

Universities' Use of Instagram in the Context of Graphic Design

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Abstract: With the great change in technology in today's world, instant communication and communication mobile devices has become possible for everyone. People have reached the technology that can instantly receive news about a development occurring anywhere in the world through social media. In a period when social media is so important, the preparation of visual designs in social media posts that can reach millions of people in accordance with the rules of graphic design makes these posts more effective. In the light of the research conducted in this study, the posts made by the private university, which has a large number of followers on the Instagram platform, were analyzed in terms of their formal features, compliance with graphic design principles and photo usage strategies. With the findings obtained as a result of these analyses, it is aimed to give direction to these institutions in order to make more effective posts for their target audiences..

Keywords: Graphic Design, Social Media, Instagram.

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Introduction

In the digitalizing world, social media is in a state of constant development and change, increasing its importance day by day. In a period when social media and social media advertisements have gained so much importance, the preparation of social media posts in accordance with graphic design elements makes the design more effective.

In a period when social media is so important, the preparation of visual designs, which are the basic elements of social media posts that appeal to millions of people, in accordance with graphic design elements makes the posts more effective. It is of great importance for organizations that share posts aimed at reaching their target audience through social media to consider graphic design principles.

In this study, it is aimed to analyze the extent to which the ten private universities with the highest number of followers on Instagram, one of the most popular social media applications, share posts in accordance with the

graphic design principles mentioned, and to give direction in order to reach their target audience more effectively. In line with this purpose, the study is important in terms of being a resource that universities can benefit from in order to make posts that can attract the attention of their followers on social media platforms where hundreds of posts are made instantly on the main page, although there are many researches on social media in Turkey, there are a limited number of studies that examine social media posts in terms of graphic design in academic terms.

Graphic Design and Social Media

Graphic Design

Graphic design is a visual communication design used to advertise a product or service or to convey a message to the target audience. The most important function of graphic design is to convey the message to the target audience as a visual communication art and to make it quickly understandable. Graphic design, which comes into play with the aspect of conveying the message visually, realizes a visual communication at this point and has become an effective part of communication (Arıkan, 2008; Becer, 2015; Tutar, 2008). Today, the expression of the word graphic in the international literature has become clear in such a way that all people can make the same interpretation. According to its meaning in the literature, the word graphic means writing, drawing, displaying and reproducing. (Tepecik, 2002).

Social Media

Social media is a new form of media that allows users to share data instantly in a simple and two-way way, while at the same time accessing information shared by other users (Boyd & Elison, 2008). Social media is actively used by almost everyone today. In this way, instant information is accessed quickly; content, articles, news, opinions, thoughts, daily events and photos shared by users can be seen through social media.

The spread of social media platforms is much faster than traditional mass media. For example, while it took 38 years for radio to reach 50 million users worldwide, it took 13 years for television and only 9 months for Twitter (Kara, 2013). Social media platforms have spread very quickly among users, and this spread is still continuing at a rapid pace. Unlike traditional media platforms, social media stands out as a living platform.

There is no obligation to receive any training in order to use social media. Anyone who wants to publish or share on social media can take part. Another advantage is that the data flow can be constantly updated instantaneously. On a traditional print media platform, it is not possible to change a news item after it has been created, only a correction can be published the next day. Social media, on the other hand, allows the information shared to be changed and edited instantly.

The most popular social media platforms used worldwide are Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Twitter, Snapchat,

Tik Tok and Club House.

It is possible to evaluate the designs shared on social media platforms within the scope of graphic design. Many social media channels require graphic designers and software developers to work together in order to make social media use more efficient. While social media is generally characterized as a two-dimensional plane like traditional printed media, the design principles of digital media platforms differ from traditional media. With the spread of social media platforms day by day, it has become necessary to apply different design methods.

With the innovations brought to our lives by social media, the scope of aesthetic qualities such as visual design and visual communication has expanded considerably. Social media interaction has also affected the communication structure and this has changed the design criteria. The design environment in new media has created new requirements. Visual design, which is used in conveying the visual message, should be done with various purposes such as informing, thinking and motivating in line with a holistic design language by purifying the message from crowded elements. The visual literacy knowledge of the target audience is important in transforming the designed visual language into a meaningful message. The socio-cultural structure, technological competence, critical perspective and expectations of the visual reader are effective in understanding and interpreting the message (Erişti, 2018).

The most important factor affecting social media design is the wide variety of screens. It is possible to access social media using different technological tools. For this reason, designs should adapt to these different tools in order to ensure readability.

Analyzing Social Media Posts of Universities

In the research, social media and content design are discussed, and it is tried to give information about the conditions that should be followed to create effective content design on Instagram. First of all, information and definitions will be given about examining the posts of the University with the highest number of followers in terms of graphic design, and then the findings and comments related to each sub-objective will be discussed.

As of the date of the research, Bahçeşehir University has 81.4B, Medipol University 68B, Istanbul Bilgi University 65.4B, Koç University 63B, Bilkent University 62.2B followers.

Bahçeşehir University

Looking at the general view of Bahçeşehir University Instagram page in Figure 1, it is seen that all visual elements in the page design are compatible with each other, that is, they speak the same language. In this way, all visual elements reinforce each other. The use of happy student photos in the posts has added a positive atmosphere to the page. The fact that the posts are a design product and do not appear as a combination of

unrelated parts gives the impression that all the parts belong together. In this way, designs where the principle of integrity is applied make it easier to read, understand and remember the design.

The harmonious arrangement of the elements in the design is formed by the combination of elements with the same basic form, size, texture, color or emotion. The fact that the featured stories section is designed in a common language and used effectively has been a factor that increases the integrity and readability of the page.



Figure 1. Bahçeşehir University Instagram Page.

Medipol University

All visual elements in the Medipol University Instagram page overview design in Figure 2 are compatible with each other and designed in the same language. In this way, it is ensured that all visual elements reinforce each other. The fact that the posts are a design product and do not appear as a combination of unrelated parts gives

the impression that all parts belong together. Designs where the principle of integrity is applied make it easier to read, understand and remember the design.

By using the logo in social media posts, Medipol University aimed to prevent the use of its visual content by others on the internet and to show the image of the institution in every sense.

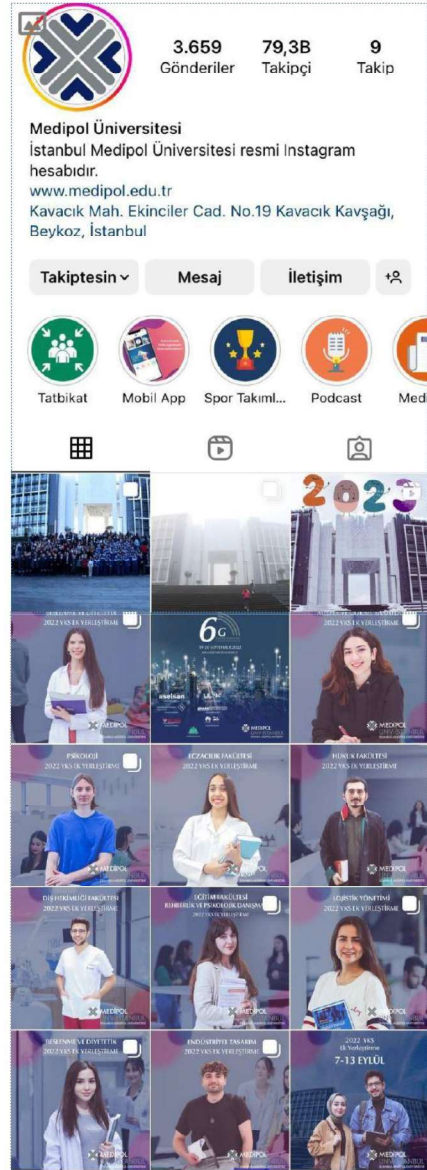


Figure 2. Medipol University Instagram Page.

The use of fast engaging photos and multiple reels of video has a more positive impact on users. The visuals are mobile-oriented and quickly delivered the message in a small area in a short time. Since the ads will be seen while scrolling through Instagram, using remarkable reels videos and photos increased the success of Medipol

University Instagram account.

The harmonious arrangement of the elements in the design was created by combining elements with the same basic form, size, texture, color or emotion. Designers utilized different methods such as border, axis and three-point method while creating integrity.

Istanbul Bilgi University

It cannot be said that the visual elements in the design of the general view of Istanbul Bilgi University Instagram page in Figure 3 are compatible with each other, and the posts are a combination of unrelated parts. Looking at the overall page structure, the fact that the posts do not speak the same language has a negative impact on the principle of integrity, reading, understanding and remembering the design.

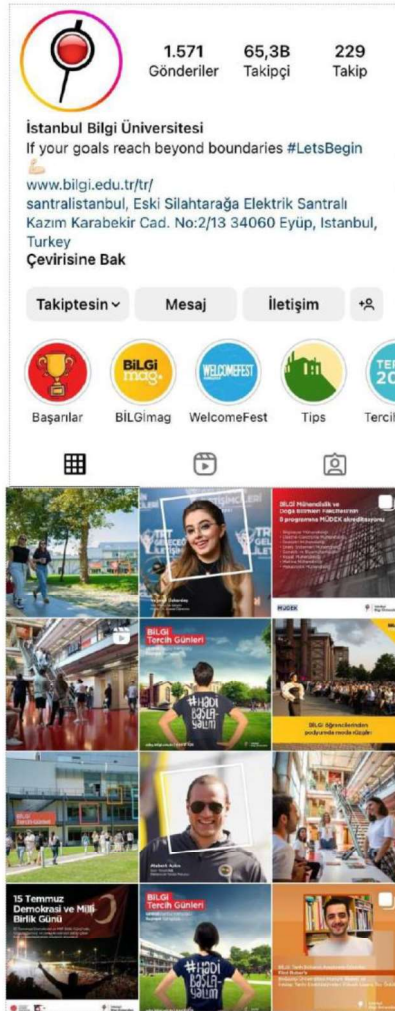


Figure 3. İstanbul Bilgi University Instagram Page.

By using logos in its social media posts, Istanbul Bilgi University aimed both to prevent the use of its visual content by others on the internet and to show the image of the institution in every sense.

The use of photos and multiple reels of video that can be interacted with quickly leaves a more positive impact on users. The visuals were mobile-oriented and quickly delivered the message in a small area in a short time. Since the ads will be seen while scrolling through Instagram, using attention-grabbing reels videos and photos had a positive impact on Istanbul Bilgi University's Instagram account.

Koç University

Not all visual elements in the Koç University Instagram page overview design in Figure 4 are compatible with each other. The combination of unrelated parts in the posts and the fact that all parts seem to belong together shows that the design is successful.

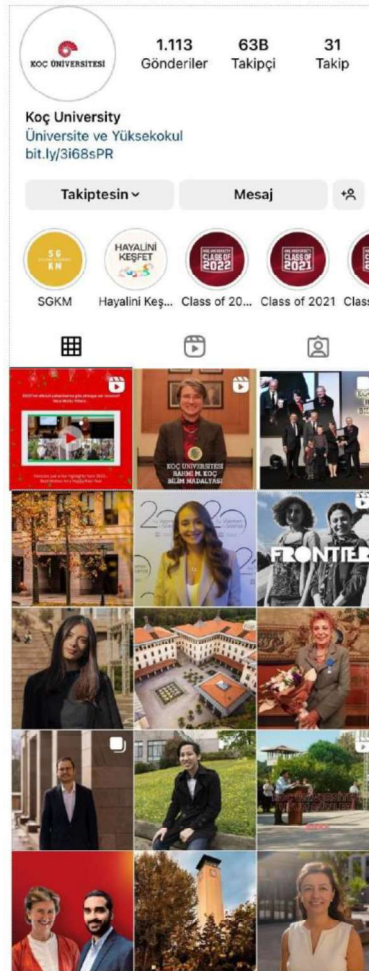


Figure 4. Koç University Instagram Page.

Social media ads are mostly viewed on smartphones. Using photos and multiple reels of video that can interact

quickly leaves a more positive impact on users. Images should be mobile-oriented and deliver the message quickly in a small area in a short time. Since the ads will be seen while browsing social media, not using attention-grabbing reels videos and high-resolution photos may limit the reach of Koç University Instagram account to the target audience. Designers did not utilize different methods such as border, axis and three-point method while creating integrity.

Bilkent University

Looking at the general view of Nişantaşı University Instagram page in Figure 5, it is seen that all visual elements in the page design are compatible with each other, that is, they speak the same language. In this way, all visual elements reinforce each other. It gives the impression that the posts are a design product and all the parts belong together. In this way, designs where the principle of integrity is applied make it easier to read, understand and remember the design.

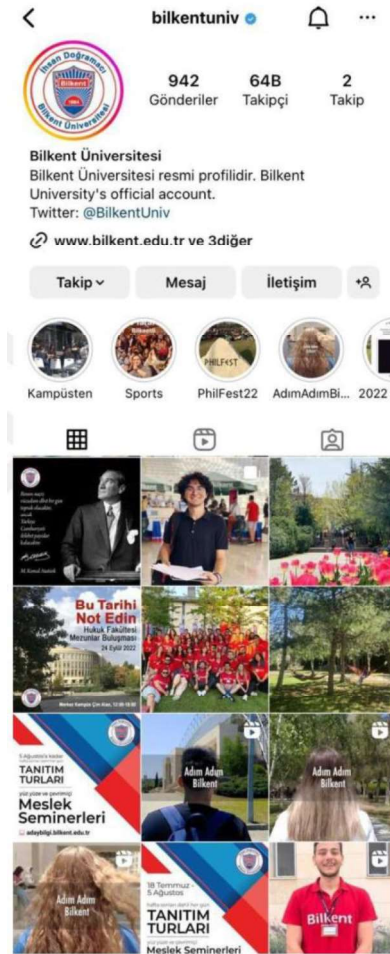


Figure 5. Bilkent University Instagram Page.

The harmonious arrangement of the elements in the design is formed by the combination of elements with the same basic form, size, texture, color or emotion.

Conclusion

Social media, the most popular communication method in today's world, is becoming more widespread every day. Social media differs from traditional media with its access to many different target audiences, the ability to produce and share content quickly and simply, the ease of measurement as mutual interaction with the target audience can be captured, the ability to reorganize posts and the free media environment it offers to its users, and people now spend more time on social media platforms than traditional media platforms.

Almost every business can publish advertisements for the target audience they want without any lower limit on social media. In this study, the social media advertisements shared by ten private Turkish universities with the highest number of followers on Instagram, the most popular social media platform today, during the registration renewal periods were analyzed and interpreted in terms of graphic design principles. It was concluded that in these posts; selected photographs, logo usage, color preferences, typography, page layout and slogan usage play an important role in terms of advertising and graphic design.

Since the home page flow on social media is constantly updated instantaneously, users are exposed to dozens of posts in a short time. It should not be forgotten that advertisements that do not attract attention at first sight on these platforms can be passed with a finger movement. For this reason, the advertisements to be published on these channels should be in a way that can attract users' attention much faster.

With the conclusion that the photos preferred in the posts are the most important element in convincing the target audience, it gives advice to universities on the choice of photos in their posts and their compliance with graphic design principles. It is possible to attract users' attention with unusual angles and collages, a correct hierarchical order or a creative slogan.

Today, with the development of the internet and social media, universities frequently use this medium to influence users' decisions. It is seen that users attach importance to social media in their school preferences and are influenced by the services on social media. In addition, research has revealed that users find social media advertisements of universities more reliable than advertisements of the same sectors published in traditional media.

In this study, graphic design, social media and university issues were examined, the correct use of photography in social media posts and its harmony in terms of graphic design principles were tried to be explained, and analysis and analysis were made with an interpretive perspective.

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