

EXPLORING USER ENGAGEMENT WITH SOCIAL
MEDIA: PRACTICES, PERCEPTIONS AND
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

BY

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ABSTRACT

The mainstream use of social media has impacted the library as it has been identified to be an efficient platform for libraries to foster networking and enhance engagement with their user community. The unique characteristics of social media with ‘high tech’, ‘interactive’ blend with the ‘human touch’ give a valuable means for libraries to provide information resources and services beyond their physical walls. However, despite its widespread usage, an engagement rate on social media was still low among library users and evaluation of social media use remain elusive and scarce in the library literature. Prior studies have yet to reveal to what extent the presence of social media triggers users’ awareness and influence their engagement. Subsequently, how it further impacts the actual library usage among end-users. Therefore, the study aimed to investigate the factors that drive users’ engagement with social media and further examined the relationship of users’ engagement with social media and actual library usage. A mixed method approach was employed, and the study population consists of selected State Public and Academic Libraries in Malaysia. The integration of DeLone and McLean’s Information Systems Success Model (ISSM), Perceived Interactivity (PI) and Consumer Online Engagement (COE) models were adopted and adapted to establish the direction of the research. A total of 334 respondents which consisted of library users; and 11 interview participants were the professional librarians. The findings indicated that Information Quality, Perceived Interactivity, and Perceived Net Benefit have empirically proven to be significant predictors of users’ engagement with social media. The study also revealed that two dimensions of online engagement (affective and behavioural) have a positive and statistically significant effect on actual library use; while cognitive engagement proved to be insignificant. The study was significant in providing libraries a holistic overview about determinants of social media engagement and offers guidelines on the evaluation of library social media application in libraries. It also explored the potential and gauges the prospective areas of improvement for harnessing use of library resources and services in meeting users’ ever-changing needs via the power of social media engagement.

خلاصة البحث

لقد أثر تعميم استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على المكتبة حيث تم تحديدها لتكون وسيلة فعالة لها لتعزيز التواصل و المشاركة مع مستخدميها. كما انها توفر الخصائص الفريدة لوسائل التواصل الاجتماعي مع مزيج من "التكنولوجيا العالية" ، "التفاعلية" ، "الترابط" مع "اللمسة الإنسانية" وسيلة قيمة للمكتبات لتوفير موارد المعلومات والخدمات خلف جدرانها المادية. ومع ذلك ، و على الرغم من استخدامها على نطاق واسع في المكتبات ، فإن معدلات المشاركة في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لا تزال منخفضة بين مستخدمي المكتبات كما أن تقييم استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لا تزال بعيدة المنال وشحيحة في أدبيات صناعة المكتبات، حيث لم تكشف الدراسات السابقة بعد إلى أي مدى يؤدي وجود وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي إلى إثارة وعي المستخدمين والتأثير في مشاركتهم النشطة في وقت لاحق ، وكيف يؤثر ذلك على الاستخدام الفعلي للمكتبة بين المستخدمين النهائيين. لذلك، تحاول هذه الدراسة البحث في العوامل التي تدفع المستخدم إلى التفاعل مع مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي للمكتبة، وكذلك دراسة العلاقة بين تفاعل المستخدمين مع وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي والاستخدامات الفعلية للمكتبة من وجهة نظر المستخدمين وأمناء المكتبات. في هذه الدراسة تم استخدام منهج الأساليب المدمجة، حيث يتألف مجتمع الدراسة من مكتبات حكومية عمومية مختارة وثلاث مكتبات عمومية في ماليزيا. كما تم اعتماد دمج نموذج DeLone ونموذج McLean لنظم المعلومات الناجح، ونمط التفاعل المدرك، ونماذج التفاعل مع العملاء عبر الإنترنت لتحديد اتجاه البحث. وقد تم التحقق تجريبيا من العوامل المحددة الأربعة التي تم تحديدها في الدراسات السابقة كتنبؤ نسبياً بمشاركة المستخدمين مع وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي. تم تحديد هذه العوامل كالتالي: السمات الفردية (INDATT)، جودة المعلومات (IQ)، التفاعل المتصور (PI) والنتائج الصافي المدرك (PNB). وعلاوة على ذلك، فحصت الدراسة الأبعاد الأساسية لمشاركة المستخدم (المعرفي والوجداني والسلوكي) وتأثيرها على الاستخدام الفعلي للمكتبة. كما شارك في الاستبيان الاستقصائي للدراسة ما مجموعه 334 من مستخدمي المكتبة و 11 مشاركا في المقابلات من أمناء المكتبات و المهنيين. تم تحليل البيانات الإحصائية باستخدام كل من برنامج SPSS و SmartPLS 3 مع التحليل الموضوعي للنهج النوعي. حيث أشارت نتائج الدراسة إلى أن اختبارات IQ و PI و PNB أثبتت تجريبياً أنها تنبئ بشكل كبير بمشاركة المستخدمين مع الوسائط الاجتماعية. ومع ذلك ، أظهرت الصفات الفردية نتائج متناقضة مع الدراسات السابقة. وعلاوة على ذلك ، أوضحت الدراسة أن لهذين البعدين من المشاركة عبر الإنترنت (المشاركة العاطفية والسلوكية) لهما تأثير إيجابي وإحصائي على الاستخدام الفعلي للمكتبة ، في حين أن التفاعل المعرفي مع وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي يظهر نتيجة ضئيلة على الاستخدام الفعلي للمكتبة. كما تتسم أهمية هذه الدراسة أيضا في توفير نظرة شاملة حول محددات مشاركة وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي للمكتبات كما تعطي المبادئ التوجيهية للمكتبات حول تقييم جهود وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وأنشطتها لاستكشاف إمكاناتها وقياس مجالات التحسين المستقبلية لتسخير استخدام موارد المكتبات وخدماتها في تلبية احتياجات وتوقعات المستخدم المتغيرة باستمرار. وبناءً على ذلك ، اقترحت الدراسة إطار عمل لتقييم مشاركة وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ، خاصة للمكتبات التي تعمل كمعيار لتحديد أفضل منصات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي للمكتبات التي سيتم تبنيها والمعايير التي يجب تعزيزها من أجل الوصول إلى مستوى الوعي الواسع للمستخدمين وزيادة التفاعل تجاه المكتبة وخدماتها.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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This thesis is dedicated to the most important person in my life:

My late father for laying the foundation of what I turned out to be in life

My adorable mother who inspired me to be whom I am now

*My lovely husband and son for endless sacrifices and loves who give me strength and
endurances to complete this journey*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter is divided into nine sections. The first and second section presents the overview and background of the study, followed with the statement of problems in section 3. Section 4 describes aim of the study; section 5 outlines research objectives and research questions, while the theoretical framework is stated in section 6. The scope of study and operational definitions is described in section 7 and 8 respectively. Finally, section 9 outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The adoption of social media is widespread across various organizations. This owes to the fact that social media has proven to be an effective platform for interactive communication, information distribution and dissemination, promotion and marketing of library collections, services and library events as well as for online customer service platform. The huge impact of social media application has enabled the information institutions especially libraries and resource centres to keep abreast with the new technology given its potential benefits and to reach out to library users and potential ones with minimal efforts.

It is widely stated in literature that the adoption of social media is extensively implemented in businesses and commerce organizations especially for the purpose of marketing and rebranding a company's products and services (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). As time changes, social media has become the trendsetter in multiple disciplines ranging from marketing, business, environment, health, politics, technology and entertainment

to the education industry. In recent year, libraries as non-profit organizations have utilized Web 2.0 technologies to facilitate the marketing efforts of library collection, information resources and services. It is also considered as the easiest way to update library outreach programs, exhibitions and can be used as online customer services and interactive feedback platform. The convenient use of Web 2.0 environment allows libraries to utilize various social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Blogs, Widgets, You Tube, Flickr, Instagram and etc. Social media has become an effective information dissemination tool which requires minimal effort in order to be utilized by libraries for marketing their informational resources and cultural efforts.

Despite the budget and resource constraints faced by libraries, the libraries need to strive to meet up with the expectation of their users in terms of providing their ever changing needs. Therefore, libraries should optimize the power of social media in order to give room for interactive communication with the library users and public in an online environment. As proclaimed by Ranganathan Law of Library Science, Library is a 'growing organism' as the role of library in the new century is beyond its concrete wall and physical building. Hence, library has to mobilize its role and function to keep growing by utilizing the latest technology in order to justify its presence and sustainability of library services to society. Furthermore, social media has the potential of improving the image of the library and improving the users' experience.

Undeniably, libraries have acknowledged the importance of social media technology in the effort to complement the way libraries increase the level of user engagement towards library and its services (Awang, 2013). In line with the rapid growth of digital resources; libraries today are embracing various social media technologies to better serve online experiences of their library community. Through these media, users can be constantly informed about the library programmes, the events

that are occurring; the collections, facilities and services offered in the library. Consequently, users can be alerted and further react into necessary actions based on their interests and needs.

A significant number of researches have identified the usefulness of social media marketing and promotion in academic libraries (Adeleke and Habila, 2012; Akporhonor, 2015; Baro et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2014; Noorhidawati et al., 2015; Siddike and Kiran, 2015). For example, A'dillah et al. (2016) highlighted that Facebook provides the greatest impact as a promotional tool and is the most effective elements in providing feedback and answering users' enquiries. Hence, utilisation of social media marketing and promotion in libraries is the most effective way to reach out the library community.

However, despite the widespread use of social media channels in libraries, there is lack of a measurement standard as the organizations having difficulties to prove that any investment in social media efforts has resulted in a direct profit or loss (McCann & Barlow, 2015). In spite of the success of the implementation recorded, on-going debate on measurement issue has shown that there is a need for library to adopt a transparent, standardized and flexible measurement framework. Mangiuc (2009) also noted, without a set of measurable results, there is no proof that the technologies were well adopted and efficiently implemented. Current literature highlights how comprehensive planning process of social media adoption determine the success and contribute to a positive return of investment to particular organizations (Fotis, 2015; Bernoff & Li, 2008; Miller & Lammas, 2010; McCann & Barlow, 2015). According to Bernoff and Li (2008) when an organization has a strategic framework with the specific goals, objectives and metrics developed, consequently it may guide the organization to choose the appropriate social media applications to be used.

There has been an active discussion about the significant use of social media in the libraries and information institutions in recent years. However, scarce information and empirical studies were found on how to define and measure success of social media use and its associated activities particularly in the library setting. Thus, the topic has caught the attention of the researchers and practitioners from multiple disciplines as its development has opened a wide range of research areas which need to be explored especially in the context of libraries in Malaysia. Measuring success in social media is tough because it is intangible (McCann & Barlow, 2015; Mangiuc, 2009). Nesta and Mi (2010) stated that in order to effectively use social media technologies in public libraries, they need to engage users and provide a welcoming entry point to library users through that medium. Previous literatures have shown that libraries were keen to embrace social media technologies to perform various activities (Ismail Abidin, Kiran and Abrizah, 2013). Nevertheless, despite substantial use of social media in libraries, it was found that the library users were relatively slow to embrace social media technologies as a platform of engaging with the library (Smeaton & Davis, 2014a).

In context of Malaysia, a number of libraries regardless of types and their core businesses have shown a sense of readiness and acceptances of social media and have incorporated it as a channel of promoting and marketing the information resources and services. Ismail Abidin et al. (2013) reported that the usage of social media in Malaysia libraries is still in its infancy phase since its inception in 2010; however as times changes, it keeps progressing in line with new technological invention. Furthermore, Rafidah, Zuraidah and Ruzita (2011) found that the most popular social media used by academic libraries is Facebook, with 9 out of 15 Malaysian academic libraries using it. Similarly, other studies revealed that Facebook was regarded as the most popular Web 2.0 applications on Malaysian Academic Library Websites (Riza Ayu & Abrizah,