

Social Media Charity Campaigns: A Study On The Motivation To Participate.

Siobhan Slattery

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts degree (Social Science Specialization) at DBS School of Arts, Dublin.

Supervisor: Dr. Niall Hanlon

Head of Department: Dr. Bernadette Quinn

April 2015
Department of Social Science
DBS School of Arts

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	3
ABSTRACT	4
INTRODUCTION	5
<i>The Charity Landscape In Ireland</i>	7
<i>Irish Charities And The Recession</i>	8
<i>Fundraising Approaches</i>	9
<i>Diversification Of Charity Approaches</i>	9
<i>Irish Social Media Usage</i>	11
<i>Social Media Charity Campaigns</i>	12
<i>Information Diffusion</i>	13
<i>Virtual Stewardship</i>	13
<i>Self-Benefit and Other-Benefit</i>	14
<i>Conclusion</i>	17
<i>Research Question</i>	17
METHODOLOGY	18
APPARATUS.....	18
RESEARCH DESIGN.....	19
THE PARTICIPANTS	20
PROCEDURE	21
DATA ANALYSIS	22
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	22
FINDINGS	24
CHARITY INVOLVEMENT	25
MOTIVATION TO PARTICIPATE	26
BENEFIT TO THE CHARITY	29
TIME FOR PARTICIPATION	31
DISCUSSION	32
SUMMARY	32
COMPARING AND CONTRASTING	34
<i>Charity Involvement</i>	34
<i>Motivation to participate</i>	35
<i>Benefit to the Charity</i>	36
<i>Time for participation</i>	37
CONCLUSION	39
LIMITATIONS	39
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	40
REFERENCES	42
APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM	45
APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	46

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to my fiancé John for his support and patience during this research project. I would like also like to thank my supervisor Dr. Niall Hanlon for his guidance.

Thank you to Dr. Annette Jorgensen who was extremely helpful and patient throughout.

Finally I would like to thank the participants who gave up time from their day to assist in the research.

Abstract

Social media charity campaigns rose to prominence in 2014 and helped to raise millions in funding for the charities involved. This research aimed to investigate the motivations for social media users to participate in the social media charity campaigns. Qualitative, semi structured interviews were conducted to gauge the motivations for taking part in charity campaigns. The themes that emerged showed that peer pressure and the involvement of others played a part in participation.

While previous research has been done on charity websites and information diffusion, in-depth research into the motivations to take part in these campaigns has not been performed. This research will fill a gap in the current knowledge about social media charity campaigns. This research is important as charities have had funding cuts and increase in demand for their services and social media is easy and cheap tool to use.

Introduction

Online social networks are now part of the everyday lives of millions of people (Spaulding, 2010, p. 38). This paper will discuss Ireland's charity fundraising crisis in the wake of the latest economic recession (The Wheel 2014). The paper will discuss the popularity of social media and the emergence of social media campaigns. It is important for charities to understand what motivates the social media user to take part and spread this relatively new form of word of mouth to harness the power of this effective marketing tool to use for their benefit.

The literature review that follows will start by looking at the charity landscape in Ireland, the types of fundraising that Irish charities are involved in and how the public like to donate. The difficulties faced by Irish charities during the recession will be discussed as well as the effect of publicised scandals in the media. This will be done to show how important it is to adapt to modern fundraising techniques to overcome these obstacles. The paper will then focus on some of the main themes that arise in research about charity fundraising and also social media. Research on the diversification of charity appeals over time will be examined, in particular how charities have moved from a simple religion orientated structure to the consumer or marketing orientated structures of recent times (Saunders 2012). The fundraising of UK charity group "Just Giving" will be used as an example of how charity campaigns have evolved on social media.

Social media is a way for people to express themselves. A study by White and Pelozo (2009) discusses how people want to be perceived in the public domain. The literature review will look at how the previous use of social media has affected the transparency and creditability of organisations and the implications this has for charities (Sisco and McCorkindale, 2013).

This paper will look at information diffusion online and previous research into this. Internet stewardship will also be discussed. Internet stewardship is seen as an important factor in creating a relationship with the target audience through the four dimensions of reciprocity, responsibility, reporting and relationship nurturing (Waters and LeBlanc Fenely, 2013, p. 216). The harnessing of electronic word of mouth will also be discussed and its current use as a tool to express oneself in terms of consumption choices (Saegner, Thomas & Wiggins, Johnson, 2013, p. 959).

The literature review will set out the current fundraising environment in Ireland as well as the statistics in relation to social media and new technology usage. The evolution of fundraising approaches over time will be displayed along with previous research on the effective aspects of such techniques. This will be done to highlight the gaps in the knowledge and how charities can benefit from adapting to the new methods. It will demonstrate why it is important to understand why people take part in the social media campaigns.

The researcher will identify gaps in the previous knowledge about charity campaigns, focusing on social media charity campaigns. The current fundraising environment in Ireland is a difficult one, charities are competing for donors, and these charities have suffered funding cuts. As well as these funding cuts there is an increase in the number of people of people seeking to use their services (The Wheel, 2014). It will be beneficial to these charities to investigate people's motivations for taking part in social media charity campaigns. Social media is a cheap and easy to use form of fundraising and will decrease fundraising budgets if used effectively. The social media charity campaigns emerged in March 2014, meaning they are relatively new (RTE, 2014). This approach to charity fundraising needs to be harnessed sooner rather than later, as technologies develop and fundraising approaches continue to evolve.

The Charity Landscape In Ireland

Research on charities in Ireland has found that charities in Ireland are divided in two. There are a large amount of smaller charities that have part time fundraisers and a small group of national and international charities who have full time, devoted fundraisers (Donoghue, O'Regan, McGee & Donovan, 2007, p.ii). Donoghue et al. (2007, p.ii) also state that the majority of fundraising is in the form of one off donations rather than a relationship being developed with the donor. The study also points to the fact that the Irish fundraisers are lacking in the training and education in fundraising activities in comparison to our UK and US counterparts who are provided with the skills and expertise to optimise their fundraising efforts (Donoghue et al., 2007, p.ii). Trends in Irish charitable giving show that prompted giving, rather than planned giving such as a regular standing order, are the

preferable way for Irish people to donate. The younger 18-24 age group and the older 70-90 age group. were less likely to donate (Donoghue et al., 2007, p.4).

Irish Charities And The Recession

Since the Irish economic recession started in 2008, charities have been hit hard by cuts in the various government budgets. A recent report has shown that 59% of charities experienced a fall in their income between 2009 and 2012 with 67% experiencing a rise in people using their services (The Wheel, 2014). 25% of the funding for Ireland's non profit sector comes from individual giving. As a result of the reduction in incomes, over 55% of charities have cut back on the services being offered (The Wheel, 2014).

Scandals arising from the administration of some charities were highlighted in the media and have affected the amount of funds people have been donating to charity. In March 2014, 45% of people surveyed had reduced the amount of money they donate to charity (Amárach 2014). 62% of people surveyed said that the recent Central Remedial Clinic scandal which saw executives of the charity receive pension top ups and pay ups amounting to millions, had changed how they think about charities and 55% of people said that the Central Remedial Clinic scandal reduced their willingness to donate to charity (Amárach 2014).

The Charities Regulatory Authority was set up in October 2014 to regulate charities in the wake of scandals, the authority operates in the Charities Act 2009 to ensure accountability and the harbour trust with the public (Charities Regulatory Authority, 2015). However charities are still being impacted by the scandals and the spending cuts brought by the recession (Amárach, 2014).

Fundraising Approaches

Irish charities use a wide range of approaches for fundraising. 43.9% use events to fundraise, while 30.6% use direct debits and standing orders, just 22.7% use a web based approach at present (The Wheel, 2014). The main challenges to fundraising were cited as uncertain future/changing external environment (42.7%) and overly dependent on grant income (30%) (The Wheel, 2014).

Diversification Of Charity Approaches

Saunders (2012) talks about the diversification of charities from religion orientated to for-profit orientated, he identifies five forms of charity fundraising structures (p. 141). Firstly there is religion orientated, secondly there is business orientated, thirdly marketing orientated, fourthly consumer oriented and finally for-profit orientated (p. 141). Earlier models such as religion orientated, focused on a very simple fundraising structure. The public donate to a charity, the charity in turn then give money to the beneficiary. Such basic forms are still in use, for example a church gate collection. Business orientated fundraising is used where charities form bonds with key benefactors and this is treated as business relationship would be. The philanthropists expect the same type of performance from the charity as they would from a business; an example of this is the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation (Saunders, 2012, p143).

Saunders (2012) has said that charity fundraising structures have had to evolve and come to rely on more complex techniques (p. 146). One such technique is marketing orientated fundraising, whereby modern marketing techniques are used to raise funds

within charities, the same way they are used in for profit organisations (Saunders, 2012, p.143). One such relatively new technique is social media networking and social media charity campaigns, which will be discussed in detail later. Saunders (2012) calls the method by which charities market themselves directly to benefactors through online social media networking tools ePhilanthropy (p. 143). The third structure Saunders (2012) mentions is consumer oriented fundraising, an approach whereby consumers are shown how their consumption of goods or services could benefit charities, an example of this was the Product Red campaign. For the Product Red campaign, certain brands such as Adidas donated a percentage of the purchase price of certain products to raise money to fight HIV/AIDS (Saunders 2012, p145). The final approach is for profit fundraising. This approach has seen companies use social media tools and online payment tools to offer ways of fundraising, while charging a commission. The company “Just Giving” is an example of this (Saunders, 2012, p145)

The research by Saunders (2012) highlights the changes charities have gone through to keep up to date with a market driven world. It shows that complex new innovations have emerged in order to become competitive in the fundraising domain. Saunders (2012) has said that although some organisations still rely on the old structures; these have become less financially viable. The paper by Saunders maps the various approaches but does not speak about social media campaigns.

Irish Social Media Usage

Statistics from the CSO (2013) have shown that 82% of Irish households have access to the internet, with 78% of people that were surveyed having gone on line in the prior 3 months. From that 78%, 48% of people had gone online to use social media. 61% of internet users of all ages use the internet every day (CSO, 2013). Eircom (2014) undertook a survey and reported that there were over 2 million Smartphone users in Ireland and that 1.4 million have access to tablets. In total, 86% of all adults had access to a portable internet enabled device. As access to the internet becomes increasingly easy the power of social media is increasing.

Facebook is one of the most popular social networks in use today and as of 2013, Facebook had passed one billion users, of which 543 million accessed the site through their mobile phone. Jonathon Waddingham (2013) spoke about Facebook and how charities are now utilising its tools efficiently to generate the best value from charity campaigns. Waddingham is the product manager at “Just Giving”, the UK’s largest fundraising website; it gives charity supporters a platform to share their support and donations on Facebook. “Just Giving” have said that one share on Facebook encourages £1 to £18 in additional donations (Waddingham 2013, p.188). Waddingham (2013) feels that people do not like showing off how much they give to charity and therefore their platform shows the generosity as helping a friend rather than telling everyone how generous they are (p.188).

The site model of “Just Giving” is very similar to other social media charity campaign creations in that the interest is garnered from the act of sharing. Sharing if you have made a

donation, sharing if you have donated to a friend's campaign and sharing a video of yourself taking part in a fundraising event, the latter being the one that generates the most value per share. In the case of sharing material it would appear that, the greater the effort, the greater the response (Waddingham, 2013, p188). John Waddingham correctly predicted that Facebook was going to be an essential tool for non profit organisations looking forward; he says that the person just wants to help their friend. The current campaigns differ from the campaigns on "Just Giving" this in that helping a friend may not always be not be basis for sharing; this needs to be investigated further.

Social Media Charity Campaigns

2014 saw the beginning of social media being used large scale in Ireland, to share content in order to raise money for charity. The two main campaigns in 2014 were the No Makeup Selfie and the Ice Bucket Challenge. The No Makeup Selfie campaign was used to raise funds for cancer charities and promote cancer awareness. The social media user posted a picture of themselves on Facebook or other social media such as Instagram and Twitter without makeup and donated by text to the organisation, they then nominated their friends to take part in the campaign. The Ice Bucket challenge was used to raise funds for the Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association charity. Social media users posted videos of themselves on social media getting a bucket of ice water poured over their heads, and they then donated by text and nominated their friends to take part in the campaign/challenge.

These internet based campaigns were highly successful with reports claiming €550k was raised for the charity as a result of the No Makeup Selfie challenge and €350k for the charity

following the Ice Bucket Challenge (RTE, 2014). The internet has provided a direct line of communication to millions of people at a relatively low cost. This efficient low cost communication is vital to the non profit organisation (Young and Salmon 2002 as cited in Waters & Le Blanc Fenely 2103 p. 217).

Information Diffusion

Social media is allowing the wide scale diffusion or sharing of information. The sharing of that information has been researched at length and previous studies have suggested it could be due to popularity or homophily (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013, p. 218). Steiglitz & Dang-Xuan (2013) conducted a study proposing that the emotion of the message being put across increases the diffusion of the information, both positive and negative emotions. Their study also goes on to show that the emotion of the message not only increases the rate of diffusion, but also the speed of diffusion (p. 219). This study is based on analysis of political tweets. Political tweets may differ from charity campaigns as they may be more emotive and strongly worded. However charity campaigns can also be emotive and therefore this needs to be investigated as a possible motivator.

Virtual Stewardship

Virtual stewardship is involved with thanking participants for their support, in order to let supporters know they are appreciated and to foster a growing relationship (Waters & Leblanc Fenely, 2103, p.226). Waters & LeBlanc Fenely (2013) performed a study, in which they examined virtual stewardship and how despite the huge hype surrounding social media such as Facebook, there may still remain some issues around non profit organisations truly

committing to them (p. 216). They list the four dimensions of stewardship as reciprocity, responsibility, reporting and relationship nurturing. Reciprocity in the context of virtual stewardship holds that stakeholders are acknowledged and appreciated (Waters & LeBlanc Fenely, 2013, p.219). Responsibility includes the responsible organisational behaviour such as providing information on how donations will be used. Waters & LeBlanc Fenely (2013) explains reporting as openness and accountability, for example access to financial information and finally relationship nurturing was described as interaction with supporters.

They examined the websites and social media pages of charities in the Non Profit Times 100 and found that they were lacking in one of the key elements of successful internet communications – interactivity (Moris & Ogan 1996 as cited in Waters & LeBlanc Fenely, 2013, p. 218). In terms of stewardship the non profit organisations were using their organisations websites more than their official Facebook pages, to communicate and form a relationship with people.

However the online campaigns that came to fruition in 2014 do not seem to operate on this basis. There has been no effort to say how donations will be used. The recognition does not come directly from the charity; neither does the invitation to participate, once they have donated there is no effort to nurture the relationship. Despite this, the campaigns have taken off, why is this?

Self-Benefit and Other-Benefit

“The internet has unleashed the greatest mass exhibitionism in human history” (Samuelson as quoted in Saegner, Thomas & Wiggins, Johnson, 2013, p. 959). People who never had the opportunity for such a huge amount of attention are posting pictures and

videos on social media looking for attention. People are grabbing their 15 minutes of fame. The research of Saegner et al. (2013) mention how word of mouth always existed, but now it is being given a relatively new outlet. This outlet is social media and it has the possibility of spreading word of mouth worldwide in a matter of hours. Although the research of Saegner et al. (2013) focuses on products and brands, people are now spreading word of mouth about charity campaigns in much the same way. This previous research has dealt with consumers using word of mouth about products and brands to build identity. Research is needed on what motivates people to take part in the charity campaigns using photos and video sharing – a relatively new phenomenon on social media today.

White and Peloza (2009) carried out five experiments using the prediction that they believed self–benefit appeals get more support than other–benefit appeals in situations that highlight self image concerns (p. 109). They named these appeals after the two main types of marketing campaigns used by charities. One appeal that highlights the benefits egotistically (self–benefit) and the second appeal that highlight the benefits altruistically (other–benefit) (Fischer, Vanderbosch & Antia as cited in White & Peloza, 2009, p. 109). The result of their research shows that participants who were conscious of their self perception donated to other–benefit appeals when in a public situation. This research shows us that the person donating to charity wants to be perceived as altruistic rather than egotistic. While this research aims to show that the desire to project a positive image effects the reaction to various charity appeals, it does not explain how this new phenomenon could become so popular. Making a donation is an other–benefit action; the act of placing a video or picture online is perhaps of self benefit.

White & Peloza (2009) talk about how people are more concerned with what impression they give when they are in the public domain, they also feel they must explain themselves (p. 112). Could it be the case that the charity appeal is now being used as an explanation for self exhibition?

Sisco and McCorkindale (2013) conducted a study of how using social media such as Facebook and Twitter affect the creditability and transparency of cancer charity organisations (p. 288). Their findings indicated that the sites needed to be updated in a timely manner but that also that they need to communicate with their audience. Communication and dialogue on these sites increased the amount of transparency and credibility. However they found that one of the charities with the highest number of communications on their site, were lower in the rankings or number of “likes” (Sisco and McCorkindale, 2013, p297). This shows that despite high communication, if the site has not been promoted or shared in an efficient manner the efforts are not optimised.

Social media sites are free to use for these charities and – however the time to update them and monitor them costs money. This study has shown that putting together a social media page is not enough; individuals need to be engaged (Sisco and McCorkindale, 2013, p298). Therefore the successes of social media campaigns that invite the donor to share and therefore create a domino effect seem ideal in that they are low cost and generate income based on word of mouth.

Conclusion

There is a lot of research on charity appeals and campaigns. Social media and information diffusion has also been studied in great detail. However the motivations behind sharing content on social media for charity have yet to be investigated in detail. None of the articles researched for this literature review had done a qualitative research on people's perceptions or motivations in relation to social media charity campaigns.

Virtual stewardship as discussed by Waters & LeBlanc Fenely (2013) involves creating a relationship with the consumer as important yet doesn't explain how a campaign which creates no relationship can be so successful. Sisco and McCorkindale (2013) discuss how credibility and transparency of the charity affect perceptions, yet these campaigns have not displayed any attempt at transparency. The charity "Just Giving" see the act of sharing as the catalyst and the bigger the better. Saegner et al (2013) talk about word of mouth and sharing content as a form of self-expression. The research by Saegner et al relates to consumer products and services. All of these studies talk about the elements that make online communication successful for organisations. None of these studies discuss the motivations behind creating and sharing content on social media, in the name of charity. It is intended that research will deal with this gap in the literature.

Research Question

The research question for this study will be:

What are the motivations for social media users in Ireland, to take part in social media charity campaigns?

Methodology

The aim of this research was to gauge people's perceptions of recent successful social media charity campaigns in order to establish what motivated people to take part. This was done in an effort to pinpoint the attraction to these campaigns and how they can benefit charities going forward.

Apparatus

A schedule of semi structured interview questions was used to gather information on the various aspects of social media charity campaign participation. A voice recording application on a Motorola Smart Phone was used to in order the capture every word of the conversation in the interviews and to enable transcription at a later date. This method had the added benefit that the data was on the interviewer's person at all times and kept confidential. The phone was password protected. Headphones were used to listen to the interviews and transcribe them verbatim into a Microsoft Word document which was then copied to the NVivo 10 software for analysis. Consent forms were provided to the participants in advance and the interview process and topics were discussed to put the participant's minds at ease in relation to confidentiality.

Research Design

Qualitative analysis was used for this research in order to find rich data in relation to why participants were prompted to participate in the social media charity campaigns. Qualitative analysis was chosen in order to find out the subjective experience of the participants being interviewed, rather than a set of data about who took part, placed within broad categories of predefined reasons (Flick, 2009, p24). The quantitative results are of no consequence to this study as they would provide a generalized set of results as opposed to a set of in depth data which could be analysed and grouped into common themes. The qualitative method allowed for more than a collection of data to emerge that could be divided into statistics; it allowed answers to emerge that could be interpreted within the context of the conversation. Gerson and Horowitz (2002, p.199) describe this as not only being concerned with the facts, but also with the ways people construct, interpret and give meaning to these experiences.

One to one interviews were conducted in a private office with the participants. The initial questions were unstructured so as to avoid influencing the direction of the interview and to relax the interviewee into the conversation. According to Flick (2009, p.151) initial unstructured questions ensure that the wrong type of question is not asked too early therefore preventing participants from giving their own views. Encouraging this type of open expression allowed for unexpected themes to emerge and allowed dialogue to flow freely. The literature review provided a framework for some of the questions asked about participation in campaigns and spreading online word of mouth. Through reference to the

themes of the literature review, questions could be formulated about what was already known in order to elicit any new information or opinions to the contrary.

The Participants

Six participants were chosen to take part. All were office employees working in a bank. Three were male and three were female. The gender was divided on a fifty-fifty basis to gauge perceptions from both sides. For confidentiality this study will refer to the participants as P.1, P.2, P.3, P.4, P.5 and P.6 in order to represent participant one to six. The participants were recruited through an email request and none of the participants were known to the interviewer on a personal level. All of the participants used social media but just four out of the six had taken part in the social media charity campaigns. As this research project sets out to gauge the perceptions of people about the campaigns it was also relevant to talk to those who had observed the campaigns but opted not to take part in these, and their reasons for this decision.

The participants were chosen using convenience sampling. This method was used as the interviewer had limited access to other groups of potential participants that were not personally known to them. Convenience sampling allowed the selection of participants who were easiest to access under given conditions (Patton as quoted in Flick 2009, p.124). As the interviewer had already given the general topic of the study to the participants and asked for those who were active on social media, the interviewer had ensured they were “good informants” and had the necessary knowledge to answer the questions in the interview

(Morse as cited in Flick, 2009, p123.) This selection process may have caused a limitation as the participants all work in the financial services industry which may have caused a narrowing of results.

Procedure

On initial contact from the participants their contact details were saved to a password protected smartphone. Suitable interview times were suggested and agreed upon which were after working hours. The interviews were conducted within a two week period. This ensured that there were no time constraints with the interviews. An empty office was secured for these interviews to allow privacy and comfort and convenience for the participants in that they did not have to travel. All participants were provided with refreshments of coffee and cake as a thank you for their participation and to create a relaxed, informal atmosphere. Prior to commencement of the interview the participants were debriefed on the topics that would be covered, they were informed on how the interviews would be recorded and then analysed.

The participants were offered a copy of the study on completion. At this point the consent form was given to participants and they were informed that they had the option to consent or not to. Finally the interviewer's contact details were provided to the participant's so that they could contact the interviewer after the interviews if they had any concerns or wanted to withdraw their participation. The interviews were recorded on a Dictaphone application for a Motorola Smartphone. The interviews consisted of 15 questions. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and saved to a word document on a password protected USB key. The interviews were then transferred to the NVivo 10 software system.

Transcribing the interviews allowed the interviewer to get an in-depth feel for the content of the interviews. Nvivo 10 was highly effective in grouping together the common themes into distinguishable categories.

Data Analysis

The data from the interviews was analysed using thematic analysis. The data from the interviews was put in to the Nvivo 10 software system which is used for qualitative research. The data from the interviews was then coded and these codes were grouped together to create themes. The themes could then be analysed and discussed. The coding of the data allowed for interaction with the data and as the coding progressed codes could be changed as ideas developed. This was done to derive a “bottom up” approach to getting data from the interviews and allowing themes and patterns to emerge that provided a way of organising the data to produce findings (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, p.21).

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were identified for this research project and carefully adhered to in accordance with the ethical guidelines set out by Dublin Business School. The ethical considerations were informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, the participants had the right to withdraw participation at any time and the participants were protected from harm. Informed consent was a priority to ensure that the participants were protected, their privacy was not invaded and the participants were not misled about the aims of the research (Flick, 2009, p37). Consent forms were provided at the beginning and a full debriefing was performed. Confidentiality was assured and the interviews were saved as

numbers P.1 to P.6 and the interviewees were referred to in the same manor, therefore ensuring they were not identifiable in the research.

The participants were informed that they could cease participation at any time. The participants were protected from harm in that they were given what Murphy and Dingwall as quoted in Flick (2009, p37) describe as self – determination, their values and decisions were respected and not questioned in any way. Anonymity was assured by saving the interviews under numbers and not disclosing and identifying data in the transcription process or the research report.

Findings

Through the process of thematic analysis four main themes emerged – charity involvement, motivation to participate, benefit to the charity, and time for participation. The theme of charity involvement emerged from data that included which previous charities the interviewee had been involved with. It also included what type of charities they were supporting at the moment or would be interested in. The theme also included the type of charity involvement the participants would prefer, for example if they would prefer to give their time or money to a cause or organisation. The second theme was motivation to participate. The theme emerged from responses to questions about why the interviewee took part. It also included data about why the interviewee felt other people took part. Included in the theme were answers to questions about family and friends that took part.

The third theme to emerge was benefit to the charity. This emerged from questioning about the benefit the interviewees perceived for the charities. Data for this theme also emerged from questioning about the interviewees opinions on the campaigns and also on their effectiveness. The final theme to emerge was time for participation. This theme developed as participants gave information about how long it took them to make the move and participate and how they saw the campaigns spread.

Charity Involvement

One of the themes to emerge was the preferred type of charity involvement the participants desired. When asked about what kind of involvement they preferred, the interviewees mostly preferred hands on or voluntary approach as opposed to simply giving a donation. When asked about the type of involvement the following answers were given:

"I would like to get physically involved. I feel bad that I don't. Every time I pass by somebody on the street, who looks for change or when I see the people like the last couple of nights. I don't know if they're in the Simon Community, handing out sandwiches to people," (P.1)

"I've done voluntary work, teaching and so on", (P.3)

"I applied to volunteer overseas when I was in UCD but I didn't get it", (P.4)

Most of the participants mentioned charities that are quite popular on a national scale and that have an online presence when asked about charities they have been involved with before. None mentioned the charities in the social media campaigns:

"I have donated to Barnardos and Temple Street", (P.2)

"I have worked with Saint Vincent De Paul on a voluntary basis", (P.5)

Only one of the six participants mentioned a local charity that they supported:

“There’s one there in Bray, a local one that I’m doing a bit of work for, Bray Lakers. And they basically work with people who are mentally handicapped, you know. So I do that”, (P.3)

Participant 3 was the only participant that was involved in hands on charity work at the time and participant three was one of the participants that preferred to observe the social media charity campaigns rather than get involved.

The answers about charity involvement demonstrate that there is an element of choice involved in the participants preferred charity involvement. Most of them would prefer to give their time than to respond to a request for donation. Participant 4 expressed their dislike for being approached on the street by charity fundraisers and asked to sign up for a direct debit:

“I don’t mind throwing an odd two euro to someone in the street with a bucket, that kind of thing. But I hate the whole, I know everybody does, but when they come up and they’re like, do you have a moment there? I don’t get involved in anything like that”, (P.4)

Motivation to participate

An element of peer pressure emerged when participants were asked about their involvement in the social media charity campaigns. Participant 4 felt pressure to get involved but also seemed to expect others to get involved in the same way:

“I think there was definitely an aspect of peer pressure because there was loads of people on my Facebook who were like, come on you’ve been nominated and I even did it with my brother two or three times and I was like I’ve nominated ya, do it. Some people just had an opposition to it and were I’m not doing it, I’m not doing the No Make Up or whatever and you’d just be thinking Cop On, you know”,(P.4)

Participant 1 also felt the pressure from being urged to take part:

“I wouldn’t say social pressure; maybe pressure is probably too strong a word but certainly there was a little bit of a nudge. I certainly felt the nudge”, (P.1)

All participants said that it was good to take part for the benefit of the charity but another theme that emerged was that of just taking part in something fun. This was expressed by participant 2 and participant 5:

“There was a huge element of the Ice Bucket challenge where it was kind of the cool thing to do but if it made people donate then no harm”, (P.2)

“It can be for the craic of doing it”, (P.5)

Two of the participants didn’t take part. One of these participants felt that he was not outgoing enough:

“Partially from shyness but partially because I hate the cold!”,(P.1)

The other participant had this view on it when asked why they felt that people took part. This participant also had strong views on charities in general:

“Shameless exhibitionism really. I’m probably really uncharitable. They don’t tend to kind of affect me really. But if someone was debating the health service or something, on general terms, that would catch my attention. To be quite honest with you really, there shouldn’t be a need for all these charities, there should be a proper health service but that’s another days’ work, that’s kind of where I’m coming from”,
(P.3)

Participation in the social media campaigns was not confined to a certain group. Although participant 1 did feel that it was more extrovert people that took part, the other participants felt that it was across the board with every type of person getting involved, even those they wouldn’t have expected too, some hadn’t expected to get involved themselves.

When asked if they were surprised that certain people had taken part participant 2 responded:

“Yeah. Every range, yeah”, (P.2)

When asked about being surprised about anyone surprising taking part participants 4 and 5 had the following answers:

“I think we’re living in an age now where there’s so much nonsense out there on social media and so much messing around that it’s kind of nice to see, you know, even like my Mum doing the No Makeup Selfie. I didn’t think that people like that would get involved but yet it did kind of bring people out and I think that was all”, (P.4)

“My sister did it in the shower with both of my parents”, (P.5)

Benefit to the charity

The third theme to emerge was the perceived benefit to the charity. While asking what the participants felt was the perceived benefit to the charity, they were also asked if they were aware of the charities the campaigns benefitted and what they had learned from these campaigns. They were also asked about their perceptions of the campaigns and the charities to see if this was of benefit to the charity.

When asked about the perceived benefit to the charity, the answers were divided between money and awareness:

“I suppose the social media raised awareness”, (P.6)

“There was a massive inflow of donations during the time of the nominations or the campaigns that they were running”, (P.2)

“Just awareness I suppose. I know a lot of people are familiar with the Irish Cancer Society and all the rest,” (P.4)

In order to gauge if the campaigns did in fact raise awareness the participants were asked to recall the causes that benefited from the campaigns and in the most part could not recall what the charity or the cause was:

“Was it for autism or something like that”, (P.5)?

“I haven’t the faintest idea. I might have known at the time but I wouldn’t know now”, (P.3)

“They are.... Is it auto..... it’s like a form of a... I can’t even think what it is..... “, (P.2)

When asked about their opinions on the campaigns the overall feeling was one of positivity and that they were a great idea. Participants found them to be innovative and a great way to raise funds:

“I thought it was really innovative. I’d seen the makeup one but I hadn’t seen anything like this. It’s very sudden direct, visual and it involves people. And it got a lot of money as well so I thought it was very clever.” (P.5)

The views of the participants demonstrated that it was a great idea to raise money but did not mention the aspect of raising awareness:

"If it gets more money in the bucket, that's all that matters. Ideally you'd like if the people who are doing it know what it's for," (P.1)

"I just think it's a good idea to incentivise people to donate. People generally don't think about it until something is put out there," (P.2)

Time for participation

The final theme to emerge was that all of the participants were late adopters to the campaigns. They waited and watched while others participated and didn't rush into it:

"I think the Ice bucket challenge took a bit of convincing!", (P.6)

"No I took a little bit of time to do it", (P.2)

The timeframe for most was a minimum of a week until they became encouraged by the participation of others and being nominated to take part,

"It was kind of like a disease, it went very rapidly around", (P.5)

While all of the participants used social media on their laptops and phones, most of them accessed social media the majority of the time on their smart phones.

"Mainly on mobile, on my iPhone", (P.6)

Discussion

Summary

This paper looks at social media charity campaigns. The popularity of the campaigns was unprecedented with figures of €550k and €350K raised for the No Make-up Selfie and Ice Bucket Challenge respectively (RTE, 2014). These campaigns are a vital life-line to struggling charities who have suffered during the recession as result of scandals emerging in the media, a drop in donations and cuts in government funding (The Wheel, 2014). It is important to harness the power of these campaigns to generate much needed funds. The aim of this research was to find out why people took part, how they perceived the campaigns and if their previous charity involvement affected their choices. The research gauged if the campaigns raised awareness of the causes and if the involvement mirrored the type of causes the participants preferred or the type of involvement the participants preferred.

Waters & LeBlanc Fenely (2013) spoke about virtual stewardship and how the elements of reciprocity, responsibility, reporting and relationship nurturing, In short these elements mean that charities form a bond with the donor and are transparent about how funds are used. Waters & LeBlanc Fenely (2013) mention interactivity as an important element of success. White and Pelosa (2009) carried out experiments which showed that people prefer to get involved in other-benefit appeals, when in the public domain. Previous research suggested that people need to be engaged in order to get involved (Cisco and

McCorkingdale, 2013, p298), they also found that their sites needed to be updated and they needed to communicate in a timely manner. Saegner et al. (2013) talk about the mass rise of “exhibitionism” online and social media being used a new form of word of mouth. The previous research suggests that there are elements such as engagement from the charity and interactively at play that make a person get involved. The online social media campaigns did not have an element of interactivity and there was not relationship fostered from the charity, so why did people get involved?

The research question is:

What are the motivations for social media users in Ireland, to take part in social media charity campaigns?

A qualitative approach was taken to this research with six people interviewed; the qualitative approach was taken in order to find rich data about their motivations as opposed to statistics. The participants were six office workers and chosen using convenience sampling. The interviews were recorded and thematic analysis was used to interpret the interviews. During this analysis the following themes emerged:

1. Charity involvement
2. Motivation to participate
3. Benefit to the charity
4. Time for participation

Comparing and Contrasting

Charity Involvement

Charity involvement emerged as a theme within the research as the questions attempted to gauge if the type of charity involvement the interviewees preferred or had been involved with before, affected their decision to take part in the social media campaigns. Most of the participants said they favored a more hands on approach such as volunteering. This was unusual as the majority of them had taken part in the social media campaigns. None of them were currently involved with volunteering for charities. Looking at the research of White and Peloza (2009), could it be that the interviewees were viewing the social media campaigns as having an element of self-benefit? Therefore when asked they said they preferred volunteering, a more typical other-benefit activity. This could be in an attempt to appear altruistic rather than egotistical.

When mentioning charities they had been involved with before, the participants did not mention any of the charities from the social media campaigns. They did mention national prominent charities, with only one person mentioning a local one. Maybe this is because they do support these or maybe they named a prominent one that everyone would know so that they would appear altruistic in the public domain (White and Peloza, 2009, p112).

From the interviews it was clear to see that the participant's previous charity involvement had no link to their participation the social media charity campaigns. Their preferable type of charity involvement did not seem to influence their participation either.

Motivation to participate

John Waddingham, the product manager at the sharing platform "Just Giving" spoke about the motivation to participate in online campaigns. The website allows people to contribute to their friends charity campaigns and then to share them, with the motivation being to help a friend (Waddingham, 2013, p188). The findings in the current research had parts that agreed and disagreed with Waddingham's views. The social media campaigns worked in a similar way to site "Just Giving" as the interest was garnered from the act of sharing and similar to what Waddingham said the greater the effort the greater the response (Waddingham, 2013, p188). Participants were keen to recall memorable videos they had seen as part of the campaign.

The current research showed that peer pressure was a motivator to participate; this factor had not come up in the research. The participants felt social pressure and wanted to fit in. One of the participants also agreed with Samuelson (as quoted in Saegner, Thomas & Wiggins, Johnson, 2013), that the internet was unleashing mass exhibitionism and this was a factor for participation.

Benefit to the Charity

In order to understand why the participants took part in the campaign, they were asked about the perceived benefit to the charity. Awareness came up as a benefit for the charity. This was mentioned in the research by respondents, however on further questioning it became apparent that the respondents had very little recollection of the charity or the cause they had supported. This corresponds to the research of Sisco and McCorkindale (2013) who investigated the number of likes on various charity Facebook pages. They found that one of the sites with the highest amount of communication on their site had one of the lower numbers of likes (Sisco and McCorkindale, 2013, p297). This shows that the one off act of sharing did not increase awareness of the charity or the cause and that people need to be engaged (Sisco and McCorkindale, 2013, p298).

Walters & LeBlanc Fenely (2013), talk about virtual stewardship and the dimensions of reciprocity, responsibility, reporting and relationship nurturing. These elements were not a favour in the social media charity campaigns. The participants had no relationship with the charity after the donation and the relationship was not nurtured. Therefore it is not surprising that no awareness of the causes was created.

Time for participation

The time for participation differed within the group but none of the participants did so straight away and were motivated by seeing others take part and then being nominated. The message behind these campaigns is quite emotive, they were about causes such as breast cancer and motor neurone disease, the fact that the participants took a while to be convinced goes against the theory of Steiglitz & Dang-Xuan (2013) who felt that the stronger the message that was put across, the quicker the rate of diffusion.

Most participants took part on their phone, this ease of access made the campaign easy to get involved in.

The research differs from existing literature for a number of reasons. The social media charity campaigns are relatively new phenomena and usage of social media is on the rise as is the use of mobile internet technologies. Research has tended to focus on the use of the internet to promote products and services. The first social media charity campaign to gain popularity was the No Make-Up Selfie in March (2014) so this type of fundraising is relatively new and there was not much available research on social media fundraising for charities. Rather the research available was about the websites of charities and how they interact on their social media pages.

In conclusion while previous research has discussed how organisations can effectively spread word of mouth, this research has addressed a gap in the knowledge about the motivation to get involved in social media charity campaigns and to share them. It has found that the elements of virtual stewardship of reciprocity, responsibility, reporting and relationship nurturing do not apply to these campaigns (Waters and LeBlanc Fenely, 2013, p. 216). The research agreed with John Waddington of "Just Giving", that the bigger the effort, the more that people shared (Waddingham, 2013, p188). The causes were emotive which previous research would suggest causes a quicker rate of information diffusion (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013, p. 218). This research showed that the participants waited a while before getting involved, they admitted to bowing under peer pressure to take part, rather than being spurred on by the cause.

Conclusion

Limitations

The use of convenience sampling for this study limited the type of people that were involved and may not form a true representation of the general public on the matter. A larger sample size would have been more representative of the subject matter. Thematic analysis was used for this research; the grouping together of themes is performed by the researcher. The researcher is tasked with picking out what is significant. This may have resulted in bias as the researcher chose what they felt is relevant. Six interviews were conducted with the six participants. This was a small sample size and may have resulted in under-coverage of the issues. The interviews were thirty minutes apiece due participants taking time out of their day to assist the interviewer. If time was not a constraint the interviews may have drawn richer data from the participants.

The interview process was time consuming a lot of information was gathered but due to the semi structured nature of the questioning; the data was irrelevant and could not be used. This meant some time was wasted. There was no budget for these interviews, if there had been a budget it may have been possible to conduct them outside of the work space, resulting in a more relaxed atmosphere for the participants.

The final limitation was the subject matter of giving to charity. The face to face interview put the interviewees on the spot about their attitudes towards giving and helping. There

may have been a desire not to come across as a person who is disinterested in the causes or in charity giving.

Recommendations for further research

If further research on this study were to be undertaken a larger sample size should be incorporated in order to gauge a broader view of the population. The face to face interview may not be as effective as a method whereby the participant could answer anonymously and answer as honestly as they can. It is suggested that an experimental approach could be undertaken online to gauge reactions to different approaches. This could be done on an anonymous basis. This could also be offered to the participant at a time that suits them, so that time constraints are eliminated.

The research has shown why the participants took part. Further study should concentrate on those that do not get involved in these campaigns in order to formulate a means of motivating them in the future. The available literature focuses on what makes a successful communication with the public. Further research should look at what is encouraging people to opt out. This should all be done to benefit the charity organisation's that depend on the donations of the public to keep their services operating for those who need them. Social media is a cheap tool for cash pressed charities, this research will be beneficial in harnessing the power of social media for the charities benefit while hopefully reducing the budget spent of more costly fundraising methods.

In conclusion, the study set out to gauge the motivations of people to take part in social media charity campaigns. Existing literature focused on information diffusion on the internet, virtual stewardship and self-benefit versus other benefit appeals. There was a gap in the research about motivations to get involved in social media campaigns. This gap was addressed and motivations emerged, such as peer pressure and seeing others become involved. This research was limited in that the interviewees were asked to be honest about a sensitive issue such as their generosity. The sample size was limited as was the budget. None the less the research showed that there are motivations involved that have not been discussed. The suggestion has been made to perform experimental research to gauge people's reactions anonymously, therefore extracting more accurate results.

References

- Amárach Research (2014). *Irish Charities Research March 2014*. Retrieved 05 December 2014, from <http://www.slideshare.net/amarach/irish-charities-research-march-2014>
- Charities Regulatory Authority, (2014). *Charities Regulatory Authority*. Retrieved 10 December 2014, from <http://www.charitiesregulatoryauthority.ie/Website/CRA/CRAweb.nsf/page/index-en>
- Charities Regulatory Authority.ie, (2015). *Our Statutory Function*. Retrieved 8 April 2015, from <https://www.charitiesregulatoryauthority.ie/Website/CRA/CRAweb.nsf/page/aboutus-statutoryfunction>
- Central Statistics Office (2014). *CSO Quicktables: Households with computer by household composition by year*. Retrieved 10 December 2014, from <http://www.cso.ie/multiquicktables/quickTables.aspx?id=ica25>
- Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks [etc.]: Sage.
- Donoghue, F., O'Regan, A., Mcgee, S., & Donovan, A. (2007). *A Report on the Practice and Scale of Charitable Fundraising from the Public in Ireland*. Dublin: The Centre for Non Profit Management.
- Eircom.net,. (2014). *Digital commuting and 'Sharenting': How we live now | Press Releases | Eircom Press Room*. Retrieved 18 December 2014, from http://pressroom.eircom.net/press_releases/article/Digital_commuting_and_Sharenting_How_we_live_now/
- Flick, U. (2009). *An introduction to qualitative research*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Fussell Sisco, H., & McCorkindale, T. (2013). Communicating 'pink': an analysis of the communication strategies, transparency, and credibility of breast cancer social media sites. *International Journal Of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 18(4), 287.

Gerson, K., Horowitz, R. (2002). Observation and Interviewing. In May, T., (Ed.), *Qualitative research in action* (pp. 199 - 244). London: SAGE.

Reed, A., Aquino, K., & Levy, E. (2007). Moral Identity and Judgments of Charitable Behaviors. *Journal Of Marketing*, 71(1), 178-193.

RTE (2014). *Ice Bucket Challenge*. Retrieved 01 December 2014, from <http://www.rte.ie/news/2014/0322/603917-no-makeup-selfie/>

RTE.ie (2014). 'No MakeUp Selfie' trend growing with €550k raised. Retrieved 01 December 2014, from <http://www.rte.ie/news/2014/0322/603917-no-makeup-selfie/>

Saenger, C., Thomas, V. L., & Johnson, J. W. (2013). Consumption-Focused Self-Expression Word of Mouth: A New Scale and Its Role in Consumer Research. *Psychology & Marketing*, 30(11), 959.

Saunders, S. G. (2013). The diversification of charities: From religion-oriented to for-profit-oriented fundraising. *International Journal Of Nonprofit And Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 18(2), 141-148. doi:10.1002/nvsm.1459

Spaulding, T. J. (2010). How can virtual communities create value for business?. *Electronic Commerce Research And Applications*, 9(Special Issue: Social Networks and Web 2.0), 38-49.

Stieglitz, S., & Dang-Xuan, L. (2013). Emotions and Information Diffusion in Social Media-Sentiment of Microblogs and Sharing Behavior. *Journal Of Management Information Systems*, 29(4), 217-248.

The Wheel, (2014). *A Portrait Of Irelands Non Profit Sector*. Dublin: Crowe Horwath. Retrieved 9 April from <https://www.wheel.ie/sites/default/files/Portrait%20of%20the%20Non-Profit%20Sector%202014%20UpdateJun2014.pdf>

The Wheel (2014). *Two thirds of charities have taken steps to increase transparency and strengthen governance, conference hears*. Retrieved 18 December 2014, from

<http://www.wheel.ie/content/two-thirds-charities-have-taken-steps-increase-transparency-strengthen-governance-conference>

Waddingham, J. (2013). The future of Facebook fundraising. *International Journal Of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 18(3), 187-191.

Waters, R. D., & Feneley, K. L. (2013). Virtual stewardship in the age of new media: Have non-profit organizations' moved beyond Web 1.0 strategies?. *International Journal Of Nonprofit And Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 18(3), 216-230.

White, K., & Peloza, J. (2009). Self-benefit versus other-benefit marketing appeals: their effectiveness in generating charitable support. *Journal of Marketing*, (4). 109

Appendix 1: Consent Form



Social Media Charity Campaigns: A Study On The Motivation To Participate

My name is Siobhan Slattery and I am conducting research that explores the motivations to participate in social media charity campaigns.

You are invited to take part in this study and participation involves an interview that will take roughly 40 minutes.

Participation is completely voluntary and so you are not obliged to take part. If you do take part and any of the questions do raise difficult feelings, you do not have to answer that question, and/or continue with the interview.

Participation is confidential. If, after the interview has been completed, you wish to have your interview removed from the study this can be accommodated up until the research study is published.

The interview, and all associated documentation, will be securely stored and stored on a password protected computer.

It is important that you understand that by completing and submitting the interview that you are consenting to participate in the study.

Should you require any further information about the research, please contact

Siobhan Slattery 1554295@mydbs.ie or Niall Hanlon Niall.Hanlon@dbs.ie

Thank you for participating in this study.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2: Interview Schedule

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your social media usage
2. How long have been using social media
3. How do you access social media
4. How or Why do you use social media, what benefits does it have for you
5. Have you/your friends taken part in social media charity campaigns
6. How did you find out about the campaign
7. Did you participate straight away (or wait a while)
8. What type of participation did it involve, how did you get involved
9. How do you think the charity benefited from the campaign
10. What campaigns stood out for you
11. Have you or your family/friends been affected by any of the causes
12. Was there something in particular that attracted you to the campaign
13. What new information, if any, did you learn about the charities
14. Have you been in contact with the charities since, or the charity with you
15. Do you now participate or have you participated in the past in any other type of charities, be it monetary donations or giving your time. Tell me about this

