trust. In this line, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4 Charity brand image has a positive effect on trust in charity.

The Relationship Between Charity Brand Image and Donation Intention

Brand image is a critical factor in charities to gain a clear and favorable place in donors' minds (Michel & Rieunier, 2012). A positive brand image created in donors' minds is a critical element that makes charities unique, different, and preferable to donors (Michaelidou et al., 2015). Michel and Rieunier (2012) found that the charity brand image is one of the most prominent antecedents of donation intention. Bendapudi et al. (1996) state that brand image provides clues about how good charities represent their donors, so charities with a more precise image are more successful in influencing donors' behaviors. Bennett and Sargeant (2005) argued that some charities achieved a 10% increase in their annual revenues through image management efforts in the UK in the early 1990s. The previous research results show that brand image positively affects donors' intention to give time and funding to charities (Beldad et al., 2014; Meijer, 2009; Michaelidou et al., 2015). The research hypothesis representing this effect is as follows:

H5 Charity brand image has a positive effect on donation intention.

The Relationship Between Brand trust and Donation Intention

The service that charities provide to donors and volunteers is generally intangible. Besides, the relationship between a charity and donors is not contractual (Gregory et al., 2020; Sargeant & Lee, 2004). Therefore, brand trust by donors and volunteers is critical in their fundraising and volunteering (Sargeant et al., 2006). Pham and Septianto (2019) argue that donors are more likely to donate as their level of trust in charity increases. Aytaç and Çarkoğlu (2019) found that the most crucial factor for individual donors when donating is trust in the charity. Consequently, the literature indicates that trust in charity brands is vital for individuals to donate. In this direction, the research hypothesis formed is as follows:

H6 Brand trust has a positive effect on donation intention.

Methodology

Research Model

This research proposes a model to determine the relationship between SMM, charity brand image, brand trust, and donation intention. Figure 1 shows hypotheses proposed to be tested. The model hypothesizes that SMM significantly influences charity brand image, brand trust, and donation intention. It presents a charity brand image and brand trust significantly influencing donation intention. It also offers that the charity brand image significantly affects brand trust. Furthermore, the model offers that charity brand image and brand trust mediate the influence of charity SMM on donation intention.

Population, Sampling, and Data Collection

This research has a quantitative pattern. Its population consists of people following Turk charities operating internationally on social media, i.e., Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter, and Instagram. These charities are IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, Deniz Feneri Association, Yeryüzü Doktorları (Doctors Worldwide), ÇARE Association for Aid and Development, Cansuyu Charity and Solidarity Organization, Beşir Association, AÇEV (Mother Child Education Foundation), and Sadakatasi Association. No available information about people following those organizations on social media is available. Therefore, the convenience sampling method was used while choosing the respondents. People actively following at least one of those charities on social media and liked the recently shared posts by charities were invited to participate in the research by sending messages through social media between 10th September and 21st November 2020. At the end of the process, 521 respondents answered the questions on the questionnaire. Reversed questions for three items (statements) have been put in the same questionnaire section along with the original ones. Respondents with inconsistent answers to at least one of the original and reversed items were eliminated to reduce response bias. After examining the responses, 155 were eliminated, and analysis proceeded with the data collected from 366 respondents.

Measurement

The data in this research were gathered using the questionnaire technique. The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part includes questions about the charities followed in social media, time spent on social media, and demographic characteristics. Respondents were asked to specify which charity organizations included in the

Fig. 1 Proposed research model
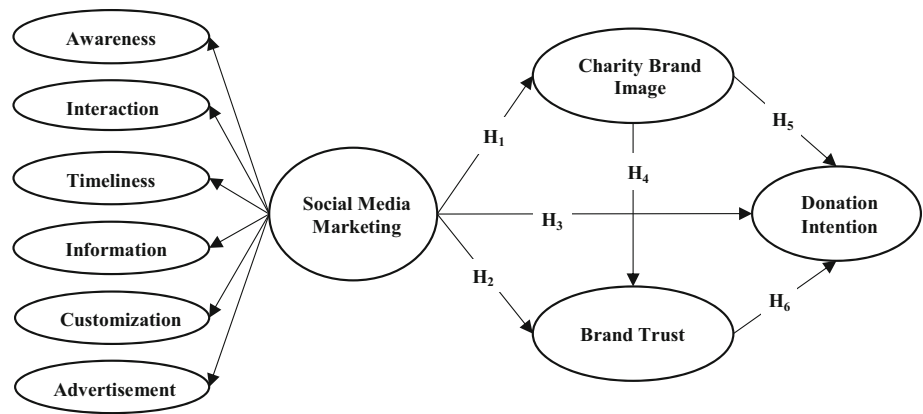
research they follow actively on social media. They were informed about considering the charity they had chosen while answering the following two parts of the survey.

The second part of the questionnaire consists of a scale to understand charities' SMM from donors' perspectives. Charity SMM has been examined in six dimensions: awareness, informativeness, interaction, timeliness, customization, and advertisement. Items to measure interaction, timeliness (trendiness), and customization have been adopted from the work of Kim and Ko (2012). Besides, items to measure advertising (Bilgin, 2018), awareness (Quinton & Fennemore, 2013), customization (Ebrahim, 2020), and informativeness (Yadav & Rahman, 2017) have been adopted from the literature.

After compiling items to measure six dimensions of charity SMM, structured interviews were carried out with ten people following at least one charity on social media. During the interviews, respondents were requested to read the factors/statements one by one and to explain what they understood from each one. Then, comparisons were made between the intended meaning and the actual meaning (what respondents understood) to assure unity. Respondents were also asked if each statement had an exact meaning and to what extent the statements differ. In line with the results of those interviews, some statements were modified. Charity SMM has six dimensions, and three items measure each dimension, a total of 18 items to measure charity SMM. The third part of the questionnaires includes 11 items to measure the charity brand image (3 items), the charity brand trust (5 items), and donation intention (3 items). The scales in the literature were adapted to measure brand image (Kethüda, 2021), brand trust (Ebrahim, 2020), and donation intention (Beldad et al., 2014). Items used to measure dimensions of charity SMM, brand image, brand trust, and donation intention are presented in Appendix 1. The questionnaire was administered in Turkish. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement level with each item from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Analysis and Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

In total, ($N = 366$) responses were collected through an online questionnaire (246 females, 108 males, and 12 preferred not to identify). The age of the respondents ranged between 18 and 65. % 82 of respondents are younger than 46 ages. Roughly %60 of respondents spend 1–4 h on social media in a day. % 27 respondents spend less than one hour, whereas only 40 respondents are on social media for more than four hours in a day. Furthermore, the social media respondents spend the most time on are, respectively, Instagram (255), Twitter (46), Facebook (35), YouTube (19), and LinkedIn (8). Besides, respondents follow charities on more than one social media platform: Instagram (330), Facebook (172), Twitter (137), and LinkedIn (31) platforms.

Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to validate the measurement model consisting of four latent variables and 29 observed variables. Since SMM includes six dimensions, firstly, CFA only applied to 18 items of all dimensions of SMM. Second-order confirmatory factor analysis was used for all 11 observed variables and six latent variables representing 18 observed variables. Factor loads of each latent variable in the theoretical model are presented in Table 1. The Chi-square ratio (Sig.: $0.000 < 0.05$) to the degree of freedom is less than (CMIN:768.696; P:0.00 < 0.05; CMIN/DF:768.696/ $365 = 2.106$) less than three. Also, NFI (0.933), IFI (0.963), CFI (0.963), RMSEA (0.055), GFI (0.874), and AGFI (0.850) are all above the standard thresholds, thus confirming the goodness of fit of the measurement model.

Results indicating the validity and reliability of the scales are presented in Table 1. Factor loads of each item (> 0.70) and average variance extracted (AVE > 0.50) are

Table 1 Evaluating the validity and reliability of multi-item scales

Variables	Items	Factor loadings	CR	CA	AVE	MSV	1	2	3	4
Donation intention	3	0.89–0.91	0.931	0.930	0.817	0.781	0.904			
Charity brand image	3	0.79–0.93	0.877	0.867	0.746	0.741	0.884	0.852		
Brand Trust	5	0.80–0.91	0.943	0.941	0.770	0.740	0.860	0.847	0.877	
SMM	6	0.75–0.94	0.940	0.963	0.723	0.642	0.785	0.799	0.801	0.850

greater than the benchmark points (0.50). The AVE values are greater than the square of their correlations, and MSV values for each construct are less than AVE. These results, presented in Table 1, indicate that convergent validity and discriminant validity are satisfied in this study (Hair et al., 2014). Furthermore, each construct's general reliability, i.e., composite reliability (C.R.), and construct's internal consistency, i.e., Cronbach's alfa (C.A.), are higher than 0.80. Those two indicate the high reliability of the constructs. To conclude, the measurement model is supported by the data, and the constructs achieve validity and reliability.

Structural Model

A covariance-based structural equation modeling, AMOS 24, was used to test the structural model. The Chi-square is not significant (Sig. = 0.101 > 0.05), and its ratio to the degree of freedom (CMIN/DF = 18.521/12 = 1.543) is less than three. Those values indicate a perfect fit. Furthermore, NFI (0.994), IFI (0.998), CFI (0.988), RMSEA (0.039), GFI (0.989), and AGFI (0.959) are all above the standard thresholds. These fit indices support the perfect fit of the structural model. The result, presented in Table 2, indicates that SMM directly influences charity brand image, brand trust, and donation intention. These results show that H1, H2, and H3 hypotheses are supported. In other words, SMM enhances the charity brand image, increases trust in charities, and raises the likelihood to donate. Besides, charity brand image significantly influences brand trust and donation intention. In other words, data support H4 and H5.

Furthermore, H6, proposing trust in a charity brand significantly affects the donation intention to a charity, is also supported.

The results indicate that although SMM has a substantial direct influence on charity brand image ($\beta = 0.509$, $p < 0.001$) and brand trust ($\beta = 0.335$, $p < 0.001$), it has a weak direct influence on the donation intention ($\beta = 0.111$, $p < 0.05$). However, SMM influences the donation intention indirectly ($\beta = 0.675$) through charity brand image and brand trust, much more than it does directly. The model was run without mediating variables, i.e., brand trust and brand image, as suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) to have a better insight on the extent to which the influence of SMM on donation intention is mediated. Results show that charity SMM, as a whole, significantly influences donation intention ($\beta = 0.785$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). This result indicates that charity brand image and brand trust partially mediate the influence of charity SMM, as a whole, on donation intention. Bootstrap approximation ($p = 0.001$, two-tailed) shows that the mediated effect of SMM on donation intention is significant. Direct and indirect effects of charity SMM on endogenous variables are presented in Table 3, along with the total effect.

Social Media Marketing

The data have supported the theoretical model. However, the model has not unveiled how much each dimension of SMM influences charity brand image, brand trust, and donation intention. The mean values of each dimension of SMM, charity brand image, brand trust, and donation

Table 2 Standardized regression weights

Dependent variables	Independent variables	Standard estimate	Standard error	Critical ratio	P
Image	SMM	0.799	0.075	12.023	***
Trust	SMM	0.324	0.075	5.122	***
	Charity brand image	0.598	0.071	8.848	***
Donation intention	Charity brand image	0.509	0.086	6.453	***
	Brand trust	0.335	0.075	4.641	***
	SMM	0.111	0.069	1.963	0.047

***: p < 0.001

Table 3 Standardized direct, indirect, and total effects

Dependent variables	Indirect effect		Direct effect			Total effect		
	SMM	Image	SMM	Image	Trust	SMM	Image	Trust
Charity brand image	–	–	0.799	–	–	0.799	–	–
Brand trust	0.478	–	0.324	0.598	–	0.801	0.598	–
Donation intention	0.675	0.200	0.111	0.509	0.335	0.785	0.709	0.335

intention were calculated. A structural model includes all dimensions of SMM as observed exogenous (independent) variables, charity brand image, brand trust, and donation intention as observed endogenous (dependent) variables were tested. The results are presented in Table 4; awareness is the only dimension of SMM that directly influences donation intention ($\beta = 0.162, p < 0.001$). Informativeness and customization directly affect brand trust, whereas timeliness, informativeness, and advertisement directly influence charity brand image.

Except for interaction, all dimensions of SMM directly or indirectly influence donation intention through charity brand image and brand trust. Charity brand image completely mediates the influence of timeliness, informativeness, and advertisement on donation intention, whereas brand trust completely mediates informativeness and customization. Awareness is the only dimension of charity SMM influencing donation intention directly. Besides, informativeness is the dimension that affects charity brand image, brand trust, and donation intention the most. The standardized total effects of dimensions of SMM on charity brand image, brand trust, and donation intention are presented in Table 5. The total effect is the sum of the direct and indirect effects between variables in the model.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper identifies to what extent charity SMM, as a construct, and its dimensions influence charity brand image, brand trust, and donation intention. Charity SMM is categorized into six dimensions: awareness, interaction, timeliness, informativeness, customization, and advertisement. Charities can create awareness about needy people on their social media posts so that prospective donors can keep donating. They can also promote interactions among donors and between donors and the organization by motivating followers to share information, ideas, views, and opinions on charities' social media profiles. Timeliness, i.e., keeping social media account updated and sharing real-time information and the latest information on activities, makes current and prospective donors believe that social media is an essential source of information. Informativeness, i.e., providing accurate, practical, and comprehensive information about the charities' activities through social media, promotes credibility. Charities' customization of their communication with individuals through social media helps them resolve their interests, curiosities, and concerns. Charities' attention-grabbing and motivating social media advertisements are essential dimensions of SMM.

These dimensions of SMM influence the charity brand image, brand trust, and donation intention differently. Timeliness, informativeness, and advertisements significantly influence charity brand image. In other words, keeping social media account updated and sharing real-time information, providing accurate, practical, and comprehensive information about the charities' activities, launching attention-grabbing, and motivating social media advertisements to promote charity brand image directly. On the other hand, informativeness, i.e., providing accurate, practical, and comprehensive information about the charities' activities, directly affects brand trust along with customization that refers to communication with individuals through social media.

Table 4 Standardized regression weights of dimensions of SMM

Endogenous variables	Exogenous variables	Standardized estimate	Standard error	Critical ratio	P
Charity brand image	Timeliness	0.207	0.055	3.455	***
	Informativeness	0.356	0.059	5.281	***
	Advertisement	0.259	0.041	5.117	***
Brand trust	Informativeness	0.305	0.050	5.915	***
	Customization	0.124	0.044	2.708	0.007
Donation intention	Awareness	0.162	0.030	5.220	***

***$p < 0.001$

Table 5 Standardized total effects of SMM	Exogenous variables	Charity brand image	Brand trust	Donation intention
	Customization	–	0.124	0.052
	Timeliness	0.207	0.102	0.124
	Advertisement	0.259	0.127	0.156
	Awareness	–	–	0.162
	Informativeness	0.356	0.480	0.341

Awareness is the only dimension of SMM that directly influences donation intention. However, informativeness, advertisement, timeliness, and customization indirectly influence donation intention via charity brand image and brand trust. Informing current and prospective donors about the existence of needy people through social media promotes donation intention directly. Surprisingly, interactions among donors or between donors and charity do not significantly influence charity brand image, trust in charity image, and donation intention. The sample of the research can explain this result. The data were collected only followers of charities on social media, in other words, from individuals who know the charity very well. Nevertheless, interactions aim to influence the attitudes and behaviors of people who are not familiar with a charity by electronic word of mouth.

Besides, charity SMM, as a whole, significantly influences charity brand image, trust in charity brand, and donations intention. Those results are in line with the results of previous research conducted on for-profit organizations. SMM effectively creates a positive brand image in for-profit organizations (Godey et al., 2016; Kim & Ko, 2012). Particularly, interactions, customizations, and informativeness dimensions of SMM promote brand trust. Charities can gain donors' trust by presenting content related to what purposes donations are used and what has been achieved with donations through social media (Bennett, 2017). Charity SMM raises awareness about needy people, informs donors what can be done to help, provide information about how previous donations have changed needy people's lives, and thus influence current and prospective donors' donation intention.

Charity brand image significantly influences trust in a charity brand. This result aligns with similar research conducted on for-profit organizations (Bennett & Sargeant, 2005). Furthermore, the charity brand image and brand trust significantly influence donation intention. Those results support previous research results (Beldad et al., 2014; Meijer, 2009; Michaelidou et al., 2015). The charity brand image is one of the most prominent antecedents of donation intention (Michel & Rieunier, 2012). Pham and Septianto (2019) concluded that trust in a charity brand positively influences the likelihood to donate. Aytaç and

Çarkoğlu (2019) and Sargeant and Lee (2004) argued that trust in a charity is the most critical factor while donating.

In addition, charity brand image and brand trust partially mediate the influence of charity SMM on donation intention more than six times the direct influence. This result indicates that the charity brand image and brand trust are crucial to promoting donation intention through social media marketing activities. This result is in line with the related literature. Feng et al. (2017) argued influence of SMM for a nonprofit organization on donation intention is mediated by the trust in the organization. Ebrahim (2020) emphasis the role of brand trust in creating brand equity via SMM activities. Besides, Bilgin (2018) stated that charity brand image mediates the influence of SMM on loyalty. To conclude, charity SMM, as a whole, affects charity brand image, brand trust, and donation intention, and charity brand image and brand trust remarkably raise the influence of charity SMM on donation intention.

Managerial Implications

This paper provides evidence to the extent to which SMM helps enhance charity brand image and brand trust and consequently donation intention. In line with this result, charities are strongly recommended to strengthen their brand image and obtain donors' trust. Charities are also advised to keep their social media accounts updated by posting the latest activities and sharing real-time information. They are also recommended to be very careful about providing accurate, practical, and comprehensive information about their activities to strengthen their brand image through social media. Keeping social media accounts updated also helps to generate brand trust. Besides, charities are strongly advised to communicate with individuals through social media to build brand trust. The posts to create awareness about needy people help to generate donations. Therefore, charities suggested posting content to create awareness in unplanned cases and urgent funds such as floods, earthquakes, fires, and wars. Since the awareness does not influence charity brand image and trust in charity, those types of content are not suggested to be posted if there is no emergency. Instead, charities are recommended to post content to develop their brand

images and generate trust in their brands. Keeping social media accounts updated, sharing real-time information, providing accurate, practical, and comprehensive information about the activities, launching attention-grabbing and motivating social media advertisements, and providing customized information through social media helps charities develop charity brand image and trust.

Limitation and Suggestions for Further Research

Some limitations need to be taken into consideration while evaluating the generalizability of the results of this paper. Firstly, data have been collected from followers of internationally operating Turk charities on Facebook, Linked In, Twitter, and Instagram. Collecting data from only followers, who generally know the charity very well, might be a critical limit for the generalizability of the results. SMM aims to create e-word of mouth communication to obtain new followers or donations. Therefore, further research can question that how and to what extent SMM influences e-word of mouth communication. Furthermore, the influence of SMM on individuals who are not familiar with the charity might be assessed in further researches.

This research has focused exclusively on charities operating under non-governmental organizations' umbrella, and SMM are determined particularly to charities. The other nonprofit or non-governmental organizations can post entertaining content to grab attention and create brand awareness through social media. Therefore, based on nonprofit or non-governmental organizations' characteristics, SMM should be reevaluated in further research.

Appendix 1

The questionnaire

Awareness

The social media posts of the charity help me to realize the existence of needy people.

The social media posts of the charity increase my sense of responsibility toward needy people.

The charity's social media posts help me understand the feelings of needy people.

Interaction

The charity's social media account allows sharing information with others.

The charity's social media account allows exchanging ideas/opinions with others.

I can easily express my ideas/thoughts on the charity's social media.

Timeliness

Content shared on this charity's social media is the newest information.

The information shared on this charity's social media is in line with the current problems and needs of needy people.

I can follow all the activities of this charity on social media.

Informativeness

This charity presents accurate information about the activities and the events carried out.

This charity presents detailed information about planned donations, activities, and events.

This charity's posts on its social media include quite extensive information.

Customization

This charity replies to my questions and comments on social media.

This charity provides information on the subjects that I am curious about or want to learn through its social media account.

This charity posts contents on social media on how donations affect needy people's lives.

Advertisement

This charity's social media ads increase awareness toward needy people.

This charity's social media ads are impressive.

This charity's social media ads are motivating to donate.

Brand Trust

I believe that this charity will always act in the best way in line with its purpose of existence.

I believe that this charity runs its operations in line with ethical rules.

I believe that the funds donated to this charity will be used optimally.

I believe that donations to this charity will not be used for personal interest.

Brand Image

This charity carries out its fundraising and aid activities accountably.

This charity organization is one of the leading ones.

I always have a good impression of this charity.

This charity has a good image in people's minds.

Donation Intention

I will likely to donate to this charity in the future.

It is important to me to contribute when this charity launches fundraising.

When I think about donating, I prefer this charity.

Declarations

References

Aytaç, S. E., & Çarkoğlu, A. (2019). *Türkiye'de Bireysel Bağışçılık ve Hayırseverlik 2019 Raporu*, Third Sector Foundation of Turkey.

Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*, 1173–1182.

Beldad, A., Snip, B., & van Hoof, J. (2014). Generosity the second time around: determinants of individuals' repeat donation intention. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 43*(1), 144–163. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764012457466

Bendapudi, N., Singh, S. N., & Bendapudi, V. (1996). Enhancing helping behavior: An integrative framework for promotion planning. *Journal of Marketing, 60*(3), 33–49. https://doi.org/10.2307/1251840

Bennett, R. (2005). Competitive environment, market orientation, and the use of relational approaches to the marketing of charity beneficiary services. *Journal of Services Marketing, 19*(7), 453–469. https://doi.org/10.1108/08876040510625963

Bennett, R. (2009). Impulsive donation decisions during online browsing of charity websites. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour, 8*(2–3), 116–134. https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.277

Bennett, R. (2017). Relevance of fundraising charities' content-marketing objectives: Perceptions of donors, fundraisers, and their consultants. *Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing, 29*(1), 39–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/10495142.2017.1293584

Bennett, R., & Sargeant, A. (2005). The nonprofit marketing landscape: Guest editors' introduction to a special section. *Journal of Business Research, 58*(6), 797–805. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2003.12.001

Bilgin, Y. (2018). The effect of social media marketing activities on brand awareness, brand image and brand loyalty. *Business & Management Studies: An International Journal, 6*(1), 128–148. https://doi.org/10.15295/v6i1.229

Cahalane, C. (2013). Charities should be proactive and approach local authorities. The Guardian, pp. 1–3. https://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2013/jul/03/charities-proactive-local-authorities.

Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M. B. (2006). The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: The role of brand loyalty. *Journal of Marketing, 70*(01), 34–49.

Chen, Y., Dai, R., Yao, J., & Li, Y. (2019). Donate time or money? The determinants of donation intention in online crowdfunding. *Sustainability (Switzerland), 11*(16). https://doi.org/10.3390/su11164269.

Chen, Y., Fay, S., & Wang, Q. (2011). The role of marketing in social media: How online consumer reviews evolve. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 25*(2), 85–94. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2011.01.003

Das, E., Kerkhof, P., & Kuiper, J. (2008). Improving the effectiveness of fundraising messages: The impact of charity goal attainment, message framing, and evidence on persuasion. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 36*(2), 161–175. https://doi.org/10.1080/00909880801922854

Davison, J. (2016). A simple act of charity? the characteristics and complexities of charitable giving in the united kingdom. *Researchgate.Net, May*.https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.2092.6323

Delgado-Ballester, E., & Luis Munuera-Alema´n, J. (2001). Brand trust in the context of consumer loyalty. *European Journal of Marketing, 35*(11/12), 1238–1258. https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000006475

Di Lauro, S., Tursunbayeva, A., & Antonelli, G. (2019). How nonprofit organizations use social media for fundraising: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Business and Management, 14*(7), 1. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v14n7p1

Ebrahim, R. S. (2020). The role of trust in understanding the impact of social media marketing on brand equity and brand loyalty. *Journal of Relationship Marketing, 19*(4), 287–308. https://doi.org/10.1080/15332667.2019.1705742

Feng, Y., Du, L., & Ling, Q. (2017). How social media strategies of nonprofit organizations affect consumer donation intention and word-of-mouth. *Social Behavior and Personality, 45*(11), 1775–1786. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.4412

Godey, B., Manthiou, A., Pederzoli, D., Rokka, J., Aiello, G., Donvito, R., & Singh, R. (2016). Social media marketing efforts of luxury brands: Influence on brand equity and consumer behavior. *Journal of Business Research, 69*(12), 5833–5841. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.181

Gregory, G., Ngo, L., & Miller, R. (2020). Branding for nonprofits: Explaining new donor decision-making in the charity sector. *Journal of Product and Brand Management, 29*(5), 583–600. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-09-2018-2011

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2014). Multivariate data analysis. In *Pearson* (7th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.

Hamouda, M. (2018). Understanding social media advertising effect on consumers' responses: An empirical investigation of tourism advertising on Facebook. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management, 31*(3), 426–445. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEIM-07-2017-0101

Hanna, R., Rohm, A., & Crittenden, V. L. (2011). We're all connected: The power of the social media ecosystem. *Business Horizons, 54*(3), 265–273. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.007

Hou, J., Du, L., & Tian, Z. (2009). The effects of nonprofit brand equity on individual giving intention: Mediating by the self-concept of individual donor. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing, 14*(3), 215–229. https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.356

Ilyas, S., Butt, M., Ashfaq, F., & Acquadro Maran, D. (2020). Drivers for nonprofits' success: Volunteer engagement and financial sustainability practices through the resource dependence theory. *Economies, 8*(4), 101. https://doi.org/10.3390/economies8040101

Kashif, M., Sarifuddin, S., & Hassan, A. (2015). Charity donation: Intentions and behavior. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning, 33*(1), 90–102. https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-07-2013-0110

Kethüda, Ö. (2021). Which matters more in higher education: social environment or teaching excellence? A comparison between private and public universities. *Journal of Higher Education (turkey), 11*(1), 51–62. https://doi.org/10.2399/yod.19.021000

Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *Journal of Business Research, 65*(10), 1480–1486. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.10.014

Knowles, S. R., Hyde, M. K., & White, K. M. (2012). Predictors of young people's charitable intentions to donate money: An Extended theory of planned behavior perspective. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 42*(9), 2096–2110. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2012.00932.x.

Kohli, C., Suri, R., & Kapoor, A. (2015). Will social media kill branding? *Business Horizons, 58*(1), 35–44. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2014.08.004

Lagrosen, S. O., & Grundén, K. (2014). Social media marketing in the wellness industry. *TQM Journal, 26*(3), 253–260. https://doi.org/10.1108/TQM-12-2013-0129

Lawrance, D. (2013). How charities can make better use of social media. The Guardian, pp. 1–2. https://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2013/feb/28/charities-social-media.

Liu, L., Suh, A., & Wagner, C. (2018). Empathy or perceived credibility? An empirical study on individual donation behavior in charitable crowdfunding. *Internet Research, 28*(3), 623–651. https://doi.org/10.1108/IntR-06-2017-0240

Mangold, W. G., & Faulds, D. J. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons, 52*(4), 357–365. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.03.002

Martin, K., & Todorov, I. (2010). How will digital platforms be harnessed in 2010, and How will they change the way people interact with brands? *Journal of Interactive Advertising, 10*(2), 61–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2010.10722170

Meijer, M. M. (2009). The effects of charity reputation on charitable giving. *Corporate Reputation Review, 12*(1), 33–42. https://doi.org/10.1057/crr.2009.5

Merchant, A., Ford, J. B., & Sargeant, A. (2010). Charitable organizations' storytelling influence on donors' emotions and intentions. *Journal of Business Research, 63*(7), 754–762. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.05.013

Mersey, R. D., Malthouse, E. C., & Calder, B. J. (2010). Engagement with online media. *Journal of Media Business Studies, 7*(2), 39–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/16522354.2010.11073506

Michaelidou, N., Micevski, M., & Theofania Siamagka, N. (2015). Consumers' intention to donate to two children's charity brands: A comparison of Barnardo's and BBC children in need. *Journal of Product and Brand Management, 24*(2), 134–146. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-04-2014-0573

Michel, G., & Rieunier, S. (2012). Nonprofit brand image and typicality influences on charitable giving. *Journal of Business Research, 65*(5), 701–707. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.04.002

Paulin, M., Ferguson, R. J., Schattke, K., & Jost, N. (2014). Millennials, social media, prosocial emotions, and charitable causes: The paradox of gender differences. *Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing, 26*(4), 335–353. https://doi.org/10.1080/10495142.2014.965069

Pham, C., & Septianto, F. (2019). A smile – the key to everybody's heart?: The interactive effects of image and message in increasing charitable behavior. *European Journal of Marketing, 54*(2), 261–281. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-01-2019-0019

Quinton, S., & Fennemore, P. (2013). Missing a strategic marketing trick? The use of online social networks by UK charities. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing, 18*(1), 36–51. https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.1450

Sano, K. (2014). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer satisfaction, promote positive wom and affect behavior intention? *Doshisha Shogaku, 3*(4), 45–69.

Sargeant, A., Ford, J. B., & Hudson, J. (2008). Charity brand personality: The relationship with giving behavior. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 37*(3), 468–491. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764007310732

Sargeant, A., Ford, J. B., & West, D. C. (2006). Perceptual determinants of nonprofit giving behavior. *Journal of Business Research, 59*(2), 155–165. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2005.04.006

Sargeant, A., & Lee, S. (2004). Donor trust and relationship commitment in the UK charity sector: The impact on behavior. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 33*(2), 185–202. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764004263321

Schets, S. (2010). *Meet charities online: How can charities utilize social media as a promotional tool?* VDM Verlag Dr.

Seo, E. J., & Park, J. W. (2018). A study on the effects of social media marketing activities on brand equity and customer response in the airline industry. *Journal of Air Transport Management, 66*, 36–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2017.09.014

Simon, F., & Tossan, V. (2018). Does brand-consumer social sharing matter? A relational framework of customer engagement to brand-hosted social media. *Journal of Business Research, 85*, 175–184. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.12.050

Tian, F., Labban, A., Shearer, R., & Gai, Q. (2019). The impact of social media activity on nonprofit donations in China. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-019-00168-7

Tsimonis, G., & Dimitriadis, S. (2014). Brand strategies in social media. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning, 32*(3), 328–344. https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-04-2013-0056

Yadav, M., & Rahman, Z. (2017). Measuring consumer perception of social media marketing activities in e-commerce industry: Scale development & validation. *Telematics and Informatics, 34*(7), 1294–1307. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2017.06.001

Zhu, Y. Q., & Chen, H. G. (2015). Social media and human need satisfaction: Implications for social media marketing. *Business Horizons, 58*(3), 335–345. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2015.01.006