Rationale for Adoption of Social Media Marketing of Library Services to Postgraduate Students: A Case of the University of Nairobi's Mahatma Gandhi Graduate Library

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to examine the rationale for social media adoption in the marketing of library services to postgraduate students at the University of Nairobi's (UoN) Mahatma Gandhi Graduate Library (MGGL). The preliminary investigation established a need for social media marketing of library services. The deterrence for social media adoption and integration into the services to assist students' training by some academic libraries still remains debatable by most scholars. The gap presented an opportunity for further investigation in the context of the use of social media in the marketing of library services specifically to postgraduate students. The study adopted a descriptive case study research as it dealt with one entity. In the study, the Interpretivists listened to the views of the academic library staff, and postgraduate students regarding the use of social media in the marketing of library services. They measured their attitudes, interpretations, and opinions during the data collection process. Both quantitative and qualitative approach to research was employed. The study targeted a sample size of 7 library staff and 70 postgraduate students as units of analysis. The study used non-probability sampling techniques involving; purposeful, convenience, and snowballing. In obtaining primary data, the study used interviews and questionnaires as data collection methods. The piloting was done to ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments. The data obtained was analyzed and computed through MS-EXCEL, a package of descriptive statistics. From the study findings, "it can be concluded, that academic library still face a myriad of challenges in adopting social media use in the marketing of services" The study recommended the need for social media adoption, marketing policy, lobbying for the ICT budget, and staff training. In a nutshell, the study is very relevant, especially to the policymakers responsible for the management of academic libraries.

Keywords

Social Media, Adoption, Marketing, Services, Students, Academic Libraries.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of social media applications in the market since their inception into the internet and mobile communication is now transforming how people search, receive, and interact with information daily. Being known to be Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools, social media are tremendously changing the whole world as they present new opportunities and challenges to the academic libraries worldwide; more so, to information or service marketing. Social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Email, and WhatsApp are transforming the face of library marketing of services.

The rationale for social media marketing strategies in any competitive learning organization is to help transform the conceptual need of that system. The library, therefore, becomes a learning organization and an information hub that changes in nature from time to time as technology and new ways of doing things advance. According to (Yadav and Agrawal, 2016), a learning organization always encourages continual learning in the ever rapidly changing environment of the 21st century; to transform itself, excel and effectively compete in such a dynamic and challenging environment brought about by social media. In this, dynamicity "the library is a growing organism" with new services and user needs (Bhatt, 2011).

The adoption of social media and its implementation as a marketing strategy has enabled many organizations such as academic libraries in services promotion, thereby achieving organizational marketing objectives and goals. For example, Facebook as a social media application, has been used by USA libraries in the University of Indiana and Library of Congress to promote library services through Facebook pages (Xia, 2009; ALA, 2011); The Tsinghua University libraries in China also use social media to reach out to their users (Lou, Yuan, and Lifeng, 2013); In India, Jagdalpur libraries use WhatsApp to enhance users' collaboration (Ansari, 2016).

The competitiveness of any learning organization such as a University's library; demands on the ability to outreaching and connecting with the varied customers, and stakeholders. Effective implementation of social media contributes to a more profitable and satisfactory results, while poor use of social media technologies could lead to organizational decline, non-performance, and losses (Mullins, 2011). The investigation formed the basis of the study to examine the rationale of social media adoption to enhance online searching, and dissemination of information that would result into; an excellent collaborative, informative, and transformative experience among the segmented postgraduate students and the University of Nairobi's (UoN's) Mahatma Gandhi Graduate Library(MGGL).

Purpose of the Study

The study was aimed at assessing the rationale of social media adoption in the marketing of library services to postgraduate students at UoN's Mahatma Gandhi Graduate Library (MGGL).

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the rationale for social media adoption in the marketing of library services to postgraduate students at UoN's Mahatma Gandhi Graduate Library (MGGL).
2. To establish the challenges involved in the adoption of social media in the marketing of library services at UoN's MGGL.
3. To suggest recommendations for the adoption of social media in the marketing library services to postgraduate students at UoN's MGGL.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter introduced the theories and concepts of the study. It covered the empirical review of the literature that was consistent with the objective of the study.

The Rationale of Social Media adoption in Marketing of Library Services

There has been a worldwide spread suggestions by various scholars pin pointing the rationale for implementing social media marketing, and its strategies. Kotler, and Armstrong (2012) suggested

that; non- profit organizations need to understand that marketing is not only about offering quality service, but also a value addition to customers. In order to excel, one must adhere to the marketing principles (Mi and Nesta, 2006). Therefore the role of librarians is to understand the needs of different user community vis-à-vis; students look for basics, and concepts on topics of their studies while scholars, and scientists look for scientific information as well as current trends in their area of research (Mugdha, Belapurkar and Munnoli, 2016). The use of currently trending online social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Email, and WhatsApp have so far assisted in the marketing of libraries in many ways:

Social Media for Collaboration, Transformation, Innovation and Competitiveness

Social media is a two-way communication medium for collaboration, exchange of information and ideas, as well as teaching and learning (Omeluzor and Itunu, 2014). Numerous libraries use social media to create collaborative relationships between the library and its user community. This could be enhanced by use of instant messaging such as Twitter, WhatsApp, and Email for answering user queries (Shakeel & Bhatti, 2012). In terms of transformation; Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) Report (2014 p.10) shows that people use libraries in order to transform themselves so as to become better versions in their lives.

The learning that occurs in either a public or private library is transformational, and this only happens via interaction with books, computers, digital platforms, in conversations, and through creation of relationships. Social media's integration into the library services under proper internet connectivity helps in the fulfillment of this relationship with the library's user community. The social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Email, and WhatsApp have also helped transform how information is accessed from physical environment to virtual platform, how libraries interact with users as well as marketing their services to respective clients (OCLC Report, 2014).

According to (Tiwari, 2008), innovation refers to creation and implementation of a new marketing method, or business practices. Therefore, changing from physical access of library services to virtual access using social media is an innovation. Innovations are meant to stir up growth and development in any organization that is willing to get on top of its competitors. In Africa, Social media marketing of library services could uplift libraries and librarians to keeping abreast with new technologies, and to effectively compete with others in the developed world, (Ayiah and Kumah, 2011). Besides, the documented library services may be uploaded, and at the same time information about current findings from researchers could be shared according to specific need of each user's group through the use of social media. This action to some extent, may help increase web metric ranking of the university (Omeluzor and Itunu, 2014), and therefore it is what a competitive organization would require from its competent departments such as library.

Social Media for Accessibility, Visibility, Quality, and Efficient Service Provision

"What is hidden cannot be seen" Neither" what is not displayed cannot be sold "Nor "what is silent cannot be heard". Social media platforms as enablers have supported the visibility of both print, and electronic library services to the potential library users. Newly acquired library services may be posted, shared, and hence disseminated to specific users, and this would increase chances of service accessibility. Integrating library services with social media would also enhance their accessibility, and visibility to users (Chu and Du, 2012). An accessible library service builds level of trust, and confidence in its users (Edewor et al., 2016). Therefore, using a more user-friendly and frequently accessed social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Email could

speedily facilitate the marketing of library services to a special user segment especially the postgraduate students.

Whenever users and other library stakeholders' access; a timely, reliable, relevant and flexible information; the service is automatically regarded as of high quality. The role of any effective library is to fulfill, and meet the goals and objectives of its mother institution from which it was established. Therefore, customers' satisfaction is enhanced through strategic management so as to remain more efficient and effective in the service delivery (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). In ensuring this quality, social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Email, and WhatsApp when incorporated into library information management systems (LIMS) like the Koha, VubiSMART among many others; facilitate an effective, efficient and reliable service delivery systems to library clientele. In addition, social media is very cost-effective in terms of saving space, time and money (Unuoha et al., 2013).

Challenges involved with accessing social media by Postgraduate Students

In the general information society point of view: to some students; social media bring about fatigue when searching for information; besides, there has been claims of access rights, privacy, and copyright issues (Unuoha et al., 2013). Others feel that, social media such as WhatsApp may result to loss of concentration contrary to its purpose, hence becoming a center for exchanging insults (Alvanoudi and Vozaza, 2019).

Challenges in the adoption of social media in the marketing of services by library staff

Omeluzor et al., (2016) in their findings from a study conducted to examine use social networking tools for service delivery in libraries in South-East zone of Nigeria, identified challenges in the adoption of social networking as laxity of training of staff on the use of computers, necessary ICT skills, and knowledge. Poor communication systems, and funding are the same major problems facing Kenya, Uganda, and other parts of African countries including Nigeria. In addition, they concurred with (Ezeani and Igwesi, 2012) who affirmed that fear of technology, paucity of internet connection, insufficient bandwidth, and erratic power supply are the major challenges still facing these regions.

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a research guide, outlining how the research is systematically conducted (Igwenagu, 2016).

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive case study research since it dealt with a single entity. A case study is also known to yield more in-depth information than a survey (Wiki, 2020). Although the study is majorly qualitative, it has components of quantitative research. The two research methods are known to complement each other according to (Mugenda, 2003). Qualitative research describes feelings, and experiences. It also measures and communicates the findings analytically; and draws inferences that can be generalized (Kumar, 2014). Quantitative research is an approach that concerns asking of questions such as how long or how many (Kumar, 2017). It aims to quantify the variation in a phenomenon and generalize this to the total population (Khan, 2018). In this study, the Interpretivists listened to the views of academic library staff, and the postgraduate

students regarding the use of social media in the marketing of library services, measured their attitudes, interpretations, and opinions during the data collection process.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The researchers used the non-probability sampling techniques namely; Purposeful, convenience, and snowballing. The purposeful sampling is appropriate, and applicable only to the important key informants, (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012; Khan, 2018) asserted. Therefore, the key informants as in this case, the library staff were purposefully selected for the interviews. In most cases, informants hold the roles of the library director, ICT librarian, service librarians, content creator, or metadata officer. Convenience sampling was employed on postgraduate students because only those who were met or accessible at the point of administering the questionnaires were given forms to fill in. Saunders et al., (2012) ascertain thus chosen by chance. Through the snowballing, 10 postgraduate students were sent the link to the online survey via their emails to fill in. The technique helped in reaching out to the subjects known to be sharing the same characteristics as it was aimed at getting a saturated data for analysis.

Sample Size and Sampling frame

In the sampling procedure, a simple random selection of the samples was employed. The sampling frame constituted of four segments of the respondents who were purposefully stratified as; One Library Director, one ICT librarian, five librarians, and a convenient selection of 50 sampled postgraduate students. In addition, another ten randomly graduate students were mailed a link (https://forms.gle/x6su3sqDsju1HUsF6) of the questionnaire to fill in online. Through the snowballing method, the researchers obtained additional ten respondents from the chain via the same platform, thus resulting to a total of 20 students. Therefore, a targeted sample size of 70 students was finally achieved, and thereby becoming a good representative sample for the study.

For the computation of quantitative analysis: A simple formula of descriptive statistics for calculating percentages was used whereby: Percentage (%) = (f/n) ×100; (f) stands for frequency while (n) total number of respondents in the study.

Table 3.1: Sampled frame at UoN's MGGL

Sampling Unit/Element	Frequency(N)	Response rate	Percentage%
Postgraduate students	70	65	92
Library staff	7	6	86

Data Collection Methods
The data collection methods were constructed into four segments:

Questionnaire for Postgraduate Students

A questionnaire comprised of open-ended, closed-ended, and scaling questions was constructed for postgraduate students only. In the open-ended questions, a respondent was allowed to provide own opinion, while in closed-ended questions, a respondent only selected relevant answer from the given set of questions. The Likert scale aided in the rating of users' attitudes when answering questions directed to them. The attitudinal rating scale like the Likert is designed to measure attitudes towards an issue (Khan, 2018).

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Interview Schedules

There were three sets of interview schedules for library staff: the Library Director, Librarians, and the ICT staff.

Research Instruments

Validity

Validity is the ability of an instrument to measure what it is prepared to do (Khan, 2018). In this context, the validity of the data collection instruments was affected when the same question administered to the respondents in the pre-test was able to give similar results to the one provided in the real practical field of data collection. In addition, the data collection tools passed through a peer review by colleagues, a pilot study, and finally reviewed by the researchers.

Reliability

In the context of the study, the data was considered reliable after results from the pilot study, and the one collected from the final study showed some level of consistency. Reliability is the capability of data collection instruments in giving similar results even when administered to the same people but at different occasions. Creswell (2012), likewise affirmed that in reliability the scores from an instrument should be stable, and consistent by giving similar scores from different occasions on different respondents.

Research Ethical Observations

The researchers observed ethical issues and conducted research with high level of professionalism. The study only sought to serve the purpose it was meant to, without disclosing any respondent's confidentiality. Nolen and Putten (2007) similarly noted, a researcher should respect the confidentiality of respondents. Mertens (2010) noticed that ethics are intertwined with research methodology in that the researcher has an ethical obligation to conduct good research. In this case, the researchers observed issues concerning plagiarism, biases, and also sought respondents' consent before the data collection process.

Data Analysis, and Presentation

The management of collected data so as to look more orderly, structured, and meaningful started with the coding and the thematic analysis of the qualitative data. MS-Excel, a statistical package was used in the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, whereby figures were presented in frequency table and Likert scale. Other measurements which the study looked into include; correlation, regression analysis, variations and measures of central tendency. Creswell (2012) noted that; data analysis and interpretation involve presenting data in tables, using figures, and drawing inferences in words to provide answers to research questions.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

Rationale for adopting social media at MGGL

The study's objective sought to examine the rationale for social adoption in the marketing of library services to postgraduate students at the University of Nairobi's (UoN's) Mahatma Gandhi Graduate Library (MGGL):

Social Media Adoption

The investigation to quantify the rationale for adopting social media usage in the marketing of library services shows all the 6 library staff and (92%) majority of students fully supported social media adoption, while (8%) of the students opposed it. Therefore, there is a need for social media adoption.

Need for Social Media Adoption

To establish the need for social adoption, it was discovered that the majority of the library staff were in full support of social media adoption. They mentioned that today, quite a large population uses social media platforms and other new technologies, and so, there is a need for technological change that could support education, research and development. Besides, social media has a broader outreach capability by the audience and is convenient for making references to users' queries. Social media facilitates users' access to services. Social media are time-saving and appropriate for use at users' comforts. Social media applications facilitate provision of services in soft copy. They are excellent for a two way communication, and at the same time are more cost-effective. In addition, a majority of students are young people who are technoservy, and therefore, social media should be adopted.

The postgraduate students similarly supported the need for social media adoption as shown below in table 4.2: Concerning the requirement for social media to make services more visible to students: the majority (75%) of students responded that they strongly agreed, while none of them disagreed with the opinion. Another majority (63%) of students strongly agreed that social media could enhance maximum use of services, while none of the respondents disagreed. About the need for social media in transforming services from physical to digital access: the majority (60%) of students pointed that, they strongly agreed, while none of the respondents disagreed.

 Regarding the need for social media use to enhance quality services to students: the majority (58.5%) of students indicated they strongly agreed, while (5%) were in disagreement. Regarding the need to make services more accessible to users: the (55%) majority of students indicated they strongly agreed, while (3%) disagreed. Another (52%) majority of the students also strongly agreed that; social media could enhance collaboration among students, while none of them disagreed.

Table 4.2: Need for Social Media Adoption

Need for social media Adoption Response	Strongly Agree Freq (%)	Agree Freq (%)	Fairly Agree Freq (%)	Disagree Agree Freq (%)
a) Enhance collaboration among students	34(52%)	26(40%)	5(8%)	0(0%)
b) Maximum use of services	41(63%)	19(29%)	5(8%)	0(0%)
c) Transforming services from physical to digital access	39(60%)	20(31%)	6(9%)	0(0%)
d) Make services more accessible to students	36(55%)	15(23%)	2(3%)	2(3%)
e) Make services more visible to students	49(75%)	13(20%)	3(5%)	0(0%)
f) Enhance quality services to students	38(58.5%)	18(27%)	6(9%)	3(5%)

Table 4.2 above shows, the findings are more correlated to the established theories on the need for social media adoption, which also corroborates the conceptual framework. The study discovered,

there is a need for social media adoption to enhance collaboration, which is in agreement with (Omeluzor and Itunu, 2014) in the previous finding. Another need to transform services from physical to digital access, concurred with (OCLC Report, 2014). A need to make services more accessible to users is similar to (Chu and Du, 2012), as presented in their previous findings on the impacts of social media. Another need to enhance quality service to students; also affirmed by (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012) similarly in their past study.

Challenges Involved in the Adoption of Social Media Use

The study sought to find out if there were challenges faced: the following were the responses to questions regarding challenges involved in accessing social media and its adoption in the library:

Challenges involved with Use of social media when Accessing library Services

To establish the challenges faced when using social media to access library services: Most of the students mentioned that network traffic could lead to the slow speed of the internet, and even WIFI. Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) established that the same problems still exist in Kenya, Uganda, and other African countries such as Nigeria. The challenges associated with accessing services remotely or off- campus were raised, poor network connectivity, and network barriers in various geographical coverage that hinder service provision. Also, the issues of lack of smart gadgets such as smartphones and laptops by some disadvantaged students, and unfavorable internet cost, due to high rates put or taxed on bundles. Other concerns include shortage of enough power supply as Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) similarly noted; and lastly, insufficient electric sockets in the library that required an immediate action.

Challenges Involved in Adoption of social media in the Marketing of Services

The following were the findings from the challenges involved with the adoption of social media usage in the marketing of library service as mentioned by key library staff: The administrators said, there is an absence of technological acceptance among the library staff, and this has led to slow adoption of social media, and therefore it is not (100%) fully embraced; Mugdha et al., (2016) asserted, the challenge comes with fear of change. There is also fear of technology among library staff and users. Furthermore, the deficit of skilled library staff to train users have resulted in technological know-how problem; Omeluzor et al., (2016) confirmed the same in their previous study. There is also poor technological infrastructure as a challenge. In addition, the University policy is neither friendly nor flexible to the library department. Another challenge is the shortage of data bundles for use on the side of the students when accessing library services and this could be a problem since many students come from different background.

The library staff as well raised concerns about, Government regulations, and interruptions on the use of social media; as established before by (Mugdha et al., 2016). They mentioned; the library still embraces the use of traditional kind of services delivery; this statement is in agreement with (Edewor et al., 2016, p.7) in their previous study to determine the level of social media usage in marketing libraries across the African continent. Besides, the library has no documented marketing policy, a statement similar to (Ediwor et al., 2016); and therefore it is still sluggish in adopting social media. There is an absence of management support; (Mugdha et al., 2016) presented the same from their findings. Lastly, there is an inadequate ICT budget, as well as lots of bureaucracies as the major issues.

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Summary of the Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

The objectives of the study were: to examine the rationale for social media adoption in the marketing of library services to postgraduate students, to establish the challenges involved in the social media adoption, and to suggest recommendation for the adoption in the marketing of library services to postgraduate students at UoN's MGGL.

Summary of the Findings

This chapter summarizes the key findings based on the study's objectives which influenced the formulation of the research questions, themes, and sub-themes as discussed below:

Rationale of Social Media Adoption

The first objective of the study was to examine the rationale for social adoption in the marketing of library services. From study findings, subtheme 4.1.1 indicates that most of the respondents supported social media adoption: These include; all the six (6) library staff, and (92%) of postgraduate students. In establishing the reasons for their support, the majority of the library staff and students provided similar feedback as shown in subtheme, 4.1.2 and Table 4.2 respectively. From the findings, it could be affirmed, the study's outcome showed quite a number of correlations with the previously reviewed theories in chapter two.

Conclusion

The researchers made conclusions based on the results and discussion. Therefore, generalization of the inferences drawn from findings are as follows:

It could be deduced that academic libraries encounter numerous challenges regarding social media adoption and use to market their services. Even though most library users accept the use of social media technologies, from the analysis of the results; it could be concluded, most users and library staff were aware that there is no documented marketing policy to take care of marketing functions. It could as well be confirmed, the library is sluggish in the adoption of emerging technologies.

From further analysis, it could be inferred that the library staff, and users are not trained on the use of ICT technologies in place. It is also true the social media platforms are not integrated into library services.

However, the study concluded that academic libraries still face a myriad of challenges in the adoption of social media. Barriers such as; insufficient management support, lots of bureaucracies, government regulations, deficit of proper budgets, and training of staff are the major deterrents of effective and efficient service delivery to users.

Recommendation

The recommendations provided by the researchers concerning the challenges resulted from the findings are as follows:

ICT Policy: The mandate of any department is to help implement the objectives of its mother organization. An effective library requires a more decentralized space but in collaboration with other corporate bodies that makes it function. The University of Nairobi should reconsider a more flexible ICT policy; that would allow the library department serves its user community very effectively.

Marketing policy: there is a need for the library to have its marketing department and documents its marketing policy. It is clear that library is the custodian of its services besides having its readers at heart. Therefore by implementing this initiative, the library will be able to market its services effectively to its clientele.

Integration of social media: There is a need to integrate social media into library services. The technology acceptance could be evident by the (92%) responses in support of social media adoption. It is also true that the library website is a one-stop information hub, but it is not compatible with the social media platforms attached to it, so as to aid in sharing of the available services to users. Social media are more convenient and enable effective communication, as mentioned in the studies. Therefore, social media adoption may enhance promotion, collaboration, efficiency, and quality service provision.

Training of the Library Staff and Users: The ICT department should impose a compulsory training of the library staff on emerging technologies. This training may help reduce technophobia and boost technological know-how; thus resulting into skill advancement and attitude change. Besides, there is a need to train students on how to access the subscribed library databases. Lastly, there should be a lobby for the technology fund to help fulfil this mission.

Smart Gadgets: The government should provide free laptops, or education smartphones with powered sim-cards for scholars. This action could benefit the financially challenged students, especially the ones from vulnerable households.

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