



2ND INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM K-FORCE 2019

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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO DISASTERS

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, social networks are increasingly recognized as an important tool in the society readiness for disasters and emergency management. Social networks can be used in disaster risk management in a different ways: alerts, spreading news about casualties and damage, publishing multimedia information such as videos and photos, tracking public debates, crisis management and dissemination of information on its response to the actual event, the creation of social cohesion and encouraging donations.

CORE IDEA OF THE RESEARCH

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY The subject of this quantitative research is to examine the attitudes of respondents about the role of social networks in preparedness and response of the community to disasters and to determine the level of trust in the use of social networks during such events. The research was carried out via an online questionnaire distributed via email and *Facebook*. The research was conducted among the students of the universities involved in the K-FORCE project from the Western Balkan countries.

FINDINGS All respondents (100%) stated that they have an account on one of the social networks, while most respondents indicated that they have *Facebook* (95.7%), *Instagram* (62%) and *YouTube* channel account (26.1%). When asked if they know that the Sector for Emergency Management – Ministry of Interior of Serbia has its official accounts on social networks (*Facebook* account and *YouTube* channel), 26.9% of respondents answered Yes, and 73.1% No (Figure 1). Most respondents (71%) said they would seek help through social networks (Figure 1) during an emergency if they were able to do so, but only 11.8% of them believe that public services would urgently respond to that call. As the biggest disadvantage when using social networks in emergencies, 60.2% of respondents emphasize the possibility of spreading false information, 21.5% believe that social networks may not function during emergencies, and 18.3% think that social networks are not a reliable source of information.

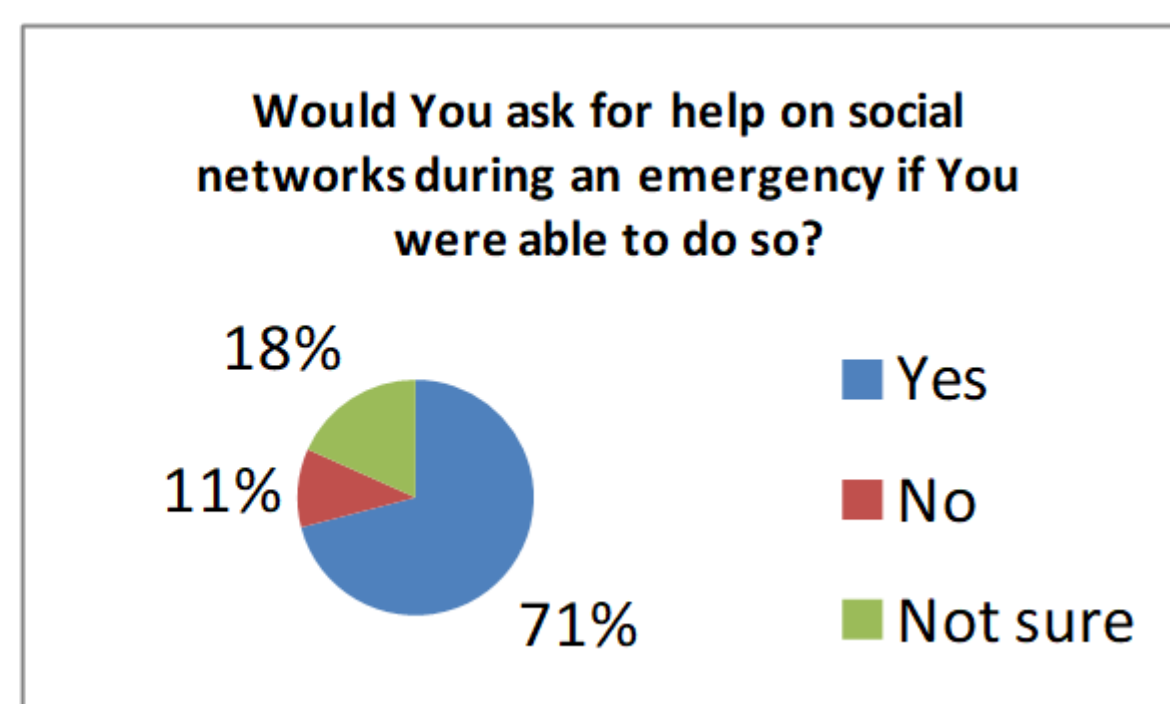
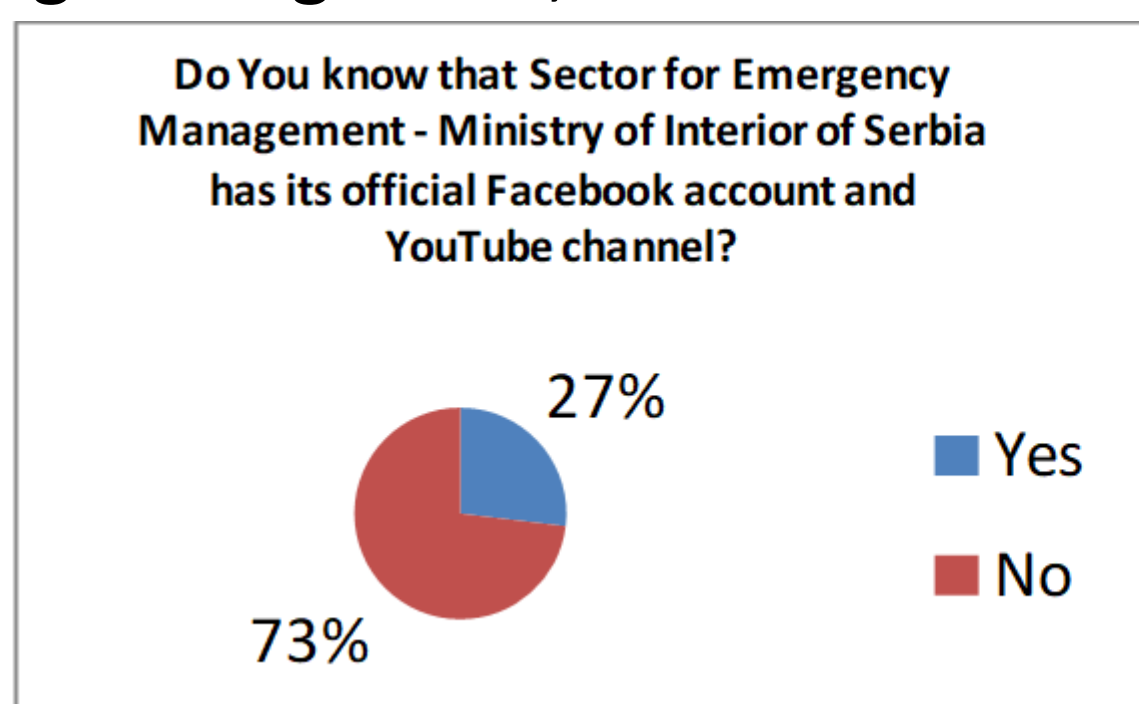


Figure 1 - Results of research on awareness of the official social networks and trust

CONCLUSION

Social networks are used daily and on a large scale, therefore they can be used to raise citizens' awareness of the dangers surrounding them, as well as education on preventive measures in order to enhance preparedness and response to a particular event. It is evident that there is awareness that social networks are a tool that enables rapid dissemination of information and alerts.

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