Implementation of Social Networks as a Digital Communication Tool in Social Supermarkets

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of social supermarkets is to serve to customers, which are in material deprivation. As non-profit organizations, they perform several business activities on everyday basis. Those activities include: (1) collecting donations in money, (2) organization of acceptance of donations in form of food and toiletries from traditional supply chains, (3) acquiring food and other stuff from other sources and (4) distribution of food, toiletries and other stuff for free and/or (5) selling goods at extremely discounted prices to socially endangered people. There are numerous possibilities of social networks implementation in such type of organizations. The aim of this paper is to analyze how social supermarkets implement social networks in communication with donors, volunteers, end users and general public. In the paper, three cases of active social supermarkets in Croatia are analyzed in order to explain the usage of social networks in their everyday operations.

KEYWORDS: digital communication, social entrepreneurship, social networks, social supermarkets

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper interrelates two topics. One topic are social supermarkets and the other are social networks as a modern communication tool. Social supermarkets are non-profit organizations. Their main purpose is to serve those groups of customers which have low income or which are in severe material deprivation. Social supermarkets emerged as the answer to the recent economic crisis across Europe and they intensively develop since 2008. The purpose of social supermarket is twofold: (1) the poverty reduction through distribution of food and toiletries to people in severe material deprivation and (2) reduction of inefficiency in traditional (dominantly food) supply chains through removal of surpluses of produced food (and other goods).

On the other hand, there is a rapid development of digital communication. The penetration rate of Internet and mobile phones within population of EU-28 exceeded 60% of inhabitants. Therefore, digital communications already play a significant role in promotional activities of social supermarkets. However, in literature, the scope and role of digital communication usage in social supermarkets is not adequately analyzed nor described. Intensive communication with end users, volunteers and donors increases operational efficiency of social supermarkets. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to show how social supermarkets use social networks as a communication tool for interaction with interested publics. The paper is structured in three chapters. In the first chapter we are going to define social supermarkets, in the second we will explain what social networks are and what is the level of their development and in the third part, based on a primary research we are going to explain good practices of social network usage in everyday operation of social supermarkets. The primary research is done by case study method on three practical examples in Croatia.

II. SOCIAL SUPERMARKETS’ ROLE IN EUROPE

There are many different types of social supermarkets in Europe but their level of development and type of organization differs from country to country. The development of social supermarkets is influenced by the economic situation and economic development of the country. Therefore, there is no common definition of social supermarkets because it should be broad enough to integrate all variations, which exist on different markets. As a relatively new phenomenon, social supermarkets are not sufficiently analyzed in the literature, but still we can find a lot of different definitions and determinations of a term social supermarkets.
A social supermarket is defined [1] as “a small, nonprofit oriented retailing operation offering a limited assortment of products at symbolic prices primary in self-service manner. Authorized for shopping are needy people only. The products are donated by food production and retail companies free of charge as they are edible but not marketable due to small blemishes. Achieved profit is reinvested into social projects”. Another definition [2] states that “social supermarkets are organizations which provide food that is no longer useful for the common trade cheaply to people who are in situations of poverty”. According to [3], social supermarkets is a new retail format that fosters positive social change by fulfilling material needs of the socially disadvantaged groups and giving them an opportunity to preserve their dignity in an environment where they can choose various kinds of goods at extremely low prices.

All definitions of social supermarkets put the emphasis on selling or distributing goods to people in severe material deprivation. In addition, according to analyzed definitions, social supermarkets can be viewed as a new type of intermediaries within the food distribution chain because they have been developed in order to transfer surpluses of food or products to people in need. When analyzing social supermarkets, some benefits should be pointed out [4] emphasize three types of benefits of social supermarkets: (1) social benefits such as: reduction of food insecurity and life quality improvement of socially endangered citizens, improvement of their social inclusion, growth of self-confidence in communication with others and fostering feeling of belonging to a certain community by treating their users as clients rather than charity users, what strengthens their sense of dignity, (2) environmental benefits which are related with food waste reduction throughout distribution of food surplus from companies and individuals to final users, and (3) economic benefits which are related with better reallocation of scarce budget because users can make by purchasing products at lower prices in social supermarkets and then to use those assets to acquire other necessities. As initially is emphasized, there are different models of social supermarkets. Main distinctive characteristics are: (a) workforce organization because some social supermarkets have paid employees, while others function only trough usage volunteers as a workforce. (b) type and layout of shops (c) assortment offered, (d) sourcing and fundraising activities, (f) availability and implementation of various technologies starting from distribution organization to communication with users.

Social supermarkets mostly rely on volunteers as the key part of the workforce of volunteers, but some of them have paid employees as well. Even though, social supermarkets are trying to develop stores to be as similar as possible to regular supermarkets, due to the lack of resources, some of them are very simple and unpresentable in layout and interior design. Mostly their assortment contains food, as well as other basic products like hygiene products, cleaning detergents or clothes. But it is necessary to point out that assortment in social supermarkets heavily depends on success of donations and fundraising activities. Mostly the products are donated, but in some cases, surpluses are bought directly from producers at discount prices. Usually they rely on public subsidies or support from other charities in their operations, but there are some examples of private initiatives in Switzerland and United Kingdom which aim to develop total commercial sustainability (see [4]). Some authors claim that role of social supermarkets can be beyond the redistribution because they can offer some complementary activities to their users in order to improve public recognition and to foster involvement of end users in their everyday operation. For instance, it is known that some social supermarket in France organize skills workshops for their users, while some social supermarkets in Austria provide lunch offer within the coffee area of their store. In addition, Klindzic et al. [5] point to some characteristics which distinct social supermarkets to other retail formats, such as: high proportion of food in the assortment, extremely low prices or goods distributed for free, limited opening hours and scarce promotional activities.

III. SOCIAL NETWORKS AS A DIGITAL COMMUNICATION TOOL AND THEIR USAGE IN NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Development of social networks goes in line with development of Information and Communication technologies (ICT) and Internet. Social networks extremely are becoming useful digital communication tool as consumers are deeply involved in creating information and using it in various situations, such as buying decisions making, leisure and entertainment, advertising, etc. The digital content such as social media and e-commerce solutions are pervasive in daily life, its influence on consumers’ lives is powerful [6]. A lot of scientists [7]–[12] analyses development of virtual environment via the web development stages. It should be noted that several aspects during the development changed: opportunities of information transmission, acceptance and processing (from a static information display in stage 1.0 to reading – writing – execution - a parallel processing in stage 4.0), an axis of technologies (from a company to human-computer symbiosis), models of interaction (from stage 1.0 client-server to server-server in stage 4.0), use of information (from development of taxonomies in stage 1.0 to insightful decisions made in stage 4.0 on the basis of information) and technologies used (from static information
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portals used in stage 1.0 to opportunities of the Internet of things in stage 4.0). There are different interpretations of cyberspace in the sources of literature [6], [8], [12]–[14]; starting from a system creating preconditions for people to cognize, communicate and cooperate and ending with social experience associated with interaction of individuals, exchange of ideas, information sharing, granting of social support, media creation, games, involvement in various discussions and activities using the global network. Consumer experiences and needs are one of key elements in decision making processes when answering such questions “how to reach target audience and communicate message in best way”. Scientists define consumer needs as desire of consumer related to a value that is typical to product or service category in functional and emotional level at a certain time or in a certain situation when a product or service must be able to maximize personal consumer benefits, to provide solutions for aesthetic and ergonomic challenges faced by consumer. Consumer needs can be divided into physical, social and psychological by designating more specific groups of needs: family, pleasure, safety, entertainment, shape, sharing, cognition, self-realization [15]–[27]. All these elements are extremely important in context of use of social media in charity, and social activities. There are suggested different models, which sometimes are more targeted to these activities, or can be adopted in any activity like commercial one. For example, Racherla and Friske [28] suggested model which explains phenomenon of online reviews and efficiency in communication with users via the messenger and the message dimension. Different issues solved by online trust researches, when trust for websites factors analyzed. Here can be outlined similarities to social media because social networks can be treated as websites in certain aspect as well. More specifically: transactions, functionality, design, previous experiences, user experience etc. Some authors [28]–[30], suggest that information provides information proxies for trust, credibility, and functionalities. Another research is electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) as a new element which really active in social media and actual in marketing communication is analyzed by [30]. On the one hand, early research on social cognition shows that when making judgments people tend to underuse base-rate information (e.g., aggregated ratings) and rely almost exclusively on individuating information (e.g., individual reviews) if both types of information are available [30].

Social media itself, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have changed the way human beings communicate and interact. In the past few years, this has become crucial in the context of business, especially in start-up fund raising [31]. HubSpot reports that 70% of business-to-consumer marketers have acquired customers through Facebook [32]. Research of social networks are focused and run in different areas such as B2C communication [33]–[37], B2B communication [38], [39], role of social networks in marketing, e-commerce [32], [40], [41]. Cultural differences in social networking site use were presented in the study of Jackson and Wang [42], the peculiarities in China and the US were presented. The study of the impact of social media on consumers was presented by Hajli [43] where he examined the role of social media in the adoption of ecommerce and social commerce. All sources confirms importance of social networks, so nowadays attention to trends and market peculiarities should be emphasized. Social networks could be classified according to the main purpose and target audience: personal (e.g. AsianAve, Badoo, Facebook, Google+, Hi5, Highlight, Instagram, Myspace, Odnoklassniki) and professional (e.g. Brainly, LinkedIn, ResearchGate, Sciences cape) [31].

![Figure 1. Social networks according to number of users (in millions)](source [31])
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It should be emphasized that specialized categories such as vertical social networks and linked to portals networks were declined in this research, as all types of business organizations were decided to be included in the research, and such networks are more likely to be related to one or other activity. The number of active users of social networks is presented in Figure 1. It should be taken in to consideration the aspect of occasionally release statistics about users, because social networks provide relatively different data. Such concern was presented by Katrin Weller [44, 45]. Despite of problems in data accuracy and availability, the dominance of Facebook was observed all over the globe, and of course new social media sites were becoming popular and competing for consumers such as QZone, Snap Chart, QQ, etc. [46]. Of course, Facebook should be treated as the leader since it is still the most powerful social media channel. More than 1.5 million local businesses have active pages on Facebook. An average user of Facebook spends there more than 55 minutes per day. 22% of teenagers connect to Facebook at least 10 times per day; 48% of users in the age group of 18–34 years connect in the morning (just waked up), and 28% connect before going to sleep [47].

The point is that it is not enough to know the types and possibilities of various social networks, the understanding of peculiarities and consumer perception of each is necessary as well. This is a challenge because of dynamics of the sector, and organizations should still consider the field of activities, potential consumers’ habits and follow novelties in social networks.

From other hand, social media should be treated as a key data source [48], [49] suggests that social media providing an opportunity for small markets, and for agricultural companies. Therefore, in advance we will focus to application of social networks, especially Facebook, in operation of a specific type of organization, i.e. in social supermarkets.

As social supermarkets are nonprofit oriented organizations, they activity in the web can be such as websites for presenting themselves, build the brand, develop a community, reach new target audiences, increase revenue, connect with volunteers, and communicate with stakeholders as suggested Kirk and Abrahams [50]. In our case important aspects of community development, communication with target audiences such as volunteers, stakeholders, and consumers are extremely important as well as delivering benefit to society by contributing to their focal social cause and delivering the benefits desired for corporate partners. Recently most attention in research of information and communication technologies (ICT) use for nonprofit organizations has moved toward particular online elements, such as the use of social media [49], [51]–[56] and online fundraising [57], [58].

Online charity has become increasingly popular, especially among young people, and it is often called micro charity [57]. Social media channels in social supermarkets gaining important place because of reach of target audiences and of online sharing, which occurs organically at no costly [51], [59]. So, social media offer excellent channel which are efficient for social supermarkets as nonprofit organizations cause because enables to reach a large number of stakeholders in a short time, and network can further boost various donations. As was stated by [53], [60], [61] recently found similar patterns for online giving in particular. For example, Twitter can help mobilize supporters into vocal advocates [56].

If nonprofits organizations, in our case social supermarkets fail to take advantage of new media expected by users, the organizations may face negative consequences. Even if such issues were discussed previously taking in to account different circumstances and aspects of food supply chain. For example, “Challenges of Reducing Fresh Produce Waste in Europe—From Farm to Fork” discussed by Blanke [62], where is emphasized countermeasures such as collection (rather than wasting) of perishable food by volunteers (“Die Tafel”), or “Food Sharing” of private household left-over perishable on social media, or any combination of the above to aid reducing fresh produce waste. It is important to have easy platform for donations, and if citizens cannot find form, make it easy, or get feedback after the donation - the organization may lose such source and donation itself. Because unsatisfied supporter who cannot find easy tools for involvement -may look for another nonprofit organization with more advanced and convenient platform and flexible solutions.

Nonetheless, study Social Supermarkets in Europe [63] suggests that interactive digital communication is not commonly used way to reach targeted audience in social supermarkets. Web sites are present are present in 14% analyzed social supermarkets in France, in 20% in Belgium, around 66% in Austria and Romania, while all analyzed social supermarkets in Luxemburg have own website. Data in [63] states that in Belgium 10% of social supermarkets utilize social media, in France only 2.3%, in Austria 1.7% while in Switzerland, Luxemburg and Romania 0%. For Croatia nor for any other Central and Southeastern
European country data are not analyzed.

IV. EXPERIENCE OF ACTIVE SOCIAL NETWORK USE IN SOCIAL SUPERMARKETS IN CROATIA

Upon conducted in-field research and deep interviews with social entrepreneurs in social supermarkets in Croatia which were done from June 2017 till nowadays, there are more than 15 social supermarkets located in various cities dominantly they are run by non-profit organizations, out of existing social supermarkets in Croatia 30% are actively using social networks to approach its targeted audiences. In this paper we will analyze case of social supermarkets in Rijeka, Osijek and Vinkovci as examples of good practice for active and effective usage of social networks in communication with various types of users. Firstly, we will give a profile of each social supermarket. Profiles are done according to infield visits and interviews with social entrepreneurs who are responsible for social supermarket’s operation and upon information available in public sources where available. Secondly, we will analyze how they implement social networks as a mean of communication with their stakeholders.

The profiles of selected social supermarkets: Social supermarket „Kruh sv. Elizabete” (in English: St Elisabeth’s bread) in Rijeka is the first social supermarket opened in Croatia. It was established in 2001. Even though it is conceived by the Franciscan Order and their volunteer, it functions as a separate non-profit organization which is it is the combination of three coordinated departments, each tasked with their own respective responsibilities [64]: (1) end users and donors, (2) clothing/footwear and finance and (3) food, volunteers and media. The Rijeka social supermarket has more than 50 regular volunteers and around 400 occasional volunteers who distribute approximately 800 packages each month to the 500 most socially endangered families in the local community, i.e. it has around 2000 users. The most important donors are individual citizens and fundraising actions are organized at three levels [65]: (1) the annual “Young against hunger” initiative (2) Saturday fundraisers at traditional retail chains stores, and (3) participation in local city events. “Young against hunger “is the key fundraiser and it is organized in cooperation with regional elementary schools where children are asked to voluntarily give one product in order to learn how to practically show solidarity with citizens in need. In addition, “orange” volunteers of the social supermarket Rijeka are present in one of the shopping malls each and every Saturday during the whole day. Occasionally, the Futsal tournament is organized. It takes place in the Hall of youth on Trsat under the motto: "entertainment for us, rescue to others” because each registered futsal team, instead of paying the registration fee in cash, is “paying” in food donations to the social supermarket. Also, the anniversary celebration of Social Supermarket Rijeka is an important and open-door event for all stakeholders in the local community. At the event a joint lunch is served bringing journalists and citizens together with volunteers and homeless people of Rijeka. Due to numerous events and fundraising activities, the social supermarket Rijeka is very exposed to traditional and electronic media. For instance, newspaper Novi list, magazine JaTrgovac and numerous portals are covering their activities in positive manner on regular basis. Therefore, this social supermarket is very well known both on local and on national level.

Social supermarket in Osijek is operated by Civil Association “River of Love” (in Croatian: Udruga Rijeka ljubavi). It has regular working hours during the week. Additionally, each month to each household a “package of life” containing 14 food products sufficient for 10 days is prepared and distributed to households in need [38]. Dependable on quantity of donation special distribution events are organized, for instance donations for kids during the Christmas or Easter period. The social supermarket serves to approximately 1000 households, i.e. around 4000 end users (persons). Approximately 15 volunteers are fully engaged in everyday activities. Data on end users are kept in database and are updated regularly upon data on financial census collected from the City Government welfare office and local employment service. Operation space is donated by the Osijek City Government and there is an occasional cooperation with Croatian Army for hosting large donation events. The donation structure includes: 80% of individual donations, 10% donations by local companies and 10% donations collected throughout cooperation with schools and universities. Social supermarket forces active interaction with local public, actively promotes its operation through national traditional and electronic media, but also intensively uses all sorts of digital communication including social networks.

Social supermarket in Vinkovci is operated by Civil Association “Young Against Hunger” (in Croatian: Mladi protiv gladi). It has regular opening hours on Friday from 16 till 19, but it operates occasionally as well when large donations have to be distributed in a quickly manner. On average, user can come to pick up food products once a month. There are 300 households, i.e. approximately 1000 individual users served by this social supermarket.
Approximately 30 volunteers are engaged in everyday activities working in teams of six on days when large donations are distributed to users. The individual donor donates operation space. Social supermarket deals with food products (80% of assortment) and toiletries (20% of assortment). From time to time smaller amounts of apparel and footwear are distributed, but due to a lack of space, this kind of assortment is not in the operation focus. Similarly, to other social supermarkets, end users’ database is updated regularly upon data on financial census collected from the City Government welfare office, local employment service and tax authorities. The donation structure includes: 90% of individual donations and 10% donations by local companies. Food collecting activities are performed within large stores in local retail outlets. In addition, they developed continuous relationship with the local moto-club Gladiator that organizes fundraising activities among its members and friends ending in yearly donations of approximately 4000 EUR in food. Local media cover activities of the social supermarket, but own leaflets, own webpage and own Facebook profile are the key communication tools for public relations.

Usage of Social Networks in Chosen Social Supermarkets: Social supermarkets in Rijeka, Osijek and Vinkovci intensively use social networks, especially Facebook, as the vital communication channel in their everyday operation. Therefore, we analyzed their Facebook pages in order to explain the means of use of this social network and its suitability in operation of social supermarkets. Table 1 shows the strength of each Facebook page in terms of publishing richness and frequency and popul arity measured by number of followers and number of reviews. All analyzed Facebook pages are in Croatian language only, but this is expected as social supermarkets, per se, are oriented towards narrow, local geographic area such as city or county. Social supermarket Osijek is the most active according to number of followers, number of published pictures and video materials, but also according to interactivity level with the community (because there are between 5 and 10 comments given by followers per one published status). Besides Facebook page, only Rijeka has active YouTube channel at which activities are promoted. However, video materials published directly at Facebook page are more frequently viewed in Osijek’s case.

Table 1. General data on Facebook pages of selected social supermarkets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Rijeka</th>
<th>Osijek</th>
<th>Vinkovci</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title (page name)</td>
<td>Socijalna Samoposluga &quot;Kruh Elizabete&quot; Rijeka</td>
<td>Rijeka Ljubavi</td>
<td>Mladi Protiv Gladi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of publishing</td>
<td>At least once a week; last status published this week</td>
<td>Almost on daily basis; last status published yesterday</td>
<td>Once a week, last status yesterday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Followers</td>
<td>1706</td>
<td>6016</td>
<td>3306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page likes</td>
<td>1692</td>
<td>5983</td>
<td>3332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of page reviews</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover pictures</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile pictures</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures in Gallery</td>
<td>More than 100</td>
<td>More than 3000</td>
<td>More than 200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: + available information, - unavailable information; presented data is the result of own analysis of Facebook activities of selected social supermarkets in Croatia on 20th December 2017

In social supermarkets, there are three groups which can be communicated via social networks, those are: (1) end users, (2) volunteers and donors, (4) general public. Table 2 shows information targeted to specific audiences by selected social supermarkets in Croatia. We can observe that Facebook is recognized as a tool for communication with the general public. All analyzed social supermarkets publish announcements on events and/or reports on organized events. But, usually, events notifications are done via Facebook status publication and, therefore, the functionality is not at the same level as it would be if the event is announced by entering Facebook event. If the event information is published as a status, followers cannot easily invite participants, nor export event to their personal calendars. Therefore, there is a place to improve this segment in the future.
Even though end users are people in severe material deprivation, social supermarket Osijek uses Facebook to reach them and to share information on package distribution and distribution of unplanned large donations of perishable goods. Also, social network is used to communicate events being organized for end users as well. In addition, during the infield interview we asked manager of social supermarket Osijek does it make sense to use social networks in communication with end users in case of social supermarkets and she responded: “If the end user does not possess a cell phone or a computer to see the announcement on his or her own, some of their neighbors will pass them information. After all, Osijek is, known for its solidarity and information sharing culture. And this way of information sharing functions perfectly”.

Regarding communication with volunteers and donors the most active is social supermarket Rijeka, but this is due to their wide base of volunteers (50 regular and 400 occasional volunteers). However, Osijek and VInkovci social supermarkets are striving to give online individual appraisal for each donation and for each donation they publish the report and acknowledgement with the clear “thank you” notice for the donor. The reports are always illustrated by numerous photos.

Table 2. Information according to targeted audiences on Facebook pages of selected social supermarkets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Targeted audience</th>
<th>Rijeka</th>
<th>Osijek</th>
<th>Vinkovci</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title (page name)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>General public</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone number</td>
<td>General public</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messenger address</td>
<td>General public</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail address</td>
<td>General public</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web address</td>
<td>General public</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hours</td>
<td>General public</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keywords</td>
<td>General public</td>
<td>3 keywords (includes social supermarket and/or grocery retail)</td>
<td>2 keywords</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description (info)</td>
<td>General public</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Only goal description</td>
<td>Only address and slogan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story</td>
<td>General public</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General public</td>
<td>Rewards</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements on package distribution to end user</td>
<td>End users</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements on the urgent distribution of unplanned / large donations</td>
<td>End users</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announces future events organized for end users</td>
<td>End users</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for volunteers</td>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests for donations</td>
<td>Donors</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Thank you” notices for donors</td>
<td>Donors</td>
<td>Acknowledgments are published periodically but are not individualized</td>
<td>Frequent acknowledgements per individual donor</td>
<td>Frequent acknowledgements per individual donor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcement of events</td>
<td>General public</td>
<td>Periodically, on the FB wall, only a few created events</td>
<td>Very intense, on the FB wall, not as FB events</td>
<td>Occasionally, as a status not created event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding information sharing, we found that links to other Facebook pages are shared in case of Rijeka and Vinkovci social supermarkets, links to other portals (such as newspapers and magazines) are done at all social supermarkets, especially to articles regarding operation of the certain social supermarket. In case of Rijeka, Vinkovci and Osijek videomaterials produced by others are shared regularly if it is concerned with the operation of given social supermarket, see Table 3.

Table 3. Links to other pages and other specifics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Rijeka</th>
<th>Osijek</th>
<th>Vinkovci</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Links to other Facebook pages</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to other portals (such as newspapers and magazines)</td>
<td>Rarely, only publications regarding this social supermarket</td>
<td>Approximately one per month, only publications regarding this social supermarket</td>
<td>Rarely, publications regarding this social supermarket and publications on poverty and sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to video produced by others</td>
<td>Approximately one per month</td>
<td>Approximately one per month</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specifics</td>
<td>Own YouTube channel „Socka na YouTube-u“</td>
<td>Intensive comments of followers, usually 5-10 comments per status; On the homepage The live chat (FB messenger) is activated as a pop-up window.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: + available information, - unavailable information; presented data is the result own analysis of Facebook activities of selected social supermarkets in Croatia on 20th December 2017.

V. CONCLUSION

Social supermarkets as new intermediators emerged due to the economic crisis in Europe. Their main function is to efficiently distribute surpluses of products from traditional supply chains to people in severe material deprivation. In this paper we explained main characteristics of social supermarkets and then our attention was drawn to the usage of social networks in their communication with environment. When compared to available data from other European countries, Croatian social supermarkets use social networks in higher percentage. The percentage of social supermarkets utilizing social networks in Croatia is 30% while in Austria and France this indicator is below 3% [63].
As good examples we analyzed the usage of social networks in three social supermarkets in Croatia, particularly Rijeka, Osijek and Vinkovci. All three analyzed social supermarkets use Facebook as the social network suitable for public relations. Upon given examples we isolated 3 groups of social supermarkets’ stakeholders addressed through social networks, those are: (1) end users, who search information on time, place and means of distribution of necessary goods within the supermarket (2) volunteers and donors to whom we can place various calls and requests, but also to whom we can make public appraisal via social networks, and (3) general public to whom we can share information on events, fundraising activities, give report on previously organized events, share links to other media and other social networks etc. All cases of social supermarkets foster active communication and share multimedia via social networks. They promote their activities and events on regularly basis, but relation to donors, volunteers and end users could be more improved in a near future. However, in order to explain the real efficiency of social network in everyday operation further research have to be done, this research could consist of survey within social network user’s population and further interviews with social supermarkets’ managers. In addition, there are some raising questions to be addressed in the future papers and discussed both on national and international level. One of them is protection of privacy of individuals, especially end users, who, as socially endangered group of people, attend donation events and without their expressed will their pictures appears at social network pages of the social supermarket. The question of privacy protection is even more problematic if we know that some events are organized for children. Therefore, in the near future, in-field interviews and focus group research has to be done to address this part of problem regarding social network usage in social supermarket.

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Implementation of Social Networks as a Digital Communication Tool in Social Supermarkets.

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