MEDİAD

Formation and Change of Beliefs through Online Environments: Analysis on the "Diyanet English" X Account

Ahmet KOÇYİĞİT*

Abstract

This study focuses on the formation and change of religious beliefs in the age of social media. Accordingly, this study aims to determine how social media is used in religious contexts. Another aim of the study is to reveal how the formation and change processes of religious beliefs are realized through social media tools. In line with these objectives, the official X account of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye - Presidency of Religious Affairs named "Diyanet English", which shares posts in English, was analyzed using the content analysis method. The posts made from this account between July 1, 2023 and July 1, 2024 were analyzed for the aim of the study using the MAXQDA 2022 package program. The data obtained within the framework of the analysis were coded and the subject distribution, sub-codes, and word cloud of the shared content were presented. When the findings and results obtained in the study were evaluated, it was determined that the Presidency of Religious Affairs shared mostly religious information, official statements, and content related to social and communal issues from the account in question. In addition, it was concluded that this account is not used actively, the posts were limited, and there was a lack of interactive use.

Keywords: New media, Religion, Faith, Presidency of Religious Affairs

Çevrimiçi Ortamlar Aracılığıyla İnançların İnşası ve Değişimi: Diyanet İngilizce X Hesabı Üzerine Analiz

Öz

Bu çalışma, sosyal medya çağında dini inaçların inşası ve değişimi üzerine odaklanmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda çalışmada sosyal medyanın dini bağlamda nasıl kullanıldığının belirlenmesi ve ortaya konulması amaçlanmıştır. Ayrıca sosyal medya araçları vasıtasıyla dini inaçların inşa ve değişim süreçlerinin nasıl ve ne şekilde gerçekleştiğinin ortaya çıkartılması çalışmanın bir diğer amacıdır. Bu amaçlar doğrultusunda çalışmada Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığının İngilizce olarak paylaşımlar gerçekleştirdiği "Diyanet English" resmi X hesabı içerik analizi yöntemi ile incelenmiştir. Bu hesaptan 1 Temmuz 2023- 1 Temmuz 2024 tarihleri arasında gerçekleştirilen paylaşımlar MAXQDA 2022 paket programı aracılığıyla çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda analiz edilmiştir. Analiz çerçevesinde elde veriler kodlanarak paylaşılan içeriklerin konu dağılımı, alt kodları ve kelime bulutu ortaya çıkartılmıştır. Çalışmada elde edilen bulgular ve sonuçlar değerlendirildiğinde Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı söz konusu hesaptan çoğunlukla dini bilgilendirme, resmi açıklama, sosyal ve toplumsal konularla ilgili içerikler paylaştığı tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca bu hesabın güncel olarak kullanılmadığı, paylaşımların sınırlı olduğu, interaktif olarak kullanımın eksik olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yeni Medya, Din, İnanç, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı

* Assist. Prof., Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University, e-mail: ahmetkocyigit@ohu.edu.tr, orcid.org/0000-0002-1276-1128, Niğde, Türkiye

Introduction

The new communication technologies that emerged in the 20th century and became the pioneers of change have drastically altered production systems. In addition to production systems, these technologies have contributed to the acceleration of digitalization in many other areas such as communication, interaction, and religion. The digital age we live in has digitized the global world and universal communication, and the speed of communication, interaction, and accessing news has greatly increased. Additionally, Web 2.0 technology (which allows users to be more active and engaged) enables user-oriented content production and allows individuals to create their own profile pages (Söğüt & Öngel, 2022). The widespread use of new media created by new communication systems has directly affected every aspect of human life. These communication technologies called social media, new media, and Web 2.0 have become an effective communication area. In addition, social media tools play an active role in setting the agenda of society, groups, and individuals and connecting them with these agendas. Additionally, new media are virtual environments where users can create their own profiles, publish self-produced content, and share their content with large communities (Blossom, 2009).

New media are the new-generation platforms of the internet where users can produce unique content. They have distinctive features such as being writeable, readable, updatable, fast, and free of charge. It would not be wrong to describe new media technology and writable web technology as a new domain of concepts, discourse, and ideas. New media increases the network effect and as a result of that, more users communicate as databases develop, applications become more functional, and they reach wider audiences (Musser & O'Reilly, 2007). New media technology appears as platforms where individuals can participate together, produce content, and come together around a specific purpose. Furthermore, it has many advantages in terms of enabling users to read, write, watch, share, and act in a coordinated manner on any subject.

Being one of the 21st century's most effective digital platforms, Web 2.0 channels provide serious advantages to individuals and organizations. Billions of users around the world use digital communication technologies and social networks to do research on products and services, exchange views on their hobbies and tastes, review products, become members of music and movie fan clubs, participate in political campaigns, promote religious beliefs, and create virtual friendships. Digital communication technologies, which are used extensively today, provide web-based communication opportunities and enable users to express their opinions, thoughts, comments, and likes online. In addition, Web 2.0 technology has provided the opportunity to combine the read technology on the web with the write technology. Web 2.0 is a combination of innovations in the internet and digital communication technologies. Many institutions, organizations, companies, and politicians want to use the advantages of these innovations and they are working to this end (Koçyiğit & Koçyiğit, 2018).

In the digital age, the rapid change and development in information and communication technologies, especially the widespread use of social media, has increased the speed of access to information and made news and information consumption extremely easy. The fact that user-generated content, information, or news reaches millions of people in a very short time shows how effective social media platforms are in the speed of information dissemination. The ease of access

to information and news, which is among the intended uses of social media platforms, draws attention as the most important aspect of these platforms.

Considering that 68.9 million people are social media users, 82 percent of the total population have access to the internet, and online news consumption is 84 percent in Türkiye (Digital, 2022), the importance of social media tools at the social level becomes evident. Although there are many different social media tools in use around the world, some have a much higher usage rate and impact than others. The platform "X" is one of the tools with a high utilization rate and level of impact. X not only covers a wide range of topics such as politics, sports, business, or entertainment, it also plays an important role in times of crisis. Today, X can set the agenda for almost every part of society, from individuals to institutions, and a topic that is a Trending Topic (TT) on X can become the agenda of the country, politicians, and even the entire nation. For this reason, social media platforms (especially X) are used as an effective communication tool by individuals, organizations, and governments.

Considering the characteristics of new media, it is possible to summarize the features of social media platforms and the benefits they provide to users with the development in digital communication technologies as follows (Musser & O'Reilly, 2007): Through mass connectivity, it provides users with interactive, symmetrical, fast and mass connectivity. With user-oriented control, users have increased control over information flow and content sharing. With user-centricity, rich interfaces designed for different experiences tailored for each user and web content that optimizes user interactions have emerged and social media users have become more active. The concept of openness provides the opportunity to access information and share it with more people. Thanks to its low cost, social media technology increases the activity of users with its ease of use and ability to contribute. Moreover, social media technology (which is flexible, editable, suitable for sharing and more suitable for achieving success through collaboration than controlling, has read-write technology, and enables dialogic structure) embodies unique digital communication features.

Considering the impact of the change created by the development of new media, this transformation has had significant effects in the field of religion and belief, as in almost every field of social life (Stout, 2011). Foremost among these effects, new media has helped to increase awareness of different beliefs and practices and promote religious pluralism by facilitating access to religious information (Hoover, 2006). In addition, new media have created new spaces for religious groups and individuals to express themselves. Social media platforms enable religious leaders to deliver preaches, prayers, and other religious content to large audiences. This allows religious knowledge and practices to transcend geographical boundaries and create a global network of interaction (Stolow, 2005). Moreover, new media has accelerated the process of individualization and personalization of religious beliefs. Unlike traditional religious communities, individuals can form and express their religious identities and beliefs on online platforms. For example, preaches posted on YouTube, religious discussions on Facebook and X, blog posts, and online religious forums help religious groups and individuals to promote and defend their beliefs (Hosseini, 2008).

Considering the studies on new media, religion, and belief in the related literature, Hosseini (2008) in his study on religion and media, mentioned the importance of religion, culture, and globalization. Arguing that globalization has a tangible impact on religion and beliefs, the author

mentions the inevitable changes in religious institutions, religious beliefs, and traditions. Hjarvard (2011) on the other hand, emphasizes the mediatization of religion today and discusses the relationship between media and religion as secularization. In his article, the author discusses the relationship between mediatization and secularization at three levels: society, organization, and individual. Knott & Mitchell (2013) in their study titled "The changing faces of media and religion", state that religion has undergone a major change and transformation with the new media technologies emerging in today's society. Kutlu (2024) in his study on online religion in Türkiye, states that new media has led to the emergence of new preachers who communicate religious and ethical values in a media-oriented way. Moreover, Kutlu (2022) in his study titled "Analysis of Fake Religious Posts on Social Media", states that posts with religious content on social media generally carry a sacred discourse, but some of them are unfounded.

Although the studies in the literature are similar to this study, this study differs from others in that it focuses on the formation and change of religious beliefs in the social media age and reveals how the formation and change processes of religious beliefs are realized through social media tools. This study focuses on the formation and change of religious beliefs in the age of social media. Accordingly, this study aims to determine how social media is used in religious contexts. Another aim of the study is to reveal how the formation and change processes of religious beliefs are realized through social media tools. In line with these objectives, the official X account of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye - Presidency of Religious Affairs (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı), (Diyanet English, 2024) which posts in English, was analyzed using the content analysis method.

New Media and Religious Representations

New media or social media are virtual environments where users can create their own profiles, publish self-produced content, and share their content with large communities. Some of this shared content affects the behavior of individuals in society directly and some indirectly. In this respect, social media can be defined as highly accessible communication technologies Blossom, (2009) that allow individuals to easily influence each other. On the other hand, social media is defined as: collaborative and online content Roberts & Kraynak (2008), virtual community Kim vd., (2010), content created by its own audience Comm & Burge (2009), and social content websites that allow participants to express themselves in online environments, communicate, participate in groups and contribute to these groups with comments and publications.

Gunelius (2011), defines social media as communication platforms created by utilizing web 2.0 technologies; online publications that emerge through conversations, relationships, and user participation. In another inclusive definition, Eley & Tilley (2009) refer to texts, images, audio content on forums, microblogs and blogs, and profile pages on social networking platforms as social media. There are hundreds of definitions of social media in the literature. Naturally, it is not possible to list all definitions here. For this reason, the definitions mentioned above are comprehensive and descriptive enough as they are agreed upon and accepted.

Social media platforms, or digital social networks, stand out with their user-oriented nature. These human-centered platforms allow all users to interact with each other. In addition to being the most important environments of writable web technology, social media platforms are channels

that are increasing in number of users and level of influence among digital communication tools. Since Web 2.0 technology includes applications that enable online and interactive communication, social media platforms are referred as the social aspects of new-generation digital information technologies (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008).

Blossom (2009), lists the characteristics of social media platforms as follows:

- They use next-generation web infrastructures that include measurable and accessible online technologies and techniques.
- Due to their online, dialogic, and interactive nature, they allow users to communicate with each other without the limitations of time and space.
- With their interactive feature, they have made it possible for web technologies to have read, write, and share features.
- The level of influence of social media platforms is quite high due to their multi-media nature and the fact that millions of users communicate with each other at the same time.

There are many social media tools and channels around the world for different purposes. Some of these tools are used all over the world, while others exist locally. Sites such as Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, and Wikipedia are among the leading sites used worldwide. Not all social media channels have a similar level of impact on communication processes. For an institution or organization to gain a place in the media and be on the agenda, it needs to make newsworthy discoveries or carry out activities and report them to the media. Additionally, not every social media channel or tool has the same impact on the target audience. For this reason, it is of great importance for an institution to choose the right tool to influence the thoughts, behaviors, and actions of the target audience. The right channels must be selected in order to attract the attention of individuals, to ensure that the messages are perceived, and to change the perceptions of the target audience (Koçyiğit, 2022).

It is necessary to highlight the platform "X", which is one of the most widely used social media tools in the world, as it includes the sampling process of the study. This platform is a medium where many agendas from politics, sports, business, entertainment, and religious issues are discussed. In fact, a topic that is a Trending Topic (TT) in X can even become the national agenda of a country. For this reason, it is seen that social media (especially today with channels such as X) can set or influence the agenda of individuals, institutions, and states. Even heads of state make their statements on this site today.

As today's societies are undergoing rapid change and digitalization, researchers (especially in the field of social sciences) have placed communication processes and technologies in a central position to explain the effects of this change on society and the processes of change. Castells, one of the most important representatives of this positioning, mentions that in order to understand and analyze societies, it is necessary to focus on their communication technologies (and therefore their media structures). Castells (2013) calls this new era "the age of informationalism", while characterizing today's societies as "network society". These technological changes have led to fundamental changes in society, the most important of which are changes in culture. Technological changes have led to the emergence of concepts such as mass culture, popular culture, and digital culture in society. With the concept of "Culture Industry", Adorno states that the mass media create a system and offer similar cultural products to the masses in unison (Adorno, 2008). On the other

hand, with the influence of mass communication technologies, the concept of popular culture is expressed as an ephemeral, short-term, ever-changing daily life culture and it includes many concepts such as music, art, sports, food and drink, fashion, politics, and social life.

Accordingly, technological developments and new media have created new spaces for religious groups and individuals to express themselves. Social media platforms enable religious leaders to deliver preaches, prayers, and other religious content to large audiences. This allows religious knowledge and practices to transcend geographical boundaries and create a global network of interaction. In addition, new media has also become a strategic tool for religious groups to promote themselves and defend their beliefs.

Recognizing the wide reach and interaction potential of social media, religious institutions or religious personalities actively use these platforms today. Social media allows religious leaders to deliver their preaches, teachings, and religious messages to large audiences, while at the same time establishing closer and continuous communication with their congregations. For example, platforms such as X, Facebook, and Instagram provide a platform for religious leaders to interact directly with their followers, answer questions, and engage in religious discussions. This digital interaction helps religious leaders and institutions to become more visible in society and disseminate religious knowledge to a wider audience. Furthermore, social media makes it easier for religious communities to connect with each other, build support networks, and coordinate religious activities. However, this process of digitalization brings with it a transformation of religious authority and traditional religious structures, requiring a redefinition of religious leadership and authority in the new media age.

Formation and Change of Beliefs in New Media

As mentioned above, Castells describes today's societies as network societies. In today's conditions, power relations, social roles, production, and distribution relations are better explained by the concept of network society. This is because there are relations in societies mediated by new communication technologies, and power, production, distribution, and social practices are determined by a networked technology. In other words, the determinants of relations in all segments of society are realized through new computer-mediated communication technologies. Moreover, structures such as political power and the nation-state have been replaced by new power relations today, determined by technological and computerized means. The best example of this is the technologically assisted uprisings and protests in different societies. In fact, the competition and power relations that have emerged between nation-states and technology giants in recent times, states taking certain measures against technology giants that exist worldwide, states trying to determine legal frameworks, and the emergence of power conflicts can be given as examples (Koçyiğit, 2022).

Today, the concepts of culture and media are in an inseparable relationship (Kutlu, 2023). This relationship manifests itself in the media's presentation of new lives to society, and in the process by which modern people make sense of the world and create images. The new symbols created by the media shape human life and create a new style of culture that includes thoughts and behaviors by creating a certain lifestyle. For this reason, this culture created by the media recreates and

shapes popular culture (Geçer, 2013). This reproduction is realized through the media and popular culture is reflected by the media in terms of its content and forms (McQuail, 1994).

In his book "Liquid Surveillance", Bauman states that while identities are ambiguous, unregulated, and self-ordained, they are transformed into symbolic entities based and centered on the image. As a result, virtual spaces have emerged and individuals have created their online spaces by creating posts according to their interests through digital media, such as websites and social media. Bauman conceptualizes these spaces as "virtual space", while Castells defines the communities in these environments as "virtual communities". In virtual space environments, virtual realities and identities are produced because the reality is blurred (Bauman, 2014; Castells, 2013).

Goffman (2016), on the other hand, states that the individuals present their selves and their thoughts virtually in the virtual space and virtual community environments. Goffman offers an explanatory approach using the example of theater to explain the atmosphere of digital culture in which the actors of virtual networks exist. According to Goffman, individuals put on a performance similar to a theater play staged by professional actors and these behaviors (which are expected to be taken seriously but are also contrived) have nothing to do with reality. Today, individuals present their selves with fake behaviors through virtual environments, and they make many of the actions they perform in daily life with contrived performances public through social media (Çakmak & Çavuş, 2018). Furthermore, Goffman, who considers the identity artificially presented by individuals as the image that they try to project to others, interprets people as the sum of all these actions and the product of all arrangements. This is similar to the fact that an individual is the sum of all the elements that they put on their online profile, such as photos, comments, posts, or the people they follow. By creating their own showcases on social media, individuals can share their personal information, world views, and even their private lives. As a result, the values that popularize user profiles which reach the highest number of likes at the end of the day, constantly share content and have a high number of followers or viewers, are composed of numbers, images, and impressions (Güzel, 2016).

New media tools have profound effects on religious practices and rituals, causing significant transformations in these areas. Through digital platforms, worships and religious rituals can be performed virtually, thus overcoming the limitations of physical space and time. For example, applications such as online preaches, virtual prayers, and digital pilgrimages enable individuals to fulfill their religious practices in a more accessible and flexible way. This process brings with it the individualization and personalization of religious practices. New media allows individuals to personalize their religious experiences, while at the same time enabling sharing these experiences with a large online community. As a result, religious practices and rituals are breaking out of traditional patterns and transforming into a more dynamic, individual-oriented structure with the influence of new media tools. This transformation contributes to the reshaping of religious life at the individual and collective level, enabling beliefs to be expressed and lived in more personal and diversified forms.

Method

This study focuses on the formation and change of religious beliefs in the age of social media. In this respect, the study aims to determine how social media is used in the religious context and to reveal how the formation and change processes of religious beliefs are realized through social

media tools. Qualitative content analysis technique was used to evaluate the study in line with its aim, to determine the context and level of the posts, and to make a systematic evaluation. Content analysis is a method for analyzing the content of various data, such as visual and verbal. It allows phenomena or events to be reduced to defined themes and categories for better analysis and interpretation (Harwood & Garry, 2003).

Content analysis is important because it offers the possibility to analyze the context and framework, level, structure, intention of communication and to identify the focus of the communicator group. Moreover, the fact that it provides a systematic approach that is appropriate for the entire data set makes this method valuable. Content analysis technique responds to all these needs to evaluate the data constituting the sample of the study in line with the aim, determine the context and level of the posts, and make a systematic evaluation (Koçyiğit, 2023). The selection of the Presidency of Religious Affairs as the sample in the study is strategically important. The Presidency was preferred because it is an official institution of the state, is an authorized institution in religious activities, has the authority to manage religious activities, and it has a certain social reputation.

In this regard, the following questions were sought to be answered in the study:

1. What is the content of the posts made on the official X account of the Presidency of Religious Affairs in English?
2. How does the Presidency of Religious Affairs use its official X account in English in the context of religious belief?
3. How does the Presidency of Religious Affairs use its official X account in English in the context of interaction?
4. How does the Directorate of Religious Affairs shape its religious activities through its official X account in English?
5. Which messages do the Directorate of Religious Affairs emphasize on its official X account in English?

Population and Sample

In this study, the official X account of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of Religious Affairs "Diyanet English" constitutes the population of the study. Since the official X account of the Presidency was launched in December 2015, tens of thousands of content posts were made until the date of the study (Diyanet English, 2024). Given the immense difficulty of analyzing all this content both in terms of time and technical aspects, the study has been limited to the Presidency's posts made during the one-year period from July 1, 2023, to July 1, 2024. In addition, reposts, likes, comments, pictures, and videos were excluded. With the help of the categories and themes created based on the data, the Presidency's cultural belief and formation management strategies in online environments were identified. In addition, the content, topics, and word groups of the posts were included in the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

In line with the aim and sample of the study, data were obtained from the data set through the MAXQDA 2022 package program, consisting of 72 posts on X Türkiye, shared by the Presidency

between July 1, 2023 and July 1, 2024. Data collection and analysis involves categorizing, defining, and interpreting the data obtained within the subject and time period that constitute the sample and limitations of the research according to certain codes. For this aim, the data obtained were analyzed and then interpreted using the MAXQDA 2022 package program. Accordingly, the data collection and analysis process of the study consists of collecting the data from X Türkiye, classifying the data, analyzing the data, and interpreting the data.

To evaluate each of the posts in the sample in accordance with the aim of the study, a coding chart was created through the MAXQDA program. The coding process refers to the process of creating themes, categories, and codes. These processes are important in terms of realizing a systematic content analysis process (Creswell, 2017). MAXQDA makes qualitative data analysis faster and easier. MAXQDA is an analysis tool that allows to import and analyze data from interviews, web pages, images, audio and video files, spreadsheets, bibliographic data, and social networks such as X.

In the course of this study, themes and sub-codes were created by the authors in order to analyze and interpret the data obtained, in accordance with the requirements of the study. In line with the data set obtained, five different sub-codes were identified under the main theme of Presidency of Religious Affairs. These sub-codes were identified as: "religious information", "activities", "official statements", "education", and "social and community issues".

Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability process in qualitative research differs from other studies. In the qualitative analysis process, validity and reliability are tested by external experts or when the same data is replicated under similar conditions and yields the same results (Fidan, 2016). Accordingly, in this study, instead of having the themes and code systems coded by a different coder (due to the difficulty of reaching an expert trained in the field, the high cost of working with a professional coder, and the time constraints), a second coding was performed by the researcher to ensure reliability. The findings obtained as a result of this coding, conducted at a different time and under the same conditions, were found to be compatible with each other to a great extent (88%).

Findings

The basic information and findings of the official X account of the Presidency of Religious Affairs "Diyanet English" (@diyanet_en), which was analyzed for the aim of the study, are given below. In line with the data obtained, the analysis of the content shared from the official X account of the Presidency, themes and sub-codes, code model, findings of the word cloud were added to the study in the form of tables and visuals. In addition, the results that emerged after the coding made in accordance with the data were interpreted in line with the aim of the study (Diyanet English, 2024).

Table 1. Diyanet English Official X Account Profile Information

Account Name	Diyanet English
X Address	@diyanet_en
Account Image	
Number of Posts	2611
Number of Followers	4689
Number of Following Accounts	22

| Location	Ankara/Türkiye
Website Address	diyanet.gov.tr/en

An analysis of the official X account page of the Presidency reveals that the account name is "Diyanet English" and the account address is "@diyanet_en". The creation date of the page is December 2015. The official page has 4689 followers and is following 22 accounts. As of July 2024, when the study was conducted, 2689 posts have been made on the page so far. In addition, a link to the official English-language website of the Presidency, "diyanet.gov.tr/en", is provided. In the description section of the page, it is written as "Presidency of Religious Affairs Official Account". The location set on the page is Ankara, Türkiye, while the profile photo features the official logo of the Presidency in red and white colors. Additionally, the logo and the name of the Presidency are displayed in red and white on the background photograph of the page (Diyanet English, 2024).

Figure 1. Code Model of the Study
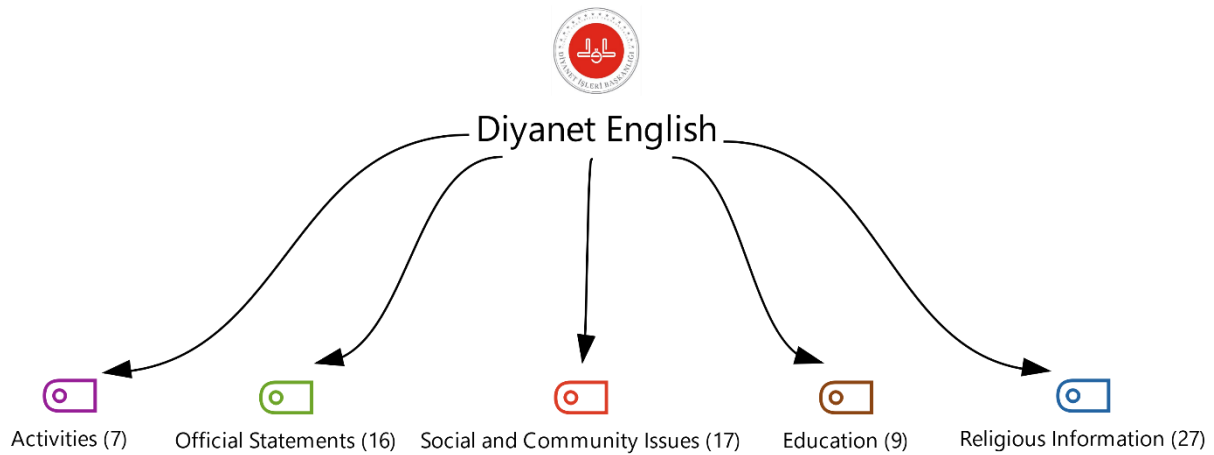
In line with the aim of the study, coding was carried out on the data to evaluate and analyze each post in the sample. After this coding process, themes and sub-codes of the study were created. The coding process is extremely important for the study as it involves certain stages and reveals meaningful relationships and connections in line with the results of the study. The code model created in accordance with the literature was analyzed within the framework of 72 posts. In order to analyze the obtained data, themes and sub-codes were determined. Accordingly, five different sub-codes were created under the main theme of "Diyanet English". These sub-codes are categorized as "religious information, activities, official statements, education, social and community issues". When the weighted code distributions of the posts were analyzed, it was found that the "religious information" (27) sub-code had the highest weight. The other codes are "social and community issues" (17), "official statements" (16), "education" (9), and "activities" (7). Accordingly, it is possible to state that the center of weight of the Presidency's posts is shaped around "religious information" and "social and community issues".

**Figure 2.** "Religious Information" Code - Sub-code Model
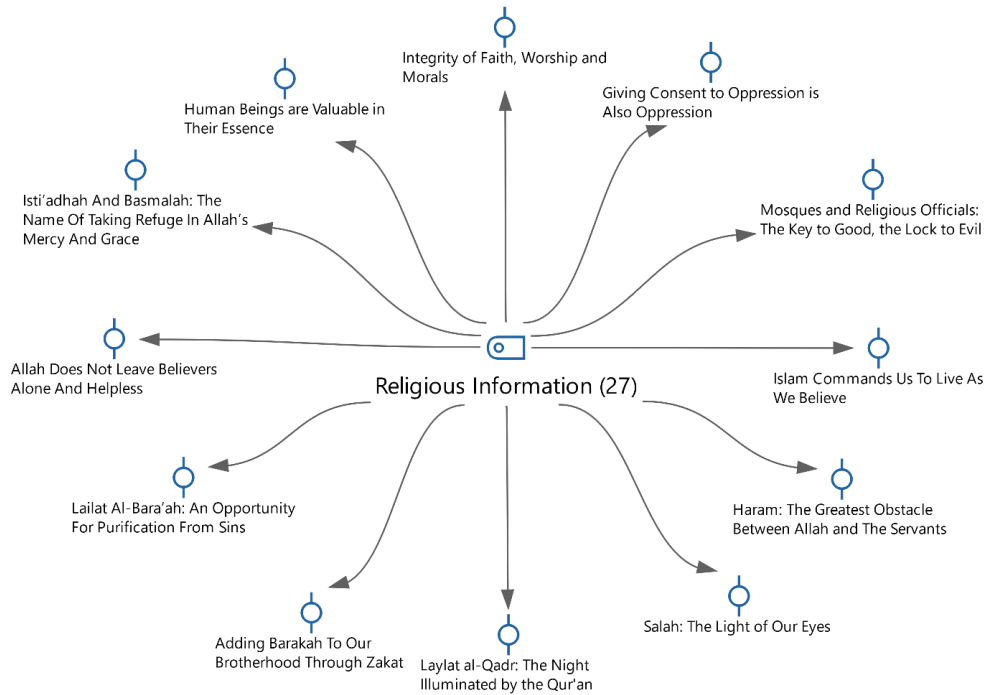
An analysis of Figure 2, which shows the Religious Information Code - Sub-Code Model, reveals that the Presidency made the most posts in this sub-code. In the posts, it is observed that information about the religion of Islam is shared generally. Within this context, it was determined that most of the posts were focused on religious information topics such as *Islamic belief, prayer, salam, Ramadan,* and *Friday*. Considering these results, it is observed that the official X account of the Presidency of Religious Affairs is mostly used to provide information on religious issues and to inform about the Islamic faith. In addition, posts were also made to explain the commandments and prohibitions of Islam.

**Figure 3.** "Social and Community Issues" Code - Sub-code Model
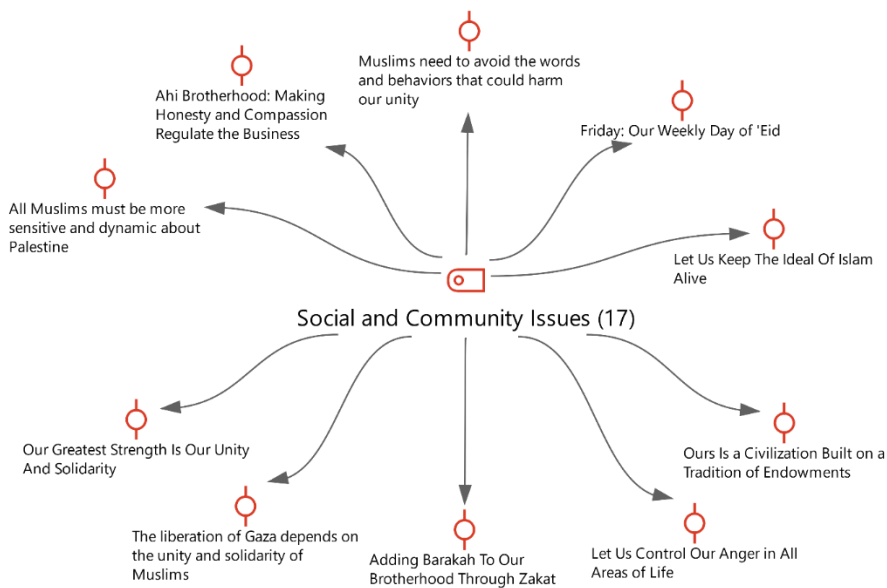
An analysis of Figure 3, which shows the Social and Community Issues Code - Sub-code Model, reveals that the Presidency attaches importance to social and community issues. When the shared contents were analyzed, it was observed that they were mostly focused on topics such as *family, civilization, brotherhood, unity, solidarity, homeland,* and *nation.* In this respect, it has been determined that the Presidency attaches importance to social and communal issues and makes efforts to convey these issues to the target audience. It is aimed to publicize and disseminate these themes in society, especially through online environments. Based on the posts, it can be said that raising awareness of these issues is a strategy of the Presidency.

**Figure 4.** "Official Statements" Code - Sub-code Model
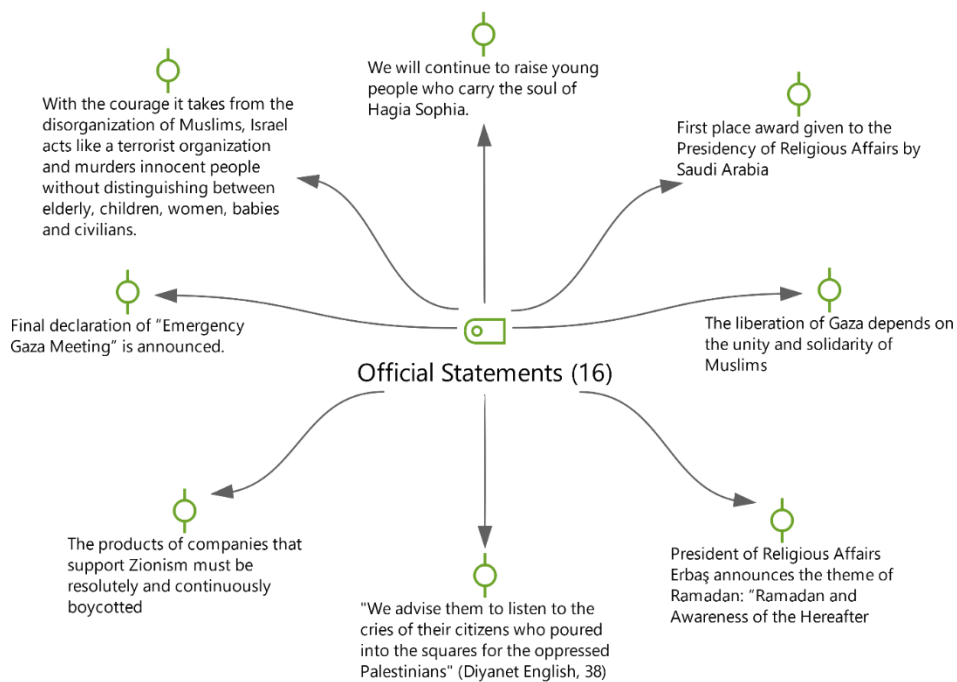
An analysis of Figure 4, which shows the Official Statements Code - Sub-code Model, reveals that the Presidency includes official statements in its posts, especially on issues that fall within the field of the Presidency of Religious Affairs and concern the society. In this respect, these posts are important in terms of informing and enlightening the public and ensuring communication. Official statements also increase the transparency and accountability of the organization. Transparency creates trust for both internal and external stakeholders, while accountability demonstrates that the organization's activities comply with ethical and legal standards. Moreover, official statements provide stakeholders with access to more accurate and up-to-date information about the organization. In crises, official statements protect the reputation of the organization by preventing misinformation and speculation. For all these reasons, they play an important role in the sustainability and long-term success of an organization.

Figure 5. "Education" Code - Sub-code Model
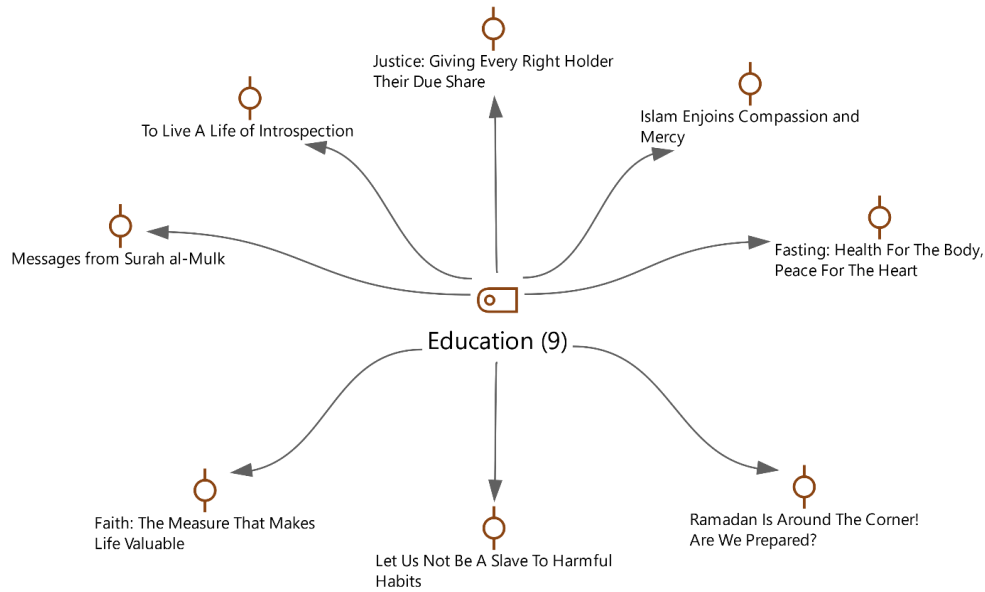
An examination of Figure 5, which shows the Education Code - Sub-code Model, reveals that the Presidency also shares information in the field of education. When the shared contents were analyzed, it was observed that educational processes and information in the religious field were provided. In this direction, it was determined that the frequency of posts was focused on topics such as Ramadan, Islamic message, justice, and life. Considering the importance that Islam attaches to the educational process, it is seen that the institution is sensitive to these issues and provides educational information to the target audience through the online environment.

Figure 6. "Activities" Code - Sub-code Model
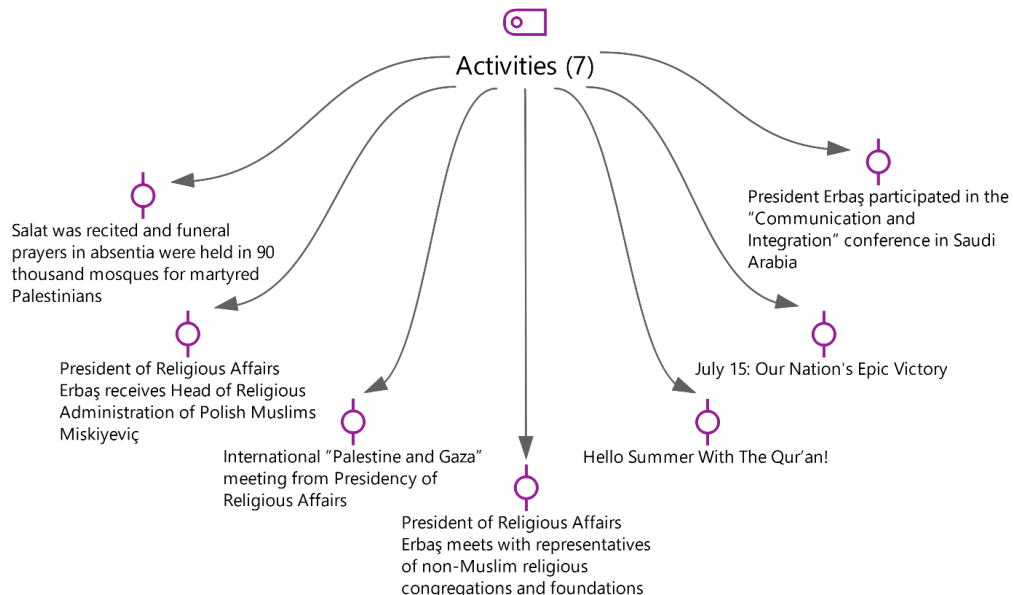
An analysis of Figure 6, which shows the Activities Code - Sub-code Model, reveals that the Presidency shares information on activities. In addition, the meetings and visits made by the President of Religious Affairs are among the posts shared on the account. Sharing an organization's activities on social media accounts is of great importance for modern communication strategies.

First of all, social media platforms enable reaching large audiences quickly and effectively, which increases the visibility and awareness of the organization. In this direction, the posts made by the organization are important in terms of visibility. Furthermore, social media posts can help build trust by providing transparent and continuous information about the organization's current activities.

Figure 7. Word Cloud of Posts

Based on the data obtained from the sample of the study, a word cloud analysis of the posts was conducted. The words were analyzed one by one and the most frequently used words were identified by excluding suffixes, numbers, dates, author names, verbs, adjectives, etc. The most frequently used words according to the word cloud analysis are shown in bold in Figure 7 above. The most frequently used words are visualized in order from bold to thin. According to the data gathered, it was determined that the most frequently used word by the Presidency in their posts was "religious".

Conclusion

As in every field, changes and transformations in social media or new media have led to changes in the religious field as well. With this digitalization process, processes of religiosity have also been introduced to the digital environment. Individuals and institutions that want to communicate in a religious sense have started to use social media frequently. In this direction, religious institutions that want to reach the target audience have started to benefit from the advantages of social media. The convenience of social media has led to the frequent use of this medium. There are many social media tools and channels around the world for different purposes. Some of these tools are used all over the world, while others exist locally. Sites such as Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, and Wikipedia are among the leading sites used worldwide.

Although there are many social media tools that have reached a certain potential in the world, the X platform is the most used one. This platform includes many agendas ranging from politics, sports, business life, and religion. Today, it can even set the agenda of governments. So much so that an issue that is on the agenda in X may even become the national agenda of another country. For this reason, it is seen that social media (especially today with channels such as X) can set or influence the agenda of individuals, institutions, and states.

Considering the analyses conducted on the coding of the data obtained from the official X account of the Presidency of Religious Affairs in English, it is observed that the Presidency is trying to use this medium effectively in the context of disseminating Islamic information. When the results of the study are evaluated, it is determined that the posts of the Presidency are generally focused in the "religious information" sub-code. In the posts, it is observed that information about the religion of Islam is shared generally. In this respect, it was determined that most of the posts were focused on religious information topics such as "Islamic belief", "prayer", "salam", "Ramadan" and "Friday". Subsequently, it was found that the posts were focused on the "social and community" sub-code. In this respect, it is possible to say that the Presidency attaches importance to social and communal issues. When the shared contents were analyzed, it was observed that they were mostly focused on topics such as family, civilization, brotherhood, unity, solidarity, homeland, and nation. It has been determined that the Presidency attaches importance to social and communal issues and makes efforts to communicate these issues to the target audience. The "Official Statements" sub-code is another area where the Presidency's posts are focused on. It was determined that the Presidency included official statements in its posts. Especially on issues that fall within the field of the Presidency of Religious Affairs and concern society, the institution shares official statements on its official X account. In this respect, these posts are important in terms of informing and enlightening the public and ensuring communication. In addition to these, the sub-codes "education" and "activities" indicate other topics on which the posts are focused.

In light of all these results, it is possible to say that the Presidency's X account in English is mostly used for informing, announcing, and explaining. Accordingly, it is observed that the Presidency uses the X account in the formation and promotion of Islamic religious beliefs. However, it has been concluded that the Presidency's X account in English is not used actively, posts are quite limited, and the interactive use of the account is lacking. It has been determined that the posts are limited in terms of interacting with the target audience and exchanging information. It is recommended that the Presidency should organize activities such as question-and-answer sessions, surveys, and call for participation in events to increase this interaction. The fact that the posts are made in English shows that the aim is to reach foreign audiences. To this end, interaction and interactive activities are of great importance in terms of reaching the target audience and getting their attention.

In conclusion, new media play an important role in the change and formation of religious beliefs. This content analysis of the official X account of the Presidency of Religious Affairs reveals how social media is used by religious institutions and the effects of this use on religious beliefs. These findings provide insights into how religious beliefs are reshaped through new media and how they have an impact at the societal level. This study aims to provide a foundation for future research and a broader perspective on the transformation of religious beliefs in the digital age.

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Çevrimiçi Ortamlar Aracılığıyla İnançların İnşası ve Değişimi: Diyanet İngilizce X Hesabı Üzerine Analiz

Ahmet KOÇYİĞİT[*]

Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Yeni medya değişiminin yarattığı etki göz önüne alındığında bu dönüşüm, toplumsal yaşamın hemen her alanında olduğu gibi din ve inanç alanında da önemli etkiler doğurmuştur (Stout, 2011). Bu etkilerin başında yeni medya, dini bilgiye erişimi kolaylaştırarak farklı inanç ve pratikler hakkında farkındalığı artırmaya ve dini çoğulculuğu teşvik etmeye yardımcı olmuştur (Hoover, 2006). Ayrıca yeni medya, dini grupların ve bireylerin kendilerini ifade etmeleri için yeni alanlar yaratmıştır. Sosyal medya platformları, dini liderlerin vaazlarını, ibadetlerini ve diğer dini içeriklerini geniş kitlelere ulaştırmalarını sağlamaktadır. Bu durum, dini bilgilerin ve pratiklerin coğrafi sınırların ötesine geçerek küresel bir etkileşim ağı oluşturmasına olanak tanımaktadır (Stolow, 2005). Bunun yanında yeni medya, dini inançların bireyselleşmesi ve özelleşmesi sürecini hızlandırmıştır. Geleneksel dini topluluklardan bağımsız olarak, bireyler kendi dini kimliklerini ve inançlarını çevrimiçi platformlarda oluşturabilmekte ve ifade edebilmektedirler. Örneğin, YouTube'da yayınlanan vaazlar, Facebook ve X'deki dini tartışmalar, blog yazıları ve çevrimiçi dini forumlar, dini grupların ve bireylerin kendi inançlarını tanıtmalarına ve savunmalarına yardımcı olmaktadır (Hosseini, 2008). Türkiye'de toplam nüfusun yüzde 82'sinin internet kullandığı, 68,9 milyon kişinin sosyal medya kullanıcısı olduğu ve online haber tüketiminin yüzde 84 düzeyinde olduğu (Digital, 2022), düşünüldüğünde sosyal medya araçlarının toplumsal düzeydeki önemi ortaya çıkmaktadır. Dünya üzerinde pek çok farklı kullanıma sahip sosyal medya araçları bulunmasına karşın bazılarının kullanım oranı ve etki düzeyi diğerlerine oranla çok daha yüksektir. Kullanım oranı ve etki düzeyinin yüksek olduğu araçların başında ise X platformu gelmektedir. Siyasetten spora, iş hayatından eğlenceye kadar birçok gündemin konu edinildiği X, önemli bir işlev üstlenmektedir. Günümüzde bireylerden kurumlara kadar neredeyse her kesimin gündemini belirleyebilmekte ve X'de Trend Topic (TT) olan bir konu ülkenin, siyasilerin ve hatta tüm ulusun gündemi haline dahi gelebilmektedir. Bu nedenle sosyal medya mecraları-özellikle de X bireyler, kurumlar ve devletler tarafından etkin bir iletişim aracı olarak kullanılmaktadır.

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[*] Assist. Prof., Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University, e-mail: ahmetkocyigit@ohu.edu.tr, orcid.org/0000-0002-1276-1128, Niğde, Türkiye

Yöntem

Bu çalışma sosyal medya çağında dini inaçların inşası ve değişimi üzerine odaklanmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda çalışmada sosyal medyanın dini bağlamda nasıl kullanıldığının belirlenmesi ve sosyal medya araçları vasıtasıyla dini inaçların inşa ve değişim süreçlerinin nasıl gerçekleştiğinin ortaya çıkartılması amaçlamıştır. Çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda değerlendirilmesi, paylaşımların bağlamının, düzeyinin tespit edilebilmesi ve sistematik bir değerlendirme yapılabilmesi amacıyla nitel içerik analizi tekniği kullanılmıştır. İçerik analizi, görsel ve sözlü veriler gibi çeşitli verilerin içeriğini analiz etmeye yönelik bir yöntemdir. Daha iyi analiz etmek ve yorumlamak için fenomen veya olayların tanımlanmış tema ve kategorilere indirgenmesini sağlamaktadır (Harwood & Garry, 2003). İçerik analizi, iletişimin bağlamını ve çerçevesini, düzeyini, yapısını ve niyetini analiz edebilme imkânı sunması ve iletişimci grubun odak noktasını belirleyebilmesi nedeniyle önemlidir. Dahası, veri setinin tamamına uygun bir sistematik ortaya koyması da bu yöntemi değerli kılmaktadır. Çalışmanın örneklemini oluşturan verilerin araştırmanın amacı doğrultusunda değerlendirilmesi, paylaşımların bağlamı ve düzeyinin tespit edilebilmesi ve sistematik bir değerlendirme yapılabilmesi için içerik analizi tekniği, tüm bu ihtiyaçlara cevap vermektedir (Koçyiğit, 2023). Çalışmada örneklem olarak Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığının seçilmesi stratejik olarak önem arz etmektedir. Başkanlığın devletin resmî bir kurumu olması, dini faaliyetlerde yetkili bir kurum olması, dini faaliyetleri yönetme yetkisinin bulunması, bireysel ve toplumsal olarak belirli bir itibarının olması sebebiyle tercih edilmiştir.

Bu doğrultuda çalışmada şu sorulara cevap aranmıştır:

1. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı İngilizce resmi X hesabından yapılan paylaşımların içerikleri nelerdir?
2. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı İngilizce resmi X hesabını dini inanç bağlamında nasıl kullanmaktadır?
3. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı İngilizce resmi X hesabını etkileşim bağlamında nasıl kullanmaktadır?
4. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı İngilizce resmi X hesabı üzerinden dini faaliyetleri nasıl şekillenmektedir?
5. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı İngilizce resmi X hesabından hangi mesajları öne çıkarmaktadır?

Evren-Örneklem

Çalışmada Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı "Diyanet English" resmi X hesabı araştırmanın evrenini oluşturmaktadır. Başkanlığın resmi X hesabı 2015 Aralık ayında faaliyete geçmesi sebebiyle araştırmanın yapıldığı tarihe kadar on binlerce içerik paylaşımı gerçekleştirilmiştir (Diyanet English, 2024). Tüm bu içeriklerin hem zaman bakımından hem de teknik açıdan analizinin çok zor olması sebebiyle Başkanlığın 1 Temmuz 2023 -1 Temmuz 2024 tarihleri arasındaki 1 yıllık sürede yapmış olduğu paylaşımlar ile sınırlandırılmıştır. Bunun yanında repostlar (yeniden paylaşım), beğeni yorumlar, resim ve videolar kapsam dışında tutulmuştur.

Veri Toplama ve Analiz

Elde edilen veriler tarafından oluşturulan kategori ve temalar yardımıyla Başkanlığın çevrimiçi ortamlarda kültürel inanç ve inşa yönetimi stratejileri ortaya konulmuştur. Ayrıca paylaşımların içerikleri, konuları ve kelime grupları ortaya araştırmaya dahil edilmiştir. Araştırmanın amacı ve örneklemi doğrultusunda veriler X Türkiye üzerinden MAXQDA 2022 paket programı aracılığıyla

Başkanlığın 1 Temmuz 2023 -1 Temmuz 2024 tarihleri arasında paylaşmış olduğu 72 posttan oluşan veri setinden elde edilmiştir. Verilerin toplanması ve analizi araştırmanın örneklemini ve sınırlılıklarını oluşturan konu ve süre içerisinde elde edilen verilerin belirli kodlara göre kategorize edilmesini, tanımlanmasını ve yorumlanmasını içermektedir. Bu doğrultuda elde edilen veriler MAXQDA 2022 paket program aracılığıyla analiz edilmiş ve ardından yorumlanmıştır.

Bu doğrultuda "Diyanet English" ana teması altında beş farklı alt kod oluşturulmuştur. Bu alt kodlar; "dini bilgilendirme, aktiviteler, resmi açıklamalar, eğitim, sosyal ve toplumsal konular" olarak kategorize edilmiştir. Gönderilerin ağırlıklı kod dağılımları incelendiğinde, en yüksek ağırlığa dini bilgilendirme (27), alt kodunun sahip olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Diğer kodlar ise ağırlıklarına göre sırasıyla sosyal ve toplumsal konular (17), resmi açıklamalar (16), eğitim (9), aktiviteler (7) şeklindedir. Bu doğrultuda Başkanlığın paylaşımlarında ağırlık merkezinin dini bilgilendirmeler, sosyal ve toplumsal konular doğrultusunda şekillendiğini ifade etmek mümkündür.

Sonuç

Bu çalışma kapsamında ele alınan Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı resmi İngilizce X hesabından elde edilen verilerin kodlanması sonucunda ortaya konan analizler göz önüne alındığında ve çalışmanın sonuçları değerlendirildiğinde; Başkanlığın paylaşımlarının genellikle dini bilgilendirme alt kodunda yoğunlaştığı tespit edilmiştir. Paylaşımlarda genellikle İslam dini ile ilgili bilgilendirme paylaşımlarının yapıldığı görülmektedir. Bu doğrultuda paylaşım sıklığının İslam inancı, dua, selam, ramazan, cuma gibi dini bilgilendirme konularında yoğunlaştığı tespit edilmiştir. Ardından ise paylaşımların sosyal ve toplumsal konular alt kodunda yoğunlaştığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu doğrultuda Başkanlığın sosyal ve toplumsal konulara önem verdiğini söylemek mümkündür. Paylaşılan içerikler incelendiğinde daha çok aile, medeniyet, kardeşlik, birlik, beraberlik, vatan, millet gibi içeriklerde yoğunlaştığı görülmüştür. Başkanlığın sosyal ve toplumsal konulara önem verdiği ve bu konuların hedef kitleye ulaştırılması için çaba sarf ettiği tespit edilmiştir. Resmi açıklamalar alt kodu ise Başkanlığın paylaşımların yoğunlaştığı bir diğer alandır. Başkanlığın resmî açıklamalara paylaşımlarında yer verdiği tespit edilmiştir. Özellikle Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığının alanına giren ve toplumu ilgilendiren konularda kurum resmî açıklamaları resmi X hesabı üzerinden paylaşmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda kamuoyunun bilgilendirilmesi, aydınlatılması ve iletişimin sağlaması açısından bu paylaşımlar önem arz etmektedir. Bunların yanında eğitim ve etkinlikler alt kodları paylaşımların yoğunlaştığı diğer konuları göstermektedir. Tüm bu sonuçlar ışığında Başkanlığın İngilizce X hesabını daha çok bilgilendirme, duyuru, açıklama amacıyla kullanıldığını söylemek mümkündür. Bu doğrultuda Başkanlığın İslam dini inançların inşasında ve tanıtımında X hesabını kullandığı görülmektedir. Fakat Başkanlık tarafından İngilizce X hesabının güncel olarak kullanılmadığı, paylaşımların sınırlı olduğu, interaktif olarak kullanımın eksik olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Ayrıca hedef kitle ile etkileşimde ve bilgi alışverişi bağlamında paylaşımların yetersiz kaldığı tespit edilmiştir.

Çalışmanın sonuçları doğrultusunda başkanlığın etkileşimi artırmak için, soru-cevap oturumları, anket çalışmaları ve etkinlik katılım çağrıları gibi aktiviteler düzenlemesi tavsiye edilmektedir. Paylaşımların İngilizce olarak yapılması yabancı hedef kitleye ulaşmanın amaç edinildiğini göstermektedir. Bu doğrultuda etkileşim ve interaktif çalışmalar hedef kitleye ulaşmak ve onların dikkatini çekmek açısından çok büyük önem arz etmektedir. Sonuç olarak yeni medya,

dini inançların değişimi ve inşasında önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı resmi X hesabı üzerine yapılan bu içerik analizi, sosyal medyanın dini kurumlar tarafından nasıl kullanıldığını ve bu kullanımın dini inançlar üzerindeki etkilerini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bulgular, dini inançların yeni medya aracılığıyla nasıl yeniden şekillendiğine ve toplumsal düzeyde nasıl bir etki yarattığına dair bilgiler sunmaktadır. Bu çalışma, gelecekteki araştırmalar için de bir temel oluşturmayı, dijital çağda dini inançların dönüşümüne dair daha geniş bir perspektif sunmayı amaçlamaktadır.