Social media training needs of volunteers

at Plan International

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Abstract: Although social media usage is increasingly important for nonprofit organizations, the actual digital literacy levels of volunteers can in practice vary greatly. In order to improve motivated volunteers' ability to mobilize on social media, the organization must first determine their current skills and training needs and how these can best be met. This case study investigates the social media training of volunteers with a mixed methods approach and tests the efficacy of a specific written training method among volunteers in a field experiment. The found connection between reading the guideline and a higher level of Facebook skills was slightly not statistically significant. But as the field experiment between groups encountered several limitations, a follow-up study with a paired sample and bigger sample size might find the relevant effect significant. Nevertheless, the qualitative and descriptive results offer valuable insights on how to increase volunteer involvement through social media training.

Keywords: social media literacy, digital literacy, volunteer training, volunteer training needs assessment, nonprofit organization

Appendices:

Appendix A: Declaration of Authorship and Compliance with Ethical Standards

Appendix B: Pre-registration

Appendix C: Facebook Guide

Appendix D: Qualitative interview transcript

Appendix E: Randomization

Appendix F: Full questionnaire (in German)

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Appendix L: Operationalization - Jamovi files

Appendix M: Case description and implications

(The appendices are attached separately, except for appendix A)

Abbreviations:

AG = Action Group

NGO = Nongovernmental Organization

NPO = Nonprofit Organization

Plan = Plan International Deutschland e.V.

PR = Public Relations

UGC = User Generated Content

1. Introduction

Social media permeates the fabric of lives today in multiple ways and can make connections and communication easier for many, a fact that is increasingly relevant for non-profit organizations. Therefore strengthening the organizations social media activity is a common goal (f. ex. Thomas, 2018; Hovey, 2010; Pressrove & Pardun, 2016). Nevertheless, enlarging and empowering organizations' social media community also bears the possibility of a reputation crisis (Thomas, 2018; The Nonprofit Risk Management Center, 2019; Schwarz & Richey, 2019) and other downsides, such as "point-and-click activism" (Kaun & Uldam, 2018, p. 2192) and "self-presentation" (Wallace et al., 2017, p. 2003).

Organizations interested in leveraging the power of social media connectivity for their own needs should be aware of the many possible obstacles that can hinder or prevent someone's participation in digital networks. As Bortree (2012) and Filsinger and Freitag's analyses (2019) show, there is a wide range of differences and needs with regards to digital literacy, particularly given changes related to overall generational profiles; and nonprofits active in the digital sphere have to identify the needs of their target profiles.

This research project examines the issue of social media and nonprofits from the angle of volunteer management, more specifically, the training of volunteers to use social media on behalf of the nonprofit they work with. To this end, a field experiment and a survey were carried out among the volunteers of a nonprofit organization, Plan International Deutschland e.V., that is currently facing the issue of digital literacy as part of its volunteer training assessment processes.

Encouraging and empowering volunteers to use social media to broadcast messages about the organization is an important opportunity for a nonprofit, given the strength of word-of-mouth testimonials as a driver for traffic and the positive effect these connections can have on growth (Eimhjellen, 2014), retention and organization identification (Bauer and Lim, 2019). Because of this the NGO wishes to offer social media training opportunities to volunteers who manifest an interest in said training. Any training should be well suited to match said volunteers' needs and expectations; for this reason, its ideal format, length and mode of delivery are not yet known.

Learning more about Plan International's volunteers' interests and expectations with regards to social media can provide helpful insights for other nonprofits' volunteer management practices. As outlined above, the challenges of expanding one's outreach social media are an important issue facing nonprofits today. Furthering the understanding of the efficacy of a specific training method to engage and develop volunteers to increase their nonprofit-related engagement on social media may help practitioners and researchers both in carrying out future work in this area.

Hence, the goal of this research project is to investigate the social media training needs of Plan International's current volunteers and how they can best be met. The research project entailed the distribution of instructional material regarding how to use various Facebook tools for the NGO's work (for example, group pages and campaigns, see appendix C) to a subset of the organization's volunteers and the subsequent surveying of both volunteers who had received this material and those who had not, in order to investigate the efficacy of the instructional material in improving participants' social media literacy. The survey also included other explorative questions aimed at investigating in more detail volunteers' social media literacy and interest in potentially engaging with other training methods in the future, as well as their social media involvement with the NPO. Questions about the interactive Wordpress blog for volunteers, the main (social) media site of the

volunteer coordination of Plan International, have been included in the survey at their behest, but are not embraced in this paper (see appendix G and M).

2. Literature Review

Given the dearth of research on the narrow focus of the project, the literature review covers the overarching topics: nonprofits and social media as well as volunteer training and especially social media literacy. An overview of existing empirical and theoretical literature in these fields is given to highlight the empirical knowledge gap in social media training of volunteers.

2.1. Nonprofits, volunteers and social media

In the early 2000s, the growing potential of social media for NPOs became the subject of several scientific studies, mainly regarding the question on how to “engage publics in activism, publicity, and fundraising” (Hovey, 2010, p. 1). Around the same time the “relationship management theory” was integrated into social media research (Hovey, 2010, p.18).

Since then, in the nonprofit sector, social media gained increasing significance and attention as a “public relations tool for promotion management”. However, research is not overall conclusive on the best methods for its employ. It also often misses the linkage between “online relationships” and “offline action” (Pressrove & Pardun, 2016, p. 137). Encouraging and empowering volunteers to use social media to broadcast messages about the organization is an important opportunity for a nonprofit, given the strength of word-of-mouth testimonials as a driver for traffic and the positive effect these connections can have on growth (Eimhjellen, 2014), retention and organization identification (Bauer and Lim, 2019). Another important reason for the enormous potential of social

media in the nonprofit sector is low costs, especially in times of “dependence on donors and volunteers for mission fulfillment” (Pressrove & Pardun, 2016, p. 137). In this study, these potentials are combined in the way that offline volunteers are trained to promote their nonprofit organization, via organic reach, on the free and open platform Facebook.

Overall, the vast majority of the research available concerns itself with the external impact of social media, that is, the effectiveness and visibility resulting from its use by nonprofits (e.g. Kaun and Uldam, 2018), or the connection between social media and other forms of desirable behavior like donating and volunteering (such as Büssing et al., 2019; Schürmann, 2013; Pressrove and Pardun, 2016; Kim and Um, 2016).

More detail on the subject of social media networks as tools and their various aspects can be found in literature, mostly handbooks for social media managers, from other fields, such as business, marketing and communication. While less specifically tailored to the circumstances of a nonprofit organization, this literature offers applicable insights nevertheless, such as van Looy (2016), Pein (2018) and Thomas (2018, p. xvi, 98ff., 148ff.).

There is less research still focusing more narrowly on the usage of social media as a tool for volunteer management and engagement. Such as Macduff (2012), covering alternatives for digital communication, or Schwarz & Richey (2019) and Haslebacher et. al. (2019) on volunteer tourists, or Gabbey (2015). Furthermore, there are the case studies on volunteer relationships via social media by Hovey (2010) on a nonprofit social dance center and Kaun and Uldam (2018) on refugee assistance.

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testimonials as a driver for traffic and the positive effect these connections can have on growth (Eimhjellen, 2014), retention and organization identification (Bauer and Lim, 2019). Also, the findings of an online survey by Pressrove and Pardun suggest that "having a social media based personal connection to the nonprofit, resembling a parasocial friendship, had a significant impact on the stakeholder's intentions to support the organization in the offline community (e.g., volunteer, donate)" (Pressrove & Pardun, 2016, p. 137). Goyal-Siraj (2013, par. 1) then introduces the volunteers to this concept: "social media sites [...] made it possible to share and promote volunteering stories and thus attract more people. [...] It made the whole volunteering scenario much more personal."

There is more so-called "gray literature" from online magazines and platforms aimed at ameliorating volunteer recruitment and engagement via social media. Examples include Kendrick on VolunteerHub (2020), Tenille (2016) on volunteerinformation.com, Anderson (2018) on volunteermatch.com, Morpus (2017), Readings (2014) and the Nonprofit Risk Management Center, (2019), on the risks of involving volunteers in social media activities. There are even webinars on the topic of "Social Media and Volunteer Engagement" targeting practitioners (VolunteerMatch, 2019).

Regarding the rare empirical evidence, the Swiss volunteer monitor found that around a quarter of the Swiss population volunteers on the Internet, which mainly involves founding and moderating Facebook groups or maintaining websites. Interestingly it was found that online voluntary behavior is often complementary to offline volunteering (Wehner et al. 2018, p.11).

Another important research stream in the field focuses on the motivations for volunteering through social media and its connectivity with offline behavior (f. ex. Haslebacher et. al., 2019; Schwarz & Richey, 2019). Because, as already Griskevicius et al. in 2007 remarked, for some "'self-sacrifice',

such as [...] charitable mentions on social media, might actually be ‘self-presentation’ (Wallace et al., 2017, p. 2003). Because mentioning a charitable cause or organization on social media can lead to the desired social recognition, without actually donating or volunteering (Wallace et al., 2017, p. 2003). Also, other authors mention the problem of popular activism in the form of “point-and-click activism” (Kaun and Uldam, 2018, p. 2192), ‘slacktivism’ or ‘hacktivism’ (Thomas, 2018, p. 5f.).

For this reason, the question of online activism can be perceived as rather normative or emotional, and some volunteers might even be opposed to online activism, viewing it as too superficial an activity. For example, Amnesty International came to the psychological understanding that many of its activists prefer physical interaction over “simply clicking messages of support“ (Thomas, 2018, p. 100).

2.2. Social media training of volunteers

The topic of the second stream of the literature review is volunteer training. On this subject, volunteer management and human resources research stress the importance of conducting a topic-specific needs assessment before setting in place new instances of formal training, in order to verify which lacunae exist between the tasks currently being carried out and those that should be, and how these gaps should be filled (Macduff, 2005; Stevenson, 2009; Pynes, 2013; Hood, 2012; Manetti et. al., 2015). Regular tests and audits are necessary for successful organizational social media activity as well. One goal of which is to “highlight skills/knowledge gaps and training needs” and/or a “lack of investment in tools, training and resources” (Thomas, 2018, p. 181).

For volunteers in NPOs, an advantage of social media sites is, that they “require only basic computer skills” (Hovey, 2010, p. 1). But here Kaun and Uldam go at least one step further, regarding the required skills: “Using Facebook […] requires activists to adjust their communication

accordingly. This includes timely responses and a certain awareness of platform logics in terms of visibilities, temporality and logistics" (Kaun & Uldam, 2018, p. 2203). Accordingly, Deiser and Newton define the 'competitive advantage' of 'organizational social media literacy' as "familiarity with, and understanding of, the core elements of social media, without necessarily needing to become an expert" (Thomas, 2018, p. 195).

For the organization, this "requires far more effort than simply producing a set of social media guidelines", as "proper training and support is essential" (Thomas, 2018, p. xx). The practitioner stresses once more that the "appropriate training" is not done by "simply including a social media policy […] and expecting everyone to read" it (Thomas, 2018, p. 157).

Volunteer management literature makes use of research on adult learning (andragogy), such as Macduff (2005) and Egan (2017), who stress practical and incrementally learning techniques. Agochiya (2009) expands on a variety of methods, but research specific to distance learning (Robideau and Vogel, 2014; Arghode et al., 2017) details overall the considerable constraints that apply to this training format. Tools on how to assess whether training involving adults with varied learning preferences are presented by Isaac (2011).

Feeding into the model of andragogy and social media are studies on the topic of how adults can best learn how to use technological tools (Farmer, 2011, 2013), but overall empirical research is rare in this narrowed field.

3. Theory

According to the relevant social media groups defined by Thomas (2018, p. 44 ff.), the volunteers can mostly be defined as social media “sharers” or “users”. This comes with several implications on how to best involve and train these stakeholders:

Sharers can often be “persuaded that the support they can provide through something as simple as liking, sharing [...] can be incredibly useful. The best way to do this is to:
- provide training [...] in how to make the most of social media.” (Thomas, 2018, p. 44 f.)

The involvement of other users furthermore “requires:
- policies and guidelines [...];
- training, ideally on an ongoing basis [...];
- ongoing support and advice […]” (Thomas, 2018, p. 45).
And in order to encourage a more proactive use of social media, it is advisable to offer additional “informal guidelines that adopt a less legalistic, more friendly tone of voice” (Thomas, 2018, p. 47).

When supporters are actively involved, the organization can be seen as a facilitator of “people’s self-expression” (User Generated Content – UGC). This encourages “own creativity, from the simple acts of uploading a photo or contributing to an online discussion, to more sophisticated activities such as creating their own videos” (Thomas, 2018, p. 97f.). This hierarchy of social media involvement, as outlined in the figure below, has been used for constructing a scale of Facebook skills explicitly for this study, see appendix H.

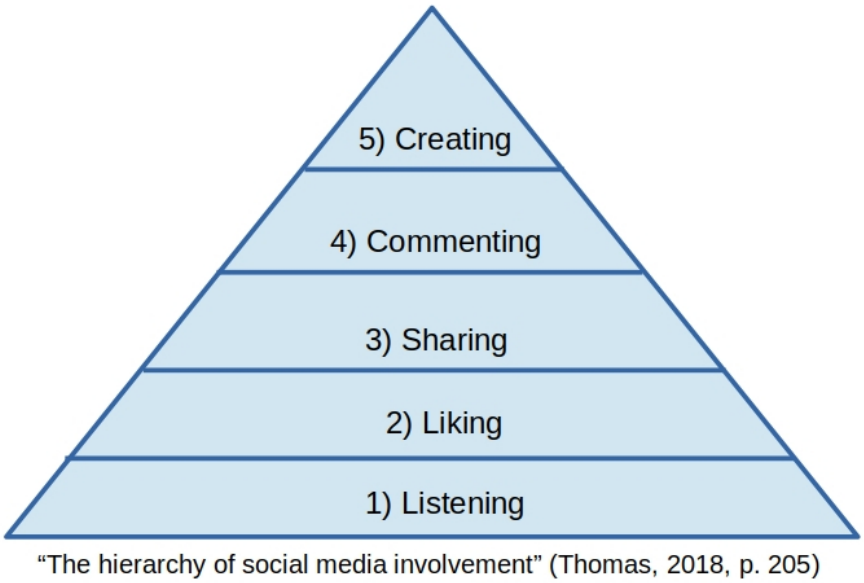

Figure 1: Own graphic of "The hierarchy of social media involvement" (Thomas, 2018, p. 205).

Adopting the informality of language and tone and additional emoticons, emojis and acronyms and hashtags "can be something of a challenge for senior professionals" (Thomas, 2018, p. 196). But then the linguistic capabilities are still easier to adopt, for senior professionals, then visual expressions and skills (Thomas, 2018, p. 196).

And regarding the aims of social media training, it must be noted, that some users never go further than the listening stage […] (Thomas, 2018, p. 206). The question of social media involvement also is connected to personality (Caci et. al., 2019; Haider, 2012). And according to Ballantine, becoming social media literate "also demands the right attitude", meaning a general curiosity towards new technologies, ' a willingness to play and explore things for the sake of exploring'. This is further explained in his model of 'the three stages of tech' (Thomas, 2018, p. 200), but not outlined in this study.

Secondly, the theoretical framework of this research project are the volunteer training techniques based on the model of andragogy, or adult learning (Kapp, 1833; Knowles, 1980; Loeng, 2018), which relies on the learner's motivation. Critics of the model highlight, among other downsides, its lack of empirical foundations and its assumption that all adults have identical training preferences in

terms of self-reliance, which is not the case (Arghode et al., 2017). Congruently, the practitioner states: “I have observed a big difference between those delegates in my workshops who use social media regularly [...] compared with those who are too busy, too scared or simply disinterested. You can read all you like [...] but, unless you actually use them – [...] it is difficult to make sense of how they work” (Thomas, 2018, p. 201).

The question of whether self-directed, written training on the topic of how to use various aspects of Facebook is a good fit for the volunteers is central to this research project. The core hypothesis that was tested in the field experiment (H1) was, that reading the training material (Facebook Guide), improves the self-assessed Facebook skills of participating members of Action Groups of Plan International Deutschland e.V.

4. Methodology

The study was initiated by a researcher who, at the same time, works as a student assistant at the observed organizational unit, see appendix A. Furthermore it was conducted in two phases, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The first phase consisted of a qualitative expert interview with the volunteer coordinators of Plan International, see appendix D. The results of these interviews were taken into account when designing the survey instrument for the second phase of the study, see appendix F. This integrated mixed methods approach was chosen because specific research on the topic is not sufficient yet and additional organization-bound knowledge was needed to conduct a qualitatively well-adapted case study.

For the between-subjects field experiment, in the second phase, Plan International’s volunteers were randomized into two groups. The experimental group received the instructional paper Facebook

Guide, a training guide which gave instructions on the usage of Facebook for the purpose of volunteering for the NGO. A questionnaire was then distributed among all volunteers, covering their current usage of social media, their needs and expectations regarding Plan International social media training, and their assessment of their current knowledge level on the subject of Facebook in particular. Also included were socio-demographics and other exploratory questions about the volunteers' general involvement. Finally, the statistical analysis compares the questionnaire results of the experimental groups, reading (and working with) the Facebook Guide, with those of the control group. The hypothesis is tested that the Facebook Guide increased volunteers' social media literacy.

In the following sections, the mixed methods approach in this case study is detailed, including further information on the survey's sampling criteria, operationalization and measurements. Data analysis was carried out with the use of Jamovi, see appendix K.

4.1. Case description

Plan International is an interesting case for this study, as it is one of the largest and oldest children's aid organizations (Plan International; 2020a). It is a non-governmental and nonprofit organization, focused on children's rights and gender equality in development cooperation. Plus its main fundraising model, of individually sponsoring a child ("Patenschaft"), is already based on a personal relationship between donors and recipients (Plan International; 2020b). Through the use of social media by volunteers, the approach of fostering personal relationships for fundraising can be further strengthened. The German presence, Plan International Deutschland e.V., includes about 100 Action Groups throughout the entire country, consisting of volunteers who donate their time to the organization in various roles out of interest in furthering its mission. Their goal is to increase the

local prominence or recognition of the NPO through public relations, events, recruitment of supporters, fundraising and other activities (Plan International; 2020c; 2020d).

The present study is furthermore limited to Facebook because it is the only platform where the named Action Group Coordination maintains an active outlet (Plan International Deutschland e.V., 2020e). This choice is due to the fact that Facebook is the most common social media platform in Germany, especially among older generations (ARD & ZDF, 2019). Worldwide, Facebook still has more than twice as many users as Instagram. And although Instagram is growing fast and has many young users, Facebook is still growing as well. Only Twitter seems to stagnate at the moment and is still far taken aback, compared to Facebook (Statista; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d; 2020e). Thus it can be assumed that Facebook will remain the most important social media site for the near future, especially for the older generation. Besides, the NGO already uses the tool of direct online fundraising via its Facebook community (Plan International Deutschland e.V., 2020f).

While in the future, social media training opportunities by the Action Group Coordination will include in-person training sessions, workshops or other such developments, the initial training document, that was sent to the volunteers, represents a form of distance learning. The Facebook Guide, in appendix C, aims at performing various tasks on Facebook, all of which are useful when applying the social media platform for the purpose of volunteering at the organization (for example, “liking” content; publishing their own videos; creating a fundraising action). The informal guideline applies a “a less legalistic, more friendly tone of voice” (Thomas, 2018, p. 47), with the ultimate aim of the social media training being to enable the volunteers to express themselves through User Generated Content “UGC” (Thomas, 2018, p. 76 f.).

Further information on the case, regarding the social media strategy of Plan International’s Volunteer Coordination in Germany, is given in appendix M.

4.2. Qualitative interview

The qualitative expert interview took place in the format of a written interview, conducted with two representatives of Plan International's Volunteer Coordination. The interview was semi-structured and started with open questions regarding volunteer and social media management, social media use and literacy of volunteers and training requirements and opportunities. The interviewees also provided additional material to the topic, such as links, Facebook statistics and policies. The full written interview can be found in appendix D.

Following an evaluation of the input received and the elaboration of the questionnaire for phase two, the said questionnaire was then reviewed by the two representatives of the Volunteer Coordination in question. This assessment also functioned as a qualitative pre-test of the questionnaire.

4.3. Field experiment

The second method was a survey experiment with Plan International volunteers regarding their social media learning through the Facebook Guide. Due to the circumstances of this field experiment, the experimental grouping was undertaken in several stages. Internally, the communication between the Action Coordination and the Action Groups is channeled through one Contact Person per group. In order to follow the internal communication standards and to avoid potential issues stemming from intra-group discussions of the Facebook Guide, the randomized group division was done at the level of Action Groups and not at the level of individual volunteers.

First, the Action Groups were divided into two groups: the experimental group, which received the Facebook Guide as experimental treatment, and the control group. At this level, in order to attempt to compensate for some of the intra-Action Group differences, this randomization was clustered. Thus controlling for the two following variables: which Action Groups have their own Facebook page or their own website, see appendix E. The reasoning behind this clustered randomization was that these Action Groups are likely to have higher web literacy and/or to be bigger and/or more active.

Secondly, a manipulation check question in the following survey asked about whether the participants were forwarded the Facebook Guide. This thirdly triggered the display of a specific survey section asking participants, whether they had read the guide “in parts” or “in total”. Lastly, four experimental groups were conducted: the volunteers who read the guide in parts (1), in total (2), and those who claimed to have used the guide in practice (3), as well as the control group, who did not receive it in the first place (0).

The dependent variable examined in this experiment is each respondent’s self-assessed skills in performing various tasks on Facebook, all of which are useful when applying Facebook for the purpose of volunteering at the organization (for example, “liking” content; publishing their own videos; creating a fundraising campaign). This variable was operationalized through a list of possible tasks and respondents were asked to rate their comfort level with performing each action on a 1–5 Likert scale, see appendix F. These items were then combined into the scale “Facebook skills”, with more complex actions (such as creating a fundraising campaign) being given higher weight than simpler actions (such as “liking” content), according to “the hierarchy of social media involvement”, as proposed by Thomas (2018, p. 205). The items of the scale were tested with a reliability analysis, which revealed a very high Cronbach's Alpha (=0.958). For detailed information on the scale construction, see appendix H.

The effect of the experimental treatment on respondents' Facebook skills was examined by contrasting the self-assessed skill level of volunteers who read the Facebook Guide or even used it practically, with that of those who did not receive it. The statistical analysis was done by an ANOVA-Analysis, distinguishing groups between having read the guide "in parts" or "in total" and using it in practice, as well as the control group, that did not receive it.

4.4. Exploratory survey

The stated survey was conducted via LimeSurvey and distributed to each Action Group's Contact Person, who then forwarded it to all Plan International volunteers. The full text of the questionnaire can be found in appendix F (in German). It contained sections visible for all respondents on socio-demographic data, engagement for the NPO, social media usage, Facebook skills and usage, and social media training. Should a respondent answer that they had no Facebook account, they answered a separate section dedicated to that. These quantitative and qualitative open questions were used for descriptive as well as exploratory quantitative analyses and qualitative interpretations.

As it is still questionable how the Facebook skills of the volunteers can be targeted in training, further exploratory regression analysis have been carried out. The linear, multiple regression applies four different models, gradually taking into account moderating and interacting variables on the Facebook skills: In the first Model (M1) only the experimental groups are taken into account, in Model (M2) moderatoring variables and in Model (M3) interacting variables are added, then in Model 4 it is controlled for interacting variables regarding the training interest and method.

5. Results

The estimate total number of volunteers that were contacted, assuming that all Contact Persons forwarded the messages as requested, is 983 volunteers. Of these, 127 began to provide some responses to the survey and 88 submitted their responses by the end. The descriptive analysis and discussion below are based on these 88 responses, except where otherwise noted. The estimated response rate was therefore 8.9%. 43 Action Groups participated in the questionnaire (N= 82, Missing= 6) and there have been 93 different AGs included in the study, thus on the level of Action Groups, this results in a response rate of 0.46.

5.1 Descriptive statistics

A factor that may well contribute to the volunteers' involvement in social media engagement is age (Thayer & Ray, 2006; Thomas, 2018). The average age of the participants is 57 years. The youngest participating volunteer is 20 years and the oldest 85 years. This is older than the average population in Germany (44,4 years) (Statista, 2020a).

The main social media platforms used by the volunteers are: 1.) Facebook (42%), 1.) YouTube (42%), 2.) Instagram (18,2%) and 3.) Twitter (8%). This corresponds with the choice of Facebook by Plan International's Action Group Coordination. But in the long run, broadening training opportunities to include other social networks may be a possibility, which was also highlighted by respondents.

Nevertheless, most volunteers do not even have a Facebook account (58%), but on the other side, 42% already have an account. Besides, the selection bias needs to be considered here: participants with a Facebook account were more likely to stop the questionnaire, see appendix I.

For the stated research subject it is crucial to gain information about the obstacles for engaging via Facebook. The most important reason for not having a Facebook account is the time-intensity with 77% approval. It is questionable whether these participants could be convinced, once they learned how to use Facebook time efficiently. Also, they might get motivated, if they witnessed how effective Facebook activism can be, thus justifying the time invested. The second most important reason for not having a Facebook account is the conviction, with 73% approval. These participants do not belong to the target group of the Facebook training. Only 6% give the reason, that they are unsure how to use Facebook, which would be the prime target group, at least of the first chapter(s) of the Facebook Guide.

Furthermore, the volunteers should indicate which goals they motivate most to engage for their NPO on Facebook. It is remarking, that the goal of direct fundraising on Facebook is relatively taken aback (mean = 2.17). Most important for the volunteers is to increase the outreach or prominence („Bekanntheit“) of their Action Group (mean = 3.84). And responses rating statements such as “Public relations via Facebook is an important part of my volunteering” (mean = 2.68) and “I would like to publish more about Plan International on my Facebook account” showed relatively little enthusiasm, on average (mean = 2.68).

Regarding the frequency of using Facebook for the NGO, it can be said that most actions on Facebook are carried out very rarely by the volunteers, especially as it gets more difficult. Creating own content is carried out seldom or never. Liking, commenting or sharing content is undertaken

only seldom, on average. But passive activities, such as reading the news feed and visiting pages, are carried out with a higher frequency in average (“sometimes“).

Equally revealing in the same direction are the results to the question of whether participants are interested in training (or further training, as the case may be) on Facebook usage for Action Groups (mean = 2.32; standard deviation = 1.29; *N= 88*).

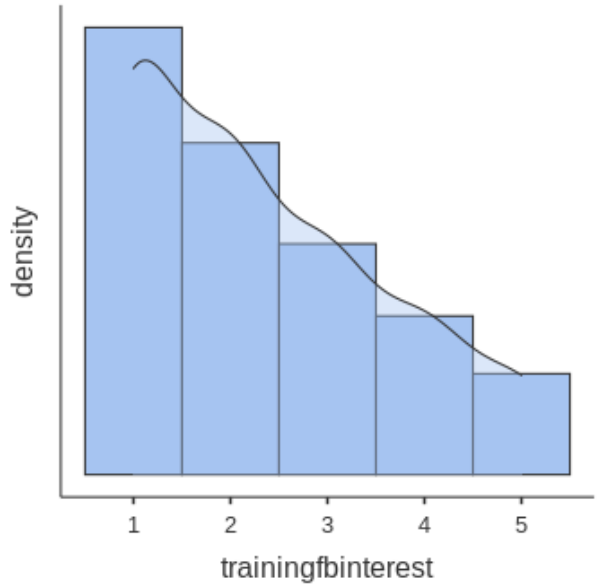

Figure 2: Interest in Facebook training, ranging from 1 “not at all” to 5 “very much” interested.

Afterward, participants were asked to rate the suitability of various methods of potential social media training. 30 - 35% of participants did not respond to these questions, but among the ones that did, in-person workshops were the highest-rated training method. The other methods listed received similar ratings: written guide (3.46 mean, 1.1 standard deviation); video tutorials (3.41 mean, 1.04 standard deviation); and webinar (3.37 mean, 1.17 standard deviation).

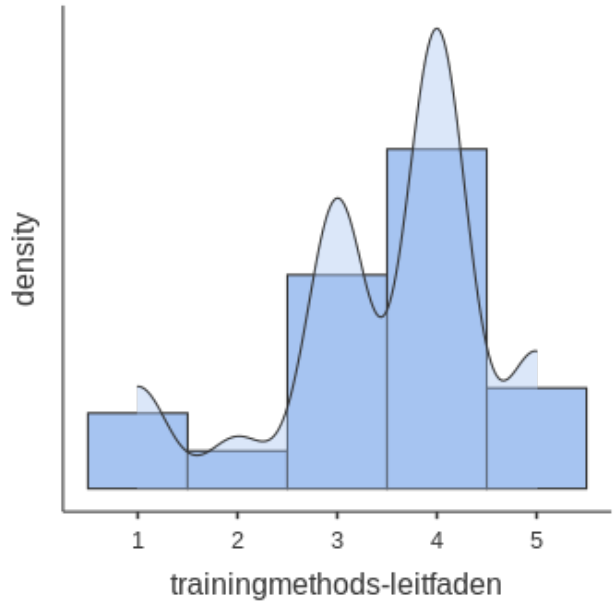

Figure 3: Approval of a written guide as social media training method, from 1 “not at all” to 5 “very much”.

Appendix G contains descriptive tables for the submitted responses to all questions posed.

5.2. Field experiment

Of the 88 respondents, 29 (33%) stated having received the Facebook Guide, whereas 59 (67%) stated that they had not (manipulation check). Among those who received it, 15 (51.7%) stated that they had read it partially or in full, whereas 14 responded that they did not read it due to lack of time (6) or interest (8). Also, 3 participants claimed to have used the guide in practice. This creates the grouping variable or independent variable.

The experiment aimed at the difference in self-assessed Facebook skills among respondents in the control group and the treatment groups, who read the guide (see 4. Methodology). Therefore, the dependent variable was the Facebook skills, combined to a scale, see appendix H.

Group	*N*	*Missing*	*Mean - „Facebook skills”*	*St. dev. - „Facebook skills”*
0 - control group, did not receive the Facebook Guide	18	41	121	53.1
1 - read the Facebook Guide in parts	3	3	199	31.6
2 - read the Facebook Guide in total	3	3	102	34.7
3 - used the Facebook Guide in practice	2	1	168	6.94

Table 1: N, missing, means and standard deviations of the Facebook skills per experimental groups.

The Hypothesis was tested, that the volunteers, who did not read (nor receive) the Facebook Guide (group 0, N = 18) have a lower level of “Facebook skills”, in average, than the participants who read the guide “in parts” (group 1, N = 3) or “in total” (group 2, N = 3) and those who even claimed to have used the guide in practice (group 3, N = 2).

Therefore an “One-Way ANOVA (Fischer’s)” analysis was carried out, to compare the self-assessed Facebook skills between the groups named above, which results in a nearly significant difference: $F(3,22) = 2.92$, $p = 0.057$. But it must be noted that the Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk) suggests a violation of the assumption of normality ($W = 0.907$, $p = 0.023$). Whereas the Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances is not critical.

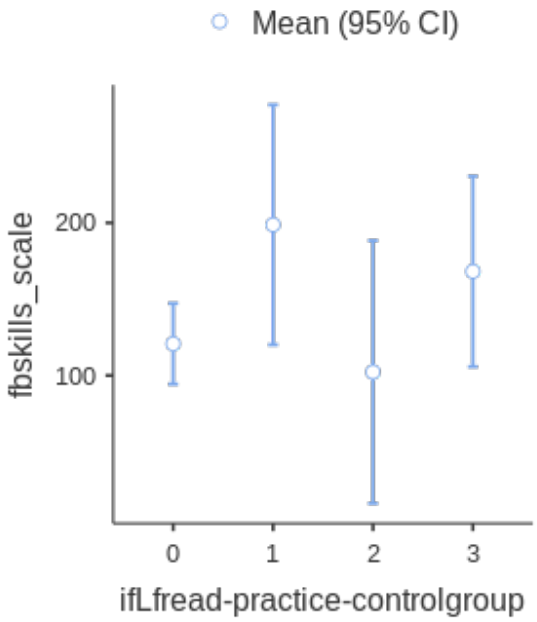

Figure 4: Plots displaying the range of self-assessed Facebook skills among respondents who did not read the Facebook Guide (left, group 0) with those that read it “in parts” (group 1) and “in total” (group 2), and those who even claimed to have used the guide in practice (group 3).

A following Tukey Post-Hoc Test reveals no significant differences between the single groups:

Reference level = Group 0	*Group 1*	*Group 2*	*Group 3*
Mean difference	-78.0	18.5	-47.4
T(df = 22)	-2.56	0.608	-1.303
p-value	0.078	0.929	0.571

Table 2: Tukey Post-Hoc Test for mean differences between groups.

The Post-Hoc Test reveals that the Facebook skills of those, who read the Facebook Guide in parts, is in average 78 points higher, than the skills of those, who did not receive it. But with p = 0.078 the result is not significant.

For further information on the analysis, see the attached Jamovi file in appendix K.

5.3. Exploratory analysis

Further analysis is warranted to examine factors that may help explain this difference in the self-assessed Facebook skills of the volunteers. Therefore the following explanatory variables were taken into account, based on qualitative reasons: demographic variables (age and gender), the respondents' self-reported frequency and enjoyment of personal Facebook usage, being responsible for specific roles tied to more intensive web or media usage and their assessment of their own motivation and obstacles with regards to engaging for the NGO on Facebook.

Variable	*Total*	*0 - control*	*1 - read in parts*	*2 - read in total*	*3 - used*
Facebook skills	131 (55.7)	121 (53.1)	199 (31.6)	102 (34.7)	168 (6.94)
Age	57.0 (14.9)	57.2 (14.5)	59.7 (10.6)	56.2 (9.02)	25.7 (2.08)
Gender (male - female)	1.23 (0.421)	1.25 (0.439)	1.50 (0.548)	1.17 (0.408)	1.00 (0.00)
Role public relations: yes – no	0.352 (0.480)	0.288 (0.457)	0.667 (0.516)	0.667 (0.516)	1.00 (0.00)
Role web-administration: yes – no	0.227 (0.421)	0.119 (0.326)	0.333 (0.516)	0.667 (0.516)	0.667 (0.577)
Frequency of personal Facebook usage	3.75 (1.18)	3.33 (1.15)	5.00 (0.00)	4.33 (0.577)	3.50 (2.12)
Enjoyment of personal Facebook usage	3.20 (1.11)	3.14 (1.24)	3.33 (0.577)	2.67 (0.577)	3.00 (1.41)
Personal Facebook activity (scale)	67.5 (22.7)	65.9 (24.5)	83.5 (14.0)	66.6 (10.1)	48.7 (4.13)
Motivation for using Facebook for the NPO (scale)	5.57 (2.33)	5.05 (2.15)	4.00 (2.00)	6.33 (1.53)	6.50 (3.54)
Frequency of Facebook usage for the NPO (scale)	134 (52.0)	123 (45.8)	151 (64.2)	133 (28.2)	152 (70.8)
Goals of engaging on Facebook for the NPO (scale)	3.38 (1.22)	3.27 (1.25)	3.56 (0.674)	4.17 (0.833)	3.17 (0.707)
Obstacles for engaging on Facebook for the NPO, associated with skills (scale)	0.486 (0.692)	0.364 (0.658)	0.667 (0.577)	0.667 (1.15)	1.00 (0.00)

Obstacles for engaging on Facebook for the NPO, associated with conviction (scale)	0.784 (0.787)	0.909 (0.750)	0.667 (0.577)	0.333 (0.577)	1.50 (2.12)
Interest in a Facebook training	2.32 (1.29)	2.31 (1.24)	1.67 (0.816)	3.00 (1.67)	2.67 (0.577)
Rating of methods for the social media training - guide	3.46 (1.10)	3.38 (1.09)	4.00 (0.00)	4.75 (0.500)	3.67 (0.577)

Table 3: Means and standard deviations of relevant variables in total and per experimental groups.

The multiple linear regression considers four different models, gradually taking into account moderating and interacting variables: In the first Model (M1) only the experimental groups are taken into account, in the second Model (M2) moderatoring variables and in the third Model (M3) interacting variables are added, then in the last Model (M4) it is controlled for interacting variables regarding the training interest and method.

Model Fit Measures	*R^2*	*Adjusted R^2*	*F (df1, df2)*	*p*
M1: Experimental groups.	0.335	0.202	2.52 (3, 15)	0.098
M2: + Age, gender, personal Facebook usage.	0.685	0.434	2.72 (8, 10)	0.070
M3: + Facebook involvement with the NGO.	0.915	0.488	2.15 (15, 3)	0.290
M4: + Facebook training interest and preference.	0.954	0.163	1.21 (17, 1)	0.625

Table 4: Model Fit Measures for Linear Regression.

Model 1 is based on a violation of assumptions, according to the Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk) with p = 0.008. Apart from that the tests for Normality and Auto-correlation did not indicate a violation of assumptions.

Multiple Linear Regression	*M1*	*M2*	*M3*	*M4*
Experimental treatment, compared to control group (= 0):				
Read the Facebook Guide in parts: 1 – 0	95.9* (39.3)	40.688 (42.186)	42.99 (62.17)	27.28 (104.55)
Read the Facebook Guide in total: 2 – 0	-37.5 (54.0)	-50.406 (49.009)	-29.53 (71.67)	-33.46 (103.33)

Used the Facebook Guide in practice: 3 – 0	55.9 (54.0)	64.445 (54.070)	33.71 (91.20)	20.75 (118.53)
Age		-1.444 (1.171)	-5.37 (3.01)	-6.12 (7.06)
Gender: male – female		27.022 (30.108)	124.89 (76.63)	129.16 (156.80)
Frequency of personal Facebook usage		40.441 (18.446)	35.50 (23.22)	37.25 (33.94)
Enjoyment of personal Facebook usage		-13.234 (19.727)	-21.57 (20.41)	-30.96 (40.15)
Personal Facebook activity (scale)		-0.146 (0.526)	-1.22 (1.26)	-1.46 (3.13)
Role public relations: yes – no			-37.75 (61.15)	-32.80 (101.51)
Role web-administration: yes – no			-37.63 (62.18)	-17.11 (157.87)
Motivation for using Facebook for the NPO (scale)			-19.92 (14.98)	-24.29 (30.92)
Frequency of Facebook usage for the NPO (scale)			2.03 (1.47)	2.07 (3.88)
Goals of engaging on Facebook for the NPO (scale)			6.47 (16.04)	-1.27 (23.95)
Obstacles for engaging on Facebook for the NPO, associated with conviction (scale)			20.10 (51.25)	6.22 (75.83)
Obstacles for engaging on Facebook for the NPO, associated with skills (scale)			-40.74 (20.83)	-46.55 (42.00)
Interest in a Facebook training				10.42 (43.52)
Rating of methods for the social media training - guide				16.25 (34.48)

Table 5: Coefficients and standard error of variables in different Linear Regression models, * marks significance with $p<0.5$.

Model 1: There is a significant difference in the group means of the Facebook skills between group 1, which read the Facebook Guide in parts, and the control group, that did not receive it. The ones that read it in parts had on average a 96 points higher rating on the Facebook skills scale, which seems a relevant effect size, regarding that this is more than half of the overall range of the scale (186 points).

Model 2: The frequency of personal Facebook usage is, with p = 0,053 (t = 2.192), an almost significant explanator for Facebook skills.

Taking into account the limited and varying case numbers, a correlation matrix might be used as an additional exploratory method, see appendix J.

6. Discussion

6.1. Field experiment and its limitations

As the results of the experiment section show, the found differences between the groups, although relevant in size, were sightly not statistically significant (p = 0.057). This indicates that the hypothesis is not statistically proven by the data: reading the training material provided, did not make a significant difference in volunteers' skill levels, in comparison with the control group.

Interestingly, the analysis shows that the mean of the first experimental group, that read the guide in parts, is higher than the mean of the second group, that read it in total. This might be explained, when taking into account, that those who read the guide in total, also read the very basic chapters, on how to set up an account for example. Thus the readers in the second group might have started the training from a much lower level of basic Facebook skills, than those who skipped the first chapters and only read selected parts of the guide, depending on the ground level of skills before starting the training. This effect would have been controlled in a paired sample, with measurements of the Facebook skills before and after the experimental treatment. Regarding the mean differences between the three groups, it might be possible that a bigger effect of the guide could have been

measured in a paired sample. Comparing the same individuals and their specific skills before and after the guiding material, might a better methodological fit for assessing learning results, but this bears other downsides (e. g. learning effect, effort).

The field experiment encountered a number of practical limitations tied to the limited number of respondents in the experimental group. Most respondents had no Facebook account (58%), and of these the most indicated reason was conviction (72.5 %) and not a lack of technical expertise. Furthermore, the questions regarding the Facebook skills were not mandatory, excluding even more cases.

One reason for the limited case number and thus the limited significance of results might be time pressure: It is indicated by the volunteers that many lack time to use social media for their Action Group. Thus, when evaluating the training material, it needs to be taken into account, that most invest only one to two hours per week for volunteering and one third invests even less. But the estimated time given, for reading and working with the guide, were only four to five weeks, rather less. For inner-organizational reasons, and given the need for digitalization in the just started pandemic, the Volunteer Coordination did not want to further withhold the guide from the rest of the volunteers. Secondly, the time span depended on the Contact Person of each Action Group to forward the guide timely.

Figure 5: Time line of the study.

As the stratified randomization was done at an aggregated group level, it might be limited to the extent, that structural differences occur at the individual level of volunteers between the groups. Further limitations associated with the randomization method in the field, relying on a Contact Person to forward the survey to all participants in time and requiring respondents to report honestly to the manipulation check, may have contributed to the very uneven distribution of participants between the experimental groups. This means that the self-reported experimental treatment did not match anticipated figures. Instead, the data set reveals conflicting information, in between participants of the same Action Group and in the experimental grouping.

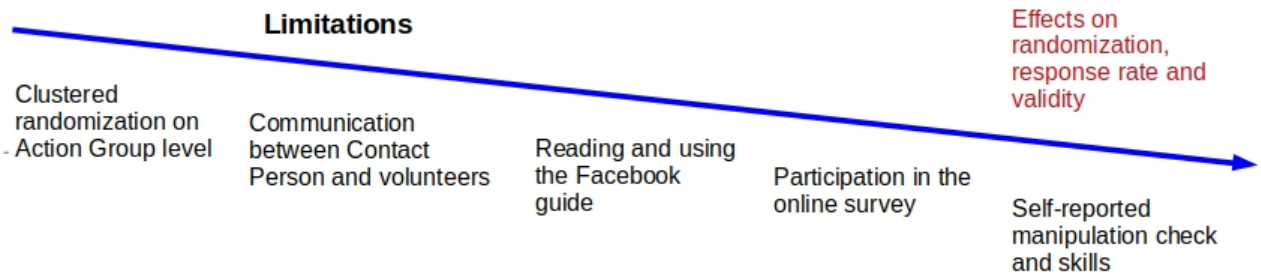

Figure 6: Limitations of the field experiment.

Because the randomization in the field was not strict, the three group filtering variables (submitted questionnaire, manipulation check (received the guide) and read the guide) have been controlled for systematically interfering third variables, such as socio-demographics or the possession of a Facebook account. The results reveal no significant differences in the manipulation check or for reading the guide. But one statistically significant and size relevant difference was found: a limited possibility to proceed with the questionnaire when possessing a Facebook account, see appendix I. This selection bias, due to the randomization method in the field, and the overall resulting small sample size, as well as the self-assessment of skills, calls into question the external and internal validity of the experimental findings.

Nevertheless, the slightly not significant effect, had a relevant effect size, and when taking into account the varying initial levels of Facebook skills, it can still be assumed that the guide, overall,

was helpful to the interested volunteers. At least no one indicated to have no need for the given instructions, because she or he already possesses sufficient skills.

6.2. Descriptive, qualitative and exploratory findings

Even so, beyond the experiment, the descriptive, qualitative and exploratory findings can be of value both to Plan International and to others who seek a greater understanding of volunteer management and training needs, as well as social media usage among nonprofit volunteers. On the individual level, this is not a single-case study, but nevertheless, the findings are, to some extent, limited to only one organization. This, on the other hand, results in greater practical relevance of the findings for Plan International's volunteer coordination, particularly their social media strategy and volunteer training.

Facebook does not seem to be a good fit for many of Plan International's volunteers, in particular, due to demographic tendencies, personal distaste and other traits, given the responses mentioned. The Volunteer Coordination should thus focus exclusively on volunteers who show an explicit interest in learning how to do more outreach using their volunteering role on social media. Training fewer "experts" in administrating social media on Action Group level, on behalf of the other group members, could be a successful strategy.

Empirically interesting, regarding this specific engagement on Facebook, are the internal roles of public relations (35 %) and web administration (23 %), since they overlap with the tasks of administrating Facebook. As the exploratory results (Model 2) show, the most significant effect on the skills has the frequency of use, and according to the correlation matrix (appendix J) these are tied to the named roles. Besides, the qualitative answers of some volunteers suggest that social media engagement is perceived as a role for one or two members of a group, and rather not as a

"social" activity for all. And the impression of persuading all volunteers to engage on Facebook even provoked severe inner-group conflicts.

Astonishingly some answers to the open questions can even be regarded as polemical (rhetorical question). Using Facebook can be tied to strong opinions or even emotions, as for some it seems to be a question of lifestyle or even belief, as indicated by the reported conflict in the Action Group. Another comment on how the guide could be improved reveals refusal, without any background knowledge: " I think the guide is awesome, but I refuse to install Facebook on my PC."

Regarding the frequency of certain Facebook activities with or for the NGO, overall, the volunteers are rather consumers of social media content by Plan International, than providers or active net-workers. Training volunteers in social media literacy needs to take into account the wide range of basic skills and learning preferences of participants. Therefore a bunch of training opportunities and scenarios should be offered to the volunteers, which also allows forth going personal development and direct interaction if needed (see Bortree, 2012; Filsinger and Freitag 2019; Thomas 2018; Arghode et al., 2017).

An important, connected issue is the motivation for engaging on social media. The stated concerns by volunteers, especially regarding Facebook, can be tied to privacy violations and institutional power (see Rothmann & Buchner, 2018), as well as dynamic changes in the sector regarding public involvement (see Statista, 2020b-e; 'the three stages of tech', Thomas, 2018, p. 200). Thus the motivation for engaging on social media, and specifically on certain platforms, as well as the benefits for the NPO, should thus be additionally targeted in training (see Thomas, 2018).

For these reasons, it seems advisable for the organization, to further train a smaller number of already skilled and strongly interested volunteers, rather than to focus on training the mass, in order

to directly generate organic reach. These future social media administrators could then, in the long run, aim at building up a strong multichannel architecture (see Thomas, 2018), to attract social media involved supporters to become digital active volunteers.

Often the issues of social media is tied to the question of age, in literature (Thomas, 2018; Filsinger & Freitag, 2019; Thayer & Ray, 2006; Kim & Lee, 2014; Wallace et al., 2017) and empirically (ARD & ZDF; 2019) as well as in comments by volunteers. But surprisingly, the connection of age with the self-assessed Facebook skills was neither found to be significant nor to have a big effect size.

7. Conclusion

The research project specifically entailed the assessment of an instructional guide, which explained how to use various Facebook resources for the purpose of engagement related to a nonprofit organization. The found connection, between reading the Facebook Guide (in parts) and a higher level of Facebook skills, was slightly not statistically significant. But as the previous section details, the study had a very limited case number, thus it might well be possible to obtain significant results in a follow-up study, relying on bigger sample size. The relevant effect size, with an alpha error of 5.7%, still can give a hint about a positive learning effect through the guide. Nevertheless, these limitations poses difficulties for the applicability of the experiment to the field of nonprofit studies in general.

Apart from the experiment, which actually demanded people to invest several hours in reading a guide, in a limited time frame of approximately three weeks, the study relies on a higher response rate. Since the descriptive and exploratory analysis rely on bigger sample size, these findings can

still be valuable for evaluating the obstacles and opportunities of social media involvement of volunteers and fostering their social media literacy on behalf of the volunteering organization. Regarding the specific case, the assessment of Plan International's Action Groups, the results will be of specific use for designing the recently started social media training and for overall volunteer management.

As there has not been a lot of scientific research in the field of training volunteers on social media literacy specifically, it could be that more exploratory research is needed before quantitative studies are conducted to develop or prove specific hypotheses. Future research on this topic may also benefit from focusing on the topic of motivation as a trigger for social media engagement and it's connection with social media agency and literacy among volunteers (see Thomas, 2018, 2018, f. ex. p. 110, 44ff.). How can a nonprofit's social media strategy convey the goals to volunteers and fully train at least some, to become active collaborators or spokespeople, in accordance with shared interests and motivation?

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