

A CASE STUDY ON MARKETING ACTIVITIES OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN VIRTUAL WORLD: SECOND LIFE - LIVE AND LEARN IN KENYA "FEED A SMILE" EXAMPLE*

KÂR AMACI GÜTMİYEN KURULUŞLARIN SANAL DÜNYADAKİ PAZARLAMA FAALİYETLERİ ÜZERİNE BİR ÖRNEK OLAY: SECOND LIFE- LIVE AND LEARN IN KENYA "FEED A SMILE" ÖRNEĞİ

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Abstract

The development of technology results in radical changes to the social life and business world. One of the trends in technological development is the creation and dissemination of digital and virtual worlds. Second Life, as one of the most popular virtual worlds of our time continues to support all types of organizations for new market opportunities. Given the complexity of the nonprofit marketplace and the existence of many organizations competing for a limited pool of support, virtual worlds become more crucial for nonprofit organizations. The effective nonprofit organizations found ways to expand its presence with the support provided by virtual worlds. The purpose of this study is to determine how and to what extent new digital platforms like virtual worlds are used by nonprofit organizations for marketing activities. For the report, a prominent and relatively successful virtual world (Second Life) and in this life "Live and Learn in Kenya" was selected as a case study to focus on. In-depth interviews were conducted to collect data in this study. Findings suggest that virtual world, i.e. Second Life, provides new funding opportunities and competitive advantage to nonprofits and it will become increasingly important to the activities of marketing in the future.

Key words: nonprofit organization, virtual world, marketing.

Özet

Teknolojinin gelişmesi, sosyal hayatta ve iş dünyasında köklü değişikliklere neden olmaktadır. Teknolojik gelişimdeki trendlerden biri de dijital ve sanal dünyaların yaratılması ve yaygınlaştırılmasıdır. Second Life, günümüzde en popüler sanal dünyalarından biri olarak yeni pazar fırsatları için her farklı türlerdeki girişim ve kurumları desteklemeye devam ediyor. Kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşların içinde bulunduğu pazar karmaşıklığı ve sınırlı bir destek havuzu için rekabet eden birçok kuruluşun varlığı göz önüne alındığında, sanal dünyalar kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşlar için daha önemli hale gelmektedir. Yenilikçi kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşlar, sanal dünyaların sağladığı destekle varlığını genişletmenin yollarını buldular. Bu çalışmanın amacı, sanal dünyalar gibi yeni dijital platformların kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşlar tarafından pazarlama faaliyetleri için nasıl ve ne ölçüde kullanıldığını belirlemektir. Bu araştırma için popüler ve ekonomik olarak ilgi çeken dünyalardan "Second Life" platformu, bu dünyanın içinden odaklanılacak vaka çalışması olarak ise "Live and Learn in Kenya" seçilmiştir. Bu çalışmada veri toplamak için derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bulgular, sanal dünyaların (ör: Second Life), kâr amacı gütmeyen kuruluşlara yeni finansman fırsatları ve rekabet avantajı sağladığını ve gelecekte pazarlama faaliyetleri için giderek daha önemli hale geleceğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: kar amacı gütmeyen kurumlar, sanal dünya, pazarlama.

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INTRODUCTION

Other than the state, nonprofit organisations are one of the many forms of organizations that work for the welfare of society and for social purposes. A nonprofit organization is an organization that aims to positively improve the lives of people, and these organizations do not take any financial gain or profit from individuals by doing so (Nielsen, 1980: 325). Although their primary goal is not to profit, these organizations also have to make a profit in order to maintain their existence and services. Unfortunately, there are many nonprofits competing to take advantage of the limited support pool in the complex market environment (Sargeant and Shang, 2010:126).

To thrive and make their contribution to society viable, these organisations have to unwittingly contend with their rivals. In today's cultures, nonprofit organizations have acquired a very important position and have been embraced by the societies of today by doing more and more for society. The size of the non-profit organization sector doubles every decade and stands out as the proportionally fastest growing sector (Sargeant and Shang, 2010: 15). However, nonprofits often appear to have problems managing and implementing their marketing campaigns. Internet and technology-based digital environments offer less costly opportunities to spread awareness and increase participation in non-profit organizations (Parker et al., 2016: 101). This study aims to show how alternative technological platforms such as Second Life can be beneficially used in finding resources, volunteer workers and donors for nonprofits.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Nonprofit Organization

Nonprofit organizations conduct their activities in order to solve some social problems and to provide some social benefits to the society. Primary purpose of these organizations is providing various benefits and saturations to their target audience and also maximize their saturation level rather than to make a profit. Nonprofit organizations or, in other words, civil society institutions are emerging as a powerful sector with their unique dynamic structures and characteristics all around the world. Over the years, very different concept seems to be used in literature in naming these institutions. The most commonly used terms are: nonprofit organizations, voluntary sector/organizations, not-for-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations, charitable organizations, independent sector, third sector, social movements, and tax-exempt organizations (Sargeant and Shang, 2010: 4).

However, the most commonly used concept is the “nonprofit organization” has been defined by many scholars in the literature. Nonprofit organizations are based on a beautiful thought that is helping others without expecting any material return, and also contains social solidarity in their activities. Historically, the civil society institutions, or nonprofit organizations showed up as a result of the failure of government and business to provide particular social needs of the society (Kotler and Murray, 1975: 468). Nonprofit organizations (NPO) can also be classified in many different aims, areas, levels and types. These organizations can operate in a wide range of fields ranging from healthcare to education, human rights to sustainable

development, crisis management to diplomacy, animal rights to child abuse (Uslu and Marangoz, 2008: 110). United Nations has adopted an approach consisting of 12 basic categories about classification of nonprofit organizations as follows (United State Publications, 2003: 31):

1. Culture and recreation,
2. Education and research,
3. Health,
4. Social services,
5. Environment,
6. Development and housing,
7. Law, advocacy and politics,
8. Philanthropic intermediaries and voluntarism promotion,
9. International,
10. Religion,
11. Business and professional associations, unions,
12. Not elsewhere classified.

According to "Giving USA 2018" report, religion is the major subsector to both donate and receive the largest amount of charitable gifts than any other subsectors in 2017. However, giving to religion declined in 2018 after six years of slow growth. There has been an increase in donations to International affairs, environmental and animal organizations (<https://givingusa.org>, 2017;2018;2019). In order for the social structure to function properly; solving social, cultural, environmental problems and providing religion, education, health, and political services is an unavoidable necessity. At this point, the benefits of nonprofit organizations are understood and the need for them is increasing. The number of public charities reporting to the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) increased from 243,430 in 1998 to 420,187 in 2008, by %73 percent (Sargeant and Shang, 2010: 17). According to Kotler (1979), marketing is an important topic of growing interest to nonprofit organization managers as their organizations confront new, complex marketplace problems. Nonprofit organizations can introduce marketing in a number of ways, such as appointing a marketing committee or task force, hiring an advertising company or marketing research firm, hiring a marketing advisor, or appointing a marketing director.

Nonprofit Organizations and Marketing

Marketing is the process of creating and providing value in order to be able to successfully execute customer relations in such a way that it cares the benefit of the organization and also its stakeholders (Kotler and Keller, 2009:45). Marketing focuses on customer relationships and the concept of "value" which is the cornerstone of these relations. According to Bennett (2014), nonprofit organizations often lack the funding to implement traditional marketing strategies for fundraising; however, digital marketing strategies offer a cost effective alternative (Basco, 2018:1).

Kotler and Levy brought forward that the marketing concept is a concept that should be used for nonprofit organizations like many other institutions in 1950 (Meler, 2003:

1788). Its development was much slower than in the private sector. The first practices were taking place in education and health sector and then spread slowly. Also, the concept of nonprofit organization's marketing was first proposed by Kotler and Zaltman. According to them, it is necessary to design and implement programs about product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and market research for these organizations which established for social benefit (Thackeray, 2000: 30).

Today's marketing approach is customer-focused and maintains that "meeting customer needs and wants" should be seen as a primary goal. Nonprofit organizations can take a proactive approach by gathering information about their clients and competitors with this contemporary marketing approach (German, 1997:3).

Internet technologies offer new product or service opportunities, new promotion strategies, new pricing strategies as well as new placing options for organizations. The Internet ensures that people come together, regardless of location and time constraints. The "Virtual Worlds" provide many conveniences for organizations to interact with customers throughout the entire new product or service development, promotion process and distribution channels. In the ongoing part of the study, the concept of virtual worlds will be explained in detail which offers a range of less costly possibilities to spread awareness and increase participation for nonprofit organizations.

The New Marketing Platform "Virtual Worlds"

The internet and developing technology offers countless opportunities for firms to conduct their businesses. The unique features of the new digital technologies provide countless advantages for businesses such as speed, convenience, interactivity, publicity and worldwide coverage. Firms can use these new technological advancements for business such as marketing, manufacturing, purchasing, and selling. These new environments help firms to collect, categorize and use information which is needed for satisfaction with their customers. Thus, the internet and developing technology promote firms to communicate with their customers in order to understand their target market better. The other opportunity is a global marketplace where commercial transactions can be conducted 7 days a week and 24 hours a day. The global internet population was 1,129 million in 2007, and it reached 4,383,810,342 billion in March 31, 2019 (Internet World Stats, 2019).

Technological and cultural transformations affect the emergence of new forms of communication types and community. Communications in the initial iteration of the World Wide Web, or Web 1.0, was predominantly one sided. After Web 2.0, communication became much more interactive. The technology of Web 2.0 involves people communicating their text, image and video messages to a much wider audience and with much more feedback in real-time (Manno and Shahrabi, 2009: 1). The fact that today's individuals want to establish social relations also in the internet environment have caused the emergence of new concepts. Conventional networking platforms (forums, blogs, newsgroups) completely changed to new types of

immersive networking realities (virtual worlds) such as Second Life, World of Warcraft, Habbo Hotel.

Second Life is a virtual platform principally features 3D-based user-generated content. It was developed by San Francisco based company Linden Lab, and public beta launched on June 23, 2003. The developers were inspired from the science fiction novel of Snow Crash (NBC News, 2007). Since the very beginning, Philip Rosedale who is the founder of Linden Lab aimed at developing computer hardware to allow people to become immersed in a virtual world. When Snow Crash came out, he found that inspiring and it painted a compelling picture of how a virtual world should look like (Dubner, 2007). Second Life is one of the most discussed virtual worlds among marketers, businesses and researchers. Also, it represents the most mature of virtual world platforms (Halvorson, 2010: 28). SL is also relatively easy to join and to use for individuals. People can connect or socialize with each other and use communication options such as voice and text chat freely. SL had 45 million residents in 2016 (Berger et. all, 2016: 84) and the total residents' number of SL is 59,865,240 in 2019 (<http://www.gridsurvey.com>, 2019). This number is increasing day by day depending on the technological suitability of individuals and awareness of the SL. This virtual environment attracts the attention not only of individuals but also organizations. An innovative and effective nonprofit organization always should seek to find ways to expand its presence locally, regionally, nationally and internationally for promoting its cause. For instance, online social networks can be used for capturing public attention and engaging like-minded individuals from local environment to international environment. Second Life is one of the virtual immersive environments which are new dimension of effective social networks. The opportunities and benefits of SL for nonprofits can be listed as follows (Bettger, 2008: 7-8):

- Organizations catch the technological trends, and add value to positioning of nonprofit organization,
- Provides a new medium to reach the nonprofit organization's audience and potential donors from all around the world,
- The world-wide marketing opportunity,
- Provides cost savings and environmental benefits offered by virtual activities,
- The opportunity to leverage another world resources and the high rate of volunteerism there,
- The potential for profit-oriented and nonprofit organizations collaboration,
- Binary fundraising opportunities (both from SL or real life).

Relay For Life is one of the eye-filling examples of a nonprofit organization which perform their activities also in SL. The SL Relay for Life/American Cancer Society exists in Second Life to promote their mission and causes. The American Cancer Society is the world's leader in the fight against cancer. Relay For Life is the signature event of the American Cancer Society in Second Life. It is a very active organization, and the online presence of this nonprofit perpetually growing in SL since 2005. In 2005, the first Relay For Life of Second Life (RFL of SL) was attended by a few hundred avatars and raised almost \$5,000 US dollars for the American Cancer Society. The 2014 RFL of SL

event ranked number 17 out of 5000 events, worldwide in donations received. SL residents have brought in over 3 million US dollars to help with the fight against cancer since 2005 (SecondLife Wiki, 2018).

New platforms, mediums and services are used to provide mutual benefit to both the organization and the customer. However, there is a small but growing literature examining the use of virtual organizations and online avatars in marketing (Barnes and Mattsson, 2008: 196). Describing the benefits of virtual worlds and marketing opportunities for nonprofit organizations will help the digitally inactive organizations about fundraising etc.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

Linden Lab announced its special information because of the 10th anniversary of Second Life in 2013. In this explanation, the number of avatars created in SL was reached 36 million (<http://www.lindenlab.com>, 2018). Also, Second Life is one of the most discussed virtual worlds among marketers, businesses and researchers. Also, it represents the most mature of virtual world platforms (Halvorson, 2010: 28). These are the powerful reasons why Second Life is chosen as the research area, and "Live and Learn in Kenya" is chosen as the case in this study.

Live and Learn in Kenya is a charitable organization which aimed changing the lives and the futures of children living in poverty in Nakuru, Kenya as well as in other parts of Kenya. It is a German-based registered nonprofit organization. It was founded in 2001 in the small German town, Selb in Fichtelgebirge (Wikipedia, 2018). Live and Learn in Kenya (LLK) finance the education of needy child and provides school needs such as fees, uniform, shoes, textbooks, school supplies with the help of sponsors. In order to help needy children, in 2010, they existed in the virtual world where they can expand their donor networks and find more sponsors by their projects. "Feed a Smile" is a virtual project which they are able to assure nutritious warm lunches for the nearly 500 children in a day. LLK organizes events in Second Life on a venue called the Lavender Field for Feed a Smile. All fund-raisers and board members are volunteers in this project. They often organize fundraising events such as concerts, picture exhibition or personal performances of some singers in Second Life.

This study was designed as a case study based on the collection of qualitative data. The semi-structured interview technique was used because it provides flexibility to the researcher, and gives the participant a chance to express her/himself better. The female avatar created (named "*sabrinamaggy*") to observe, participate, and gain first-hand and intimate knowledge on the working mechanics of nonprofits in Second Life. Online interviews were held with the founders, managers, volunteers and donors. Different interview forms were created for each different participant such as founders, volunteers and donators. All questions in the interview forms (shown in Appendix A, B, C) were inspired by previous studies on virtual world; synthetic worlds (Castronova, 2001; 2003; 2005), virtual world marketing (Halvorson, 2010), virtual entrepreneurship (Sağtaş, 2013; Gülmez, Sağtaş, and Özeltürkay, 2014), doing business in Second Life (Azeharie & Sharma, 2011) and nonprofit giving behavior

(Sargeant et al, 2006). The head of the nonprofit organization (LLK, feed a Smile) has many years experiences in managing a nonprofit organization in virtual world looked through the questionnaire forms, and gave her suggestions regarding the questions. Due to the nature of the research environment, researchers applied an interactive online method to data collection. The participants of the selected community were then contacted through personal messaging. Prior to communicating with the participants, preliminary information about the community was obtained from the founder of the organization. Through the founder's direction the sample was selected and contacted. Considering ethical issues only voluntary participation for interviews been conducted. In this direction, online interviews were applied to participants in the virtual world (Figure 3 and Figure 4).

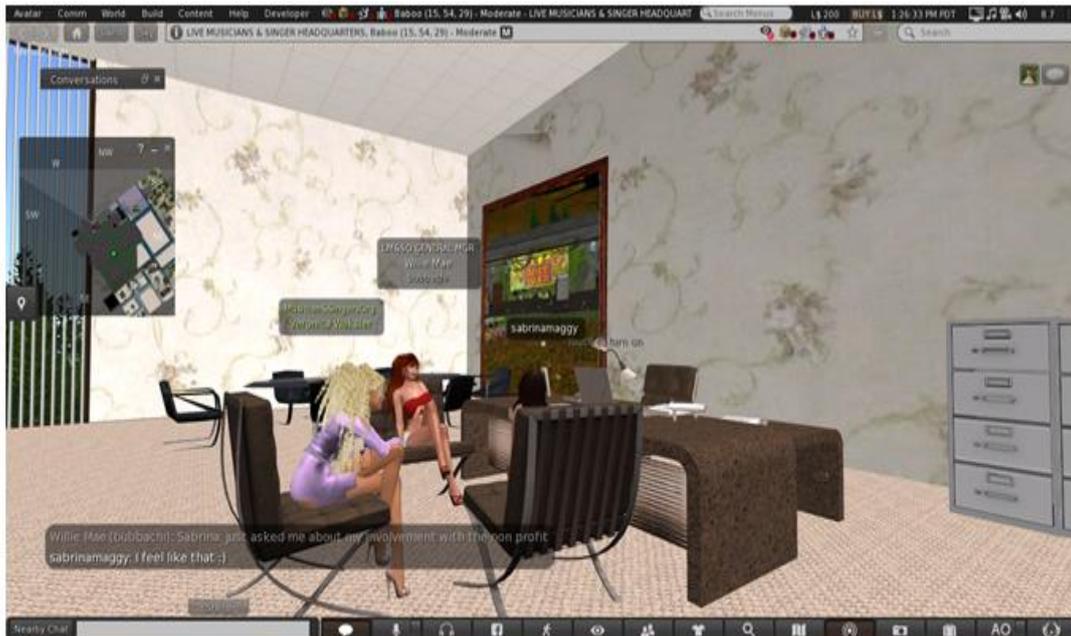


Figure 3. The Interview with Volunteers in Second Life

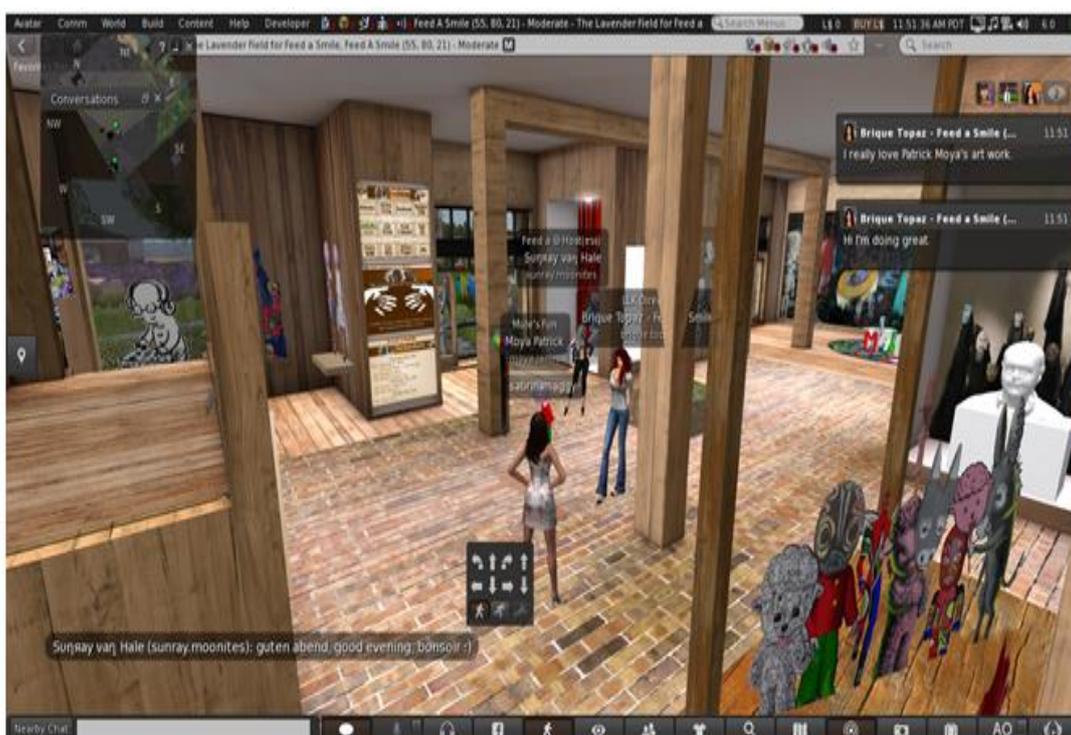


Figure 4. The Interview with Founder of Feed a Smile in Second Life

Live and Learn in Kenya Int.'s "Feed a Smile Project" is sample organization which selected for review. As a result of in-depth interviews with the founder, volunteers and donators of the Live and Learn in Kenya organization, it is aimed to determine how and to what extent new digital platform like virtual world is used by nonprofit organizations for marketing activities. The sample was selected from the members of 'Feed a Smile' from Second Life. There are 641 members in this group. They were 1 founder, 7 donors, and 11 volunteers. Volunteers and donators were selected based on the judgmental sampling and snowball sampling techniques together. The participants were identified by the founder then also some participants referred to other one. The data were collected in between February and May, 2018 and the descriptive analysis technique was used to explain findings of the in-depth interviews. Participants' demographic characteristics and features are shown in

Participants	Gender	Age	Education	Marital Status	Region	Profession
Donor 1	Female	46-55	Graduate	Partner	Europe	Therapist
Donor 2	Male	56-65	Graduate	Married	Europe	Salesman
Donor 3	Female	26-35	Undergraduate	Divorced	Europe	Customer Service Representative
Donor 4	Female	36-45	College	Single	Europe	Business woman
Donor 5	Female	46-55	Graduate	Partner	Europe	Teacher
Donor 6	*	*	*	*	*	*
Donor 7	*	*	*	*	*	*
Donor 8	*	*	*	*	*	*
Volunteer 1	Female	46-55	Graduate	Married	Europe	Teacher
Volunteer 2	Female	46-55	Graduate	Partner	Europe	Doctor
Volunteer 3	Female	46-55	School	Single	Europe	Housewife
Volunteer 4	Male	46-55	Undergraduate	Divorced	North America	Musician
Volunteer 5	Female	36-45	College	Partner	Europe	Manager
Volunteer 6	Male	46-55	School	Single	Europe	Programmer
Volunteer 7	Other	66 or older	Graduate	Single	North America	Retired
Volunteer 8	Male	67 or older	College	Divorced	North America	Musician
Volunteer 9	Male	36-45	College	Single	Europe	Chemistry
Volunteer 10	Female	46-55	College	Divorced	Europe	Singer

Volunteer 11	Female	26-35	Undergraduate	Married	Europe	Accountant
Founder	Female	56-65	Graduate	Married	Europe	Teacher

Table 1;

**these donors do not want to share their information*

Table 1. *The Demographic Characteristics of Participants*

Accordingly, the donors were coded as "D" to indicate "donor" and each participant was numbered as "D1, D2, D3, D4...". The volunteers were coded as "V" to indicate "volunteer" and each participant was numbered as "V1, V2, V3, V4...". The founder of the organization was coded as "F". The demographic information collected about the participants is about the real lives of the people. In the virtual world some avatars are sensitive about sharing their information about their real life (e.g. D6, D7, and D8). According to the data collected, most of the participants are women, and the age range is concentrated at 46-55. The level of education is usually graduate education, and most of the participants are from Europe. The views of the participants were coded on the basis of confidentiality, without their real or avatar names. The themes (categories) that will form the main lines of the research findings are revealed, descriptive analysis were conducted. *Table 2* represents donor themes, *Table 3* represents volunteer themes and *Table 4* represents the themes that emerged as a result of the interview with the founder.

1. Donors' awareness of the nonprofit organization's presence
2. Attractiveness of the organization
3. Donations' causes for the organization
4. Performance of the organization
5. Donors' perception of benefits
6. Reliability of the organization
7. Communication quality of the organization
8. The organization's perception in real life
9. The anonymity of avatars

Table 2. *The themes formed by the analysis of the donors' interviews*

The donors generally heard about Live and Learn in Kenya (LLK) from their friends or in an event they participated. Some donors have learned this nonprofit organization (LLK) through social media ads like (D3) *"I have seen different ads on Facebook and I have seen ads for like concerts for this nonprofit organization."* It can be said that social media ads also affect the life in virtual worlds. After donors being informed about the nonprofit organization, there must be something attractive to think about donation. Most of the donors were influenced by the organization's services for children. One of the participants said that (D1) *"Children are victims of political systems. I'm mother; it was in our old religion to be attentive with other. We come all from the same world, and there's not separation. This materialist world one*

day will fade, we are crazy, and we forget who we are. Africa is poor of our fault so we let the adults die in war so we must protect mothers and children."

When data are examined to see whether the performance of the organization has an impact on donations, donors who care about the performance of the organization are the majority. If organizations explicitly explain how donations are used, it can be said that it will have a positive impact on donors. For example, the participant said that (D5) *"You can easily see where the money is going and the progress of projects is carefully documented."* Nevertheless, people who do not have enough knowledge also donate to the organization.

Social Exchange Theory suggests that donors are often motivated to give because they perceive that some benefits will accrue to them as a consequence of their gift (Amos, 1982; Bar-Tel, 1976; Krebs, 1982 as cited Sargeant et al, 2006: 157). However, participants indicated that they don't seek to gain any benefit from a virtual world or virtual organization (LLK) by giving. The good communication established by the founder of the organization and the clear publication of how donations are used has a positive impact on donors. The donor's answers show that they have good thoughts about the reliability of this organization. People communicate through avatars without so much knowledge about each other on virtual platforms. Nevertheless, the thoughts of donors about virtual communication are mostly positive when they compare with real life. In addition, it was not perceived negatively by donors that LLK is a virtual organization. One of the participants said that (D7) *"It is easier and faster to communicate through this virtual way by touching the reality of people. Necessarily people are here sensitized by the approach there are so many other "stimulations" on Second Life."* People (donors) generally do not have negative thoughts about virtual nonprofit organizations. And also, more positive word of mouth marketing should be done for this concept to be fully in mind and able to increase donations.

The virtual world provides anonymity to people who are behind their avatars. Some donors may not want their donations to be known because some beliefs require it to be hidden.

1. Volunteers' working knowledge in the virtual nonprofit organization
2. Volunteers' motivations
3. Volunteers' experiences and qualifications
4. The virtual platform advantages and disadvantages for nonprofit organizations
5. The marketing activities of volunteers
6. The activities of volunteers to expand donor's network
7. The virtual donors' profile and encouragement activities of volunteers
8. The future of virtual world and virtual nonprofit organizations
9. The volunteers' situation about supporting other organizations

Table 3. *The themes formed by the analysis of the data obtained at the end of volunteers' interviews*

The amount of knowledge and experience of volunteers may be effective for nonprofit organizations, so volunteers were asked if they had previously worked in another nonprofit organization. According to the data obtained, it can be said that most of the volunteers worked in a nonprofit organization in real world and virtual world. The

concept of “volunteerism” is also related to motivation because volunteer workers generally do not get a financial gain, and spiritual gains can motivate them to work. One of the participants said that (V1) *“I think it is important to be involved with the issues that matter most to you. If everyone had just one cause, we can eradicate all the negative stuff out there.”* The other participant said that (V6) *“I like the goal and we know it really goes to Kenya, not to overpaid board members.”* and the participant (V7) said that who is singing at events of LLK, *“It is nice to combine music with the good cause of Feed a Smile, and especially as you can see on the organization’s Facebook page where they post photos that the donations reach their target.”* Many of the volunteers think that the experience they have gained over many years has made them successful in this role. For example, the participant said that (V8) *“I have experience in leadership roles up to and being team captain.”* and the other participant said that (V9) *“She has many years of performing experience...”* Therefore, she fits well to the role indicated that provides many advantages for the organization.

Volunteers generally think that this virtual platform provides many advantageous for the organization. The participant (V11) said that *“Advantage is that you get to help, in this case those lovely smiles. The disadvantage would be the fact that people might feel they HAVE TO donate, that will keep them from coming.”* The opportunity to collect donations from all over the world, and opportunity to reach talented volunteers can be attractiveness of this platform. Also, this platform is seen as supporting tool the real world. Social media is one of the online networks to support the organization. They use YouTube to share videos about their events and their schools in Kenya. Also, they share so many information or picture about their activities, collected funds, and children’s situation in Kenya in the blog page of “Feed a Smile” project. After marketing activities like promotion, volunteers try to make visitors and artists feel good and welcome here. They appreciate their work and their donations. Also they create the information boards, organize new events, host, and run the Subscriber. Some of the volunteers show a lot of effort to help the Feed a Smile project to promote itself by suggesting events to their friends.

Most of the volunteers have positive thoughts about the future of virtual worlds and “Feed a Smile”. For example, the participant (V3) said that, *“I hope that we will get more members and foster parents and more donations of course, because there is still a lot to improve in Kenya, but I also hope that other media like Facebook, instagram and so on SL will grow and become more influential.”*

Nine of the eleven volunteers are working for another nonprofit organization such as Relay for Life, Respect Yourself, and Burning Man. This is one of the opportunities that this virtual world has to offer, because you can work for more than one nonprofit organization in every second, hour or day. It may not be possible in real life for a person to travel very quickly to such different places. Most of the volunteers work for more than one nonprofit organization. However, other participants state that they do not want to dissipate their energy and want to work for an organization with their whole hearts.

In addition to all these, the volunteers express their sincere admirations for all the great works of the founder of “Feed a Smile” project. They also said that they are very happy to work for this organization and they want to continue their good work.

1. The introduction of the “Live and Learn in Kenya/ Feed a Smile”
2. The reasons for being in the virtual world, <i>Second Life</i>
3. Organizational structure of the “LLK” Virtual Nonprofit Organization
4. The virtual platform advantages, disadvantages and opportunities for nonprofit organizations
5. Activities of the “Live and Learn in Kenya” in <i>Second Life</i>
6. The competition in virtual world
7. Economic support of virtual world
8. The virtual donors profile and donor encouragement activities of founder
9. The future of virtual world and virtual nonprofit organizations

Table 4. *The themes formed by the analysis of the data obtained at the end of founder's interview*

The founder of the organization mainly runs the activities by herself, because the performers and artists expect her to be present for their shows. She does have a couple of people helping with hosting and especially with building. All performers and helpers are volunteers and she does not receive money at all. In real life, she also works as a chairwoman of Live and Learn in Kenya Int’l and in Germany – Leben und Lernen in Kenia e.v.: According to her thoughts, one of the main advantages is that an event can be planned and you needn’t worry about the weather in SL. She said that, *“If I plan an open-air concert, for example, in RL I always have to worry about it raining or even being so hot that people would rather go to the beach. In SL the only weather problem is if there is a storm where the entertainer is from and he/she loses internet access.”* The quality of the internet connection of avatars is becoming important because the virtual world is built on internet connectivity. Another advantage is that people can be given links to informative links and check them immediately. Second Life offers a variety of ways to connect with someone and share something to satisfy their inhabitants. SL doesn’t cost anything, so people needn’t worry about having to pay expensive entrance fees – and just donate what they have. It is the one of the advantages for her. In Second Life, you cannot see the person behind the avatar and usually don’t even know what they sound like. And she thinks that it is one of the disadvantages, because it is so much easier to let people know how you really feel – or what the project really means to you when you are face to face. The other disadvantage is time zones. She lives in Germany, the SL time zone is 9 hours behind her, making it nearly impossible to organize events during the peak hours – after 8pm SLT. - which would be 5 am for her.

She said that about opportunities, *“The opportunities that SL provides are huge and many. Being able to meet people from around the world that I would never have the chance to meet is still something that amazes me. Having outstanding musicians performing live and streaming right into my own home is fabulous. Part of the reason that our organization has become so well-known is through SL and other virtual platforms.”* As you can see, the world-wide connection opportunity is very important

to nonprofit organizations. They mainly have concerts of all kinds – from opera to pop music. They have an art gallery showing work from the best SL artists. They donate all sales made during their exhibits to Feed a Smile. The shows are 24 hours the day. Concerts take place an average 3 to 4 times a week. In the virtual world, generally artistic activities are done to get donors attention. It may not be possible to do these activities so often in real life. Even if it does, it will be very costly for the organization. She thinks that if the organizations are diligent and honest, there is a lot to be had and experienced in the virtual world. Honesty is becoming even more important because this is a virtual world. It is very difficult to understand the intentions of the avatars at the first time. It could be malicious people. These thoughts of the founder may be seen as important advices for a nonprofit organization that is unsure of entering this virtual world. Finally, she wanted to add that Second Life is a fantastic platform for nonprofit organizations!

CONCLUSION

The virtual world Second Life has its own economy and a virtual token referred to as Linden Dollars (L\$). As of June 2018, exchange rates are approximately USD\$1 to L\$255. This creates an advantageous currency effect because donations made in small quantities can have huge effects for virtual nonprofit organization. The purpose of this study is to determine how and to what extent new digital platforms like virtual worlds are used by nonprofit organizations for marketing activities. In accordance with this purpose, the researchers have entered into the virtual world (SL) and made in-depth interviews with donors, volunteers, and founders of the nonprofit organization “Feed a Smile”. In this part of the study, the obtained results will be discussed.

When the demographic characteristics of the donors are examined, it is seen that they are from the USA or Europe which are the countries with high development and income level. This means that small donations from these countries can become large donations for an organization in Kenya. According to the information given by the founder, avatars are not afraid to make small donations for this reason. Live and Learn in Kenya provides education and warm meals for over 500 children. “Feed a Smile” plays a major role in providing the funding for at least 1/3 or the meals monthly. Therefore, the “Feed a Smile” carries out their promotional activities without considering the donation rate.

The volunteers of the “Feed a Smile” organization indicated that they operate their promotional activities through social media. They also use their personal virtual network in Second Life to spread the word regarding the nonprofit’s activities. Since these promotions are made through the word of mouth, communication becomes more intimate, reliable and effective. It is known that the population of Second Life is 54 million, so the potential of this virtual network size should not be underestimated. There is an opportunity in terms of promotional activities for the virtual charity organizations in this borderless world. The initial costs of these promotional activities are usually lower than that the organizations pay in real world. It is an effective and cheap way of marketing communication which is used to inform target audiences of the relative merits of a product, service, organization or issue.

The answers given by donors show that they first learn about the virtual nonprofit organizations because of a friend suggestion or announcements for the events. It can be said that the marketing activities of the organization have positive effects on the number of donors and the donation rates. This finding supports that the promotional activities, accessible place and price options of "Feed a Smile" helps the organization to reach its goal.

"Feed a Smile" organizes art events such as concert, art gallery to attract the attention of donors in their virtual island, Second Life. These events are organized openly to the participant from all over the virtual world for fundraising. All avatars can make a donation from the donation box which was set up in the activity/event area. This donation box is available 7 days 24 hours for donors. By choosing the right place, an organization can increase their sales amounts in real life. The SL is a kind of virtual area that can provide this over a longer period of time. It is easier and cheaper for virtual organizations. SL provides a reachable and convenient platform channel for organizations to reach their clientele.

"Feed a Smile" raises funds for the very needy children in Nakuru, Kenya. Most of the donors were influenced by the organization's services for children feeding and education. All volunteers work on a voluntary basis without any financial gain for this virtual nonprofit organization. As a general interpretation of the data obtained it can be said that most of the volunteers working in the virtual world have already working experience in this kind of organization before either in different virtual worlds or in real life. They use their many years of experience and qualifications to help the "Feed a Smile" reaching its aim. The aim of the organization motivates the volunteers to work for this organization, and the donors to make a donation.

Some of the donors said that they are donating because the nonprofit organization has a good transparency at their activities. Open and sincere communication of the founder and volunteers, the publication of the videos of the works done on YouTube, and the providing continuous information about the donations via Facebook have positive effects on the reliability of the organization. Donors have noted that they pay attention to this, and they follow and appreciate the feedback provided by the organization about the donations and children via Facebook. The donors and volunteers said that they also talk about this virtual nonprofit organization in their real life. People are surprised but usually give positive reactions when they tell this virtual nonprofit organization and their project.

The researchers asked volunteers to make comparisons between real life donors and virtual donors. Volunteers stated that it is not easy to learn about the people behind the avatars in this world, but according to their experiences the donor profile here is a slightly older and generous group. The findings on demographic information about donors supported the volunteers' opinion regarding the donors in Second Life. The donors' age group is generally between 46 and 55.

In conclusion, Second Life is a useful marketplace which provides effective economic support and so many opportunities that cannot be ignored for a nonprofit organization. The nonprofit organizations get effective revenues with little cost in

Second Life. The volunteers and founder think that this virtual world will grow and become more influential in the future. In this case, the nonprofit organizations which have difficulty finding resource, volunteer worker, and donors need to use alternative virtual worlds like Second Life. Feed a Smile, Relay for Life and Respect Yourself are the examples of successful nonprofit organizations that are aware of all of these things and operates in this virtual world now. The opportunity to reach out all over the world and meet so many people makes these nonprofit organizations more popular.

However, the nonprofit organizations should consider the following situations regarding this virtual world. The Second Life time zone is PST/PDT (Pacific Standard Time/Pacific Daylight Time) the real-world time zone of Linden Lab. This allows that avatars can donate in different time periods from all around the world, but it creates difficulty for volunteers and founder to match different groups of donors from different time zones. The other situation is that the anonymity of the person behind the avatar. According to the founder of "Feed a Smile", it is so much easier to let people know how you really feel or what the project really means to you when you are face to face. These are seen as the disadvantages of this virtual world by the participants.

The findings of this study suggest that the nonprofit organizations which have difficulty about finding resource, volunteer worker, and donors should consider about alternative platforms like Second Life to operate in.

The Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Studies

The research was only being carried out through digital-based virtual worlds. Second Life was selected as a research universe, and "Feed a Smile" project run by the organization of Live and Learn in Kenya was examined as a case study. There is a time difference between the virtual world and the real world, which varies from country to country. It is so necessary to have fast and uninterrupted internet connection and strong computer hardware in order not to get disconnected from the virtual world when researching or interviewing. This case study was conducted on a specific nonprofit organization and within a specific time frame. These can be seen as limitations of the study.

More extensive new study can be done with other organizations in the same virtual world or in other virtual worlds to contribute to the literature. Also, a nonprofit organization which does not exist in Second Life can start to operate marketing activities in this virtual world with the help of a research team. The effectiveness of the nonprofit organization in Second Life could be observed in a particular period.

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