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Use of social media as a marketing and information provision tool by the City of Cape Town Libraries

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Background: Social media use by libraries has facilitated communication and marketing of services to user communities. The City of Cape Town Libraries adopted social media usage in the 2015–2016 financial year. This study is set out to assess librarians' perception and response to the implementation and adoption of social media for library services.

Objectives: The research sought to appraise the City of Cape Town public librarians' experiences of social media use in the provision of information services, evaluate librarians' perceptions of social media use for information provision services and recommend ways in which social media information services provision can be improved upon.

Method: A quantitative research method and a descriptive survey research design approach was adopted for the study, and a web-based questionnaire was used for data collection. The study was anchored on the technological acceptance model, and employed total enumeration sampling to collect data from the 102 City of Cape Town librarians-in-charge.

Results: City of Cape Town librarians have positive perception and acceptance towards the use of social media to perform library-related duties. Librarians utilised social media in engaging with library users, including marketing of library services, and promotion of library events. Experiences including lack of guidance in dealing with copyright issues and organisational policy favouring a single social media platform were reported.

Conclusion: Library services through is vastly positive but expansion across multiple social media platforms is necessary to encourage further engagement with users. A third construct: preference of choice is proposed for the TAM model.

Keywords: City of Cape Town libraries; library social media; social media marketing; social and libraries; public libraries; technology acceptance model; technology trends in libraries; social media; library services.

Introduction

Social media has become a popular marketing tool for libraries as it allows libraries to reach out to users and communicate with them online (Joo, Choi & Baek 2018). Libraries are known for connecting people with information, and social media has an important role to play in marketing information to library users and promoting the library as a community hub, where marketing of the library is seen as a priority function of social media (Islam & Habiba 2015). According to Khan and Rafiq (2019), for libraries, social media has the potential of enhancing library services and providing new ways to communicate. However, whilst libraries are embracing the implementation of social media use for library marketing purposes and providing information services to the public, they also face challenges in making the implementation a success. Such challenges include poor customer response, limited engagement by both library staff and library users (Chu & Du 2013) and management issues (Cavanagh 2016).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as a group of Internet-integrated applications built on the ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0 (a platform), allowing the creation and exchange of user-generated content (the ways in which people make use of social media). The 'Web 2.0' term was developed in 2005 by Tim O'Reilly and refers to the changes in the World Wide Web (WWW) where users are now enabled to use digital tools to create content, make changes, publish and share this content in collaborative and open participatory environments (O'Reilly 2007).

The development of Web 2.0 led to libraries developing a new term relating to the adoption of Web 2.0 applications in the library environment and thus the development of the 'Library 2.0'

term as introduced by Michael Casey in 2005 (Serantes 2009). Casey and Sevastinuk (2006) mentioned that any definition of Library 2.0 should include the three most important elements, that is, library users being given control in participatory, constant changes and user-driven services and implementing such services to improve and reach out to current and future users.

An overview of social media in libraries

Several studies have been carried out in different fields on how businesses and institutions use social media for connecting with customers and what impact this has had on their businesses (Appel et al. 2020; Shawky et al. 2019; Smith 2017; Stephen 2016). According to DeSoto (2015), the primary goal of social media is to provide a way for people to share, communicate, engage and listen to one another. Kaul (2016) mentioned that Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals have also been greatly impacted by social media and its networks in the recent past, with ever-increasing growth of web resources, ongoing advances in information and communication technology (ICT) applications and the introduction of innovations for imparting better services to library users. This led to the transformation of library and information services from its manual and semi-automated days to an automated global information system. An opinion by Harrison (2017) is that in less than a decade, social media has gone from being a fringe activity for libraries to an activity that is seen as central to libraries' outreach and promotion efforts. Amongst many purposes for the use of social media by libraries, it is used for marketing and promoting library services such as library events, new collections, creating awareness, promoting talks and trending topics. Libraries also use social media in promoting their customer services by monitoring what is being said about them and responding to both positive and negative comments.

Luo, Wang and Han (2013) agreed that many public libraries used social media platforms to communicate with their users and also to increase their visibility in an online environment. Apart from being a low-cost marketing tool, another advantage of social media is that it increases libraries' efficiency in interacting with library users, receiving feedback from users, engaging with the community and giving the community a sense of belonging (Fernandez 2009). Islam and Habiba (2015) stated that libraries must take advantage of Web 2.0 applications and market their services regularly through the Internet, connect with their users and promote services. The main reason for library users to connect with the library's social media pages is because users want to get instant feedback from the library when they have library services queries (Phillips 2015). According to Khan and Rafiq (2019), the availability of libraries on social media platforms plays a role in engaging, supporting and guiding library users, even outside the physical libraries.

Statistics from the South African social media landscape 2020 revealed that WhatsApp has the greatest number of active users, registered at 10.1 million, whilst Facebook and YouTube came second with 9.1 million each. Instagram and Twitter both came third with 4.7 million. WeChat and Snapchat were last on the list with 1.2 million each. Facebook was revealed as the social platform of choice for marketing, where more than 89% of respondents indicated that they were active on Facebook, versus 77% active on Twitter, 75% active on LinkedIn and 68% active on Instagram. Marketing professionals have found LinkedIn to be a powerful tool in connecting professionals. Twitter still remains a powerful platform for personal expression and news dissemination tool, whilst Instagram proved itself more as a social connection tool than of sharing views or broadcasting news. Reasons for the use of social media include staying in touch with what friends are doing (56%), staying updated with the news and current events (56%), entertainment content (50%), general networking with other people (48%) and sharing photos and videos with others (48%).

Social media platforms are part of the marketing tools that libraries utilise in the promotion of information services. Library marketing is defined by Mozila (2019) as activities undertaken by libraries in creating awareness and promoting services and products that are offered by libraries, and it provides libraries with an opportunity to advertise their services and products to clients and in the process get feedback on how they can improve such services. Olorunfemi and Ipadeola (2018) suggested that marketing should be an everyday responsibility of a library, as its role is to create awareness about library products and information services and inform clients about the resources and services that match their information needs and interest. Social media is 'a new window for marketing of library and information services' (Jain 2015) as it offers libraries an opportunity to go beyond physical buildings to be part of the world's online conversations (Bradley 2015). Libraries are opening social media accounts because they want to market their services to potential users, especially young people. In addition, social media is a tool that allows libraries an opportunity to showcase their services to the public (Harvey 2016).

Problem statement

City of Cape Town's Department of Library and Information Services (COCTLIS) initiated the use of Facebook for libraries to market themselves to their communities, considering that these days, social media is where most people and businesses engage (Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch 2017; Zhang, Jansen & Chowdhury 2011) and it was also relevant for them to be in that space. After the review of literature, there is no evidence of research conducted on public librarians' behaviour towards the use of social media for the provision and marketing of library information services in South Africa. The use of social media by City of

Cape Town Libraries was established in 2015–2016 financial year. The response and perception of librarians have not been adequately assessed since the implementation and adoption of social media use at COCTLIS for work purposes. This article sought to assess how librarians perceived the use of social media in engaging with library users and the perceived usefulness (PU) of these services to library users and library services operations. The results will assist in understanding public librarians' perceptions of the adoption of social media as a marketing and information service provision tool. The results will not only expand the literature on social media use in libraries but most importantly, they will focus on public libraries and South Africa, where the literature is almost nonexistent on social media use in public libraries in Africa.

Research objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Assess librarians' experiences of social media use for the provision and marketing of information services.
2. Evaluate librarians' perceptions of social media use for the provision and marketing of information services.
3. Recommend ways social media information service provision can be improved upon in public libraries.

Research questions

1. What are librarians' experiences of social media use for library information services purposes?
2. How do librarians perceive the use of social media for library information services purposes?
3. In what ways can information services provision be improved upon through the use of social media?

Literature review

The constant developments of the Internet have brought visible changes in which organisations do business and interact with clients. Today's organisations are embracing the benefits of Web 2.0 technologies, specifically of social media and social networking tools. Web 2.0 is viewed as the second generation of web-based applications where all users participating in it are creating, sharing information, interacting, collaborating and making constant changes on the published content by using social networking sites. Averweg (2011) opined:

> [L]ike with the advent of television in South Africa, social media tools are becoming an integral part of the infrastructure of South African society and communities; changing how everything is done in all domains of the country. (p. 16)

Traditional marketing alone is no longer seen as enough in building organisations' brands and products; therefore, organisations are turning to social media (Du Plessis 2010). Even though libraries have adopted Web 2.0 services, some research studies in the library field still show that the application of Web 2.0 technologies in libraries did not always bring out the desired outcomes (Matobako &

Nwagwu 2018). Jones and Harvey (2016) viewed social media not only as a tool that assists libraries in continuing with what they have already been doing – that is, communicating, promoting, marketing and presenting library services to users – but also as a tool that offers libraries an opportunity to communicate with current users and is accessible to potential users, especially the younger generation, who are already heavily active in online spaces and rely on social media for communication, information sharing and discussions (Canty 2013; Khan & Bhatti 2012).

There is still little knowledge about social media content and user engagement in public libraries, and research still needs to be conducted in helping public librarians realise the effectiveness of marketing through social media (Joo et al. 2018). In addition, Phillips (2015) agreed that extant research on the use of social media for library marketing has been conducted in the context of academic libraries, where aims and users are different from those of the public libraries; hence, this article aimed to reveal how social media is used by City of Cape Town Libraries.

Looking at types of posts posted by different public libraries, Joo et al. (2018) found that more than half are advertising upcoming and past library events and commented that developing use of social media content by public libraries can expand the role played by this tool in public libraries, as it can be used for far greater things than just distribution of library events. Looking at the use and role played by social media in public libraries, Nielsdottir (2017) reported that public librarians find social media an important tool for marketing their libraries, as it helped in improving libraries' image through online platforms. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, YouTube and Snapchat were found to be the most popular platforms in reaching targeted groups outside the libraries, especially young adults. Cavanagh (2016), on practices of using social media by Canadian public libraries, revealed that one of the reasons given by public librarians for making themselves available online was to participate in the newly developed technological communication (Twitter) so they can be seen as relevant by their users. Canty's (2013) research on how 'major' libraries around the world use social media and what social media platforms they adopted, including the Library of Congress, the National Library of Australia and the National Library of Scotland, to name a few, stated that libraries use social media for various reasons and some libraries are using more than one platform of social media; that is, they are using Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, etc., with Twitter being the most popular platform used to reach out to communities, market and promote events, run competitions, report operational issues, showcase new additions to the collections, respond to patrons' questions, etc.

Canty (2013) stated that social media could be used as a powerful information dissemination tool that can offer libraries an opportunity to promote their services and resources, as the primary goal of social media or social

networking is to provide a platform for individuals to share, listen and engage with an audience, and by sharing information through social media posts, libraries can keep the library users promptly and effectively informed (DeSoto 2015). Acccording to Ezeani and Igwesi (2012), Facebook is the most librarian-friendly tool that librarians can use to interact with users in finding out about their information needs; LinkedIn can be used for strategic dissemination of information (SDI) by academic libraries where librarians can get users to connect with specialists in their particular fields of interest; Twitter was promoted as a tool that is used to keep staff and patrons updated on daily activities at the library.

Canty (2013), Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) and Khan and Bhatti (2012) promoted social media as a good platform to improve customer service as it allows two-way online communication between libraries and library users, allowing users to send instant messages (IMs) on complaints or asking questions on particular issues, enabling them to get instant feedback from the library. Averweg (2011) argued that public service aims to improve the communities; therefore, public service organisations need to utilise Internet technology to improve the quality of the service, efficiency and effectiveness to the public, as in a country such as South Africa, there is no more important issue than improving the delivery of public services.

Social media is becoming a must for all libraries, and when used properly, it can become a great tool for promoting library services, such as promotion of reading and writing amongst the youth; this is because the use of social media tools requires users to read and write (Plockey & Amuda 2013). Staino (2009) was quoted saying, 'a librarian will be more important than ever by working collaboratively with other educators to teach students how to navigate and use digital information'. Web 2.0 applications provide an opportunity for libraries to bridge the geographical distances between them and the communities. In communication, Web 2.0 technologies are used to provide services such as online information literacy programmes by using tools such as blogs, wikis, social networking, RSS feeds, Flickr and YouTube (Akeriwa, Penzhorn & Holmner 2015; Luo 2013).

Fernandez (2009) applied a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis for social media use by libraries, seeing the strengths and opportunities of adopting social media as being freely available, low-cost marketing tools that allow libraries an opportunity to reach out to their clientele at large whilst increasing libraries' efficiency in interacting with library users, receiving feedback from users, engaging with the community and giving the community a sense of belonging and allowing library users an opportunity to contribute their ideas about library services and services and resources that libraries should consider. Patel and Vyas (2019) collaborated with Fernandez (2009) by saying that an advantage of using social media is that it increases participation between the library and library users, as users can give feedback about services and the library can use it to enhance those user

services. Patel and Vyas (2019) also mentioned that social media helps to disseminate and to deliver the latest information to users in a more direct manner, and it assists in promoting library information services. Librarians can use social media tools to create awareness of library services to potential clients who are not aware of such services.

Rutherford (2008), Smeaton and Davis (2014) and Carlsson (2015) cited the reluctance of staff as the biggest barrier facing public librarians in adopting social media and using it for marketing and promotion of library services. The influence of organisational culture on the success or failure of how librarians (particularly public librarians) view the adoption of social media by libraries was also cited by Smeaton and Davis (2014), with Matobako and Nwagwu (2018) citing that the younger generation of librarians indicated that they were benefiting from using social media in libraries, as compared with older generation staff members indicating that social media in libraries was a waste of time in a study focusing on benefits and challenges on the usage of social media in libraries.

Nesta and Mi (2010) were concerned that even though libraries were showing interest and keenness in adopting social technologies, library users still seemed to be slow in taking up social technologies as a means of communicating and connecting with libraries. Akeriwa et al.'s (2015) study revealed that library users use social networking applications (such as Facebook) on a daily basis and suggested that they would like the professional benefits of social media tools by libraries, such as delivering library services through instant messaging, social networks and social bookmarking, as they are regarded to have potential in delivering library services in this academic library, with study outcomes revealing that there is a good response from the university community with regard to the adoption of social media by the university. However, breach of privacy between college and personal life was mentioned as a reason for not connecting with the library's social media pages, with other respondents indicating that information posted on the library's social media page might be irrelevant to them in Jones and Harvey's (2016) study about the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool in academic libraries.

Some of the challenges faced by librarians in adopting social media successfully in libraries were mentioned by Harvey (2016), Ezeani and Igwesi (2012), Kaul (2016) and Patel and Vyas (2019). These include rules imposed on libraries by management regarding what social media tools to use and how these should be considered the biggest challenge, lack of interest from users in engaging with the library through social media, time required in managing social media tools, lack of staff knowledge and interest in using the tools, lack of staff training, budget cuts which lead to libraries struggling to appoint staff who can be dedicated to managing social media platforms and copyright issues caused by free access to information where people can copy,

paste and edit information without giving credit to the original authors.

Theoretical framework

This study is guided by the technological acceptance model (TAM) as developed by Davis (1989). The TAM has two variables, 'perceived usefulness', which was defined as the degree to which a person believes that using a technology or system would enhance their job performance, and 'perceived ease of use' (PEU), which was explained as the degree to which a person believes that using technology or system would require no effort. According to Davis (1989), TAM is aimed at examining the impact that ease of use and usefulness have on technology use. He believes that under TAM, individuals are likely to adopt a technology if it is useful and easy to use. Likewise, technology is less likely to be adopted when it is not perceived as useful or perceived as not easy to use. Both PU and PEU may influence the person's attitudes towards using a technology (intention) and intentions to use technology will determine whether an individual will end up using the technology or not (behaviour) (Davis 1989). For this study, PU was used to determine to what extent the City of Cape Town's librarians perceive the usefulness of social media utilisation for library work purposes and also to determine the usefulness of social media in meeting library users' needs by City of Cape Town Libraries. The PEU was used to determine the City of Cape Town's librarians' perceived experiences on using social media to provide library services such as information services to library users.

Research methodology

The descriptive survey research design approach and quantitative research method were employed for this study. The study population was the 102 City of Cape Town librarians-in-charge, as they are the managers of libraries and have the responsibility of managing all library activities, including overseeing the social media accounts. A total enumeration sampling technique was used for the study; hence, all 102 librarians-in-charge were included in the study. Data collection for the study was carried out using a web-based questionnaire. The link to the online questionnaire was sent by e-mail to the 102 librarians-in-charge of the City of Cape Town Libraries with 69 (70.38%) respondents participating in the study. According to Mertler (2016), when using mail, e-mail or web surveys, a response rate of 50% to 75% is acceptable. All respondents gave their consent as the section was made compulsory; only respondents who accepted to participate had access to the content of the questionnaire. In compliance with the anonymity of respondents, pseudonyms are used to refer to libraries' responses as L1 to L69.

Ethical considerations

This research project was conducted in full compliance with the University of the Western Cape's research ethics. Permission to conduct research was requested from the relevant City of Cape Town's department and approval to conduct research was issued. Participants in the research were assured of anonymity and their right to withdraw from the research study at any time without providing any reasons for withdrawal. Participants were also assured that the research data would strictly be used only for this research and academic purposes. Participants were provided with detailed information on the purpose of the research project and consent to participate in the research was obtained from participants. All the data collected will be managed in accordance with the University of the Western Cape's Research Data policy (ref. no. HS19/9/11. 15/11/2019).

Results

The use of social media platforms by librarians was queried, and the findings reveal that all 69 (100%) respondents indicated that libraries are using Facebook. This confirms the South African Social Media Landscape of 2019 report on the uptake on Facebook across all age groups, racial divides and lifestyle measures, which puts Facebook at over 9 million active users, making it the second most utilised social media platform in South Africa (Patricios 2020).

The results of this study agree with Joo et al.'s (2018) study that Facebook has become one of the most popular channels adopted by public libraries. A total of 21 (30.43%) respondents indicated that they also use other social networking platforms such as WhatsApp (used for staff or internal communication), four (5.79%) use YouTube, two (2.89%) use Pinterest and one (1.44%) uses Instagram. The use of Facebook is high compared with other social media platforms. It is also noteworthy that the COCTLIS internal policy documents stipulate Facebook as the social media of preference.

The librarians were asked to indicate their years of experience in using social media for library work purposes. This was not only the experience in using social media at the City of Cape Town Libraries, considering that people move from one job to another. Responses from the participants indicated that 32 (46%) librarians have 2–5 years of experience, whilst 29 (42%) have more than 5 years of experience and only eight (12%)
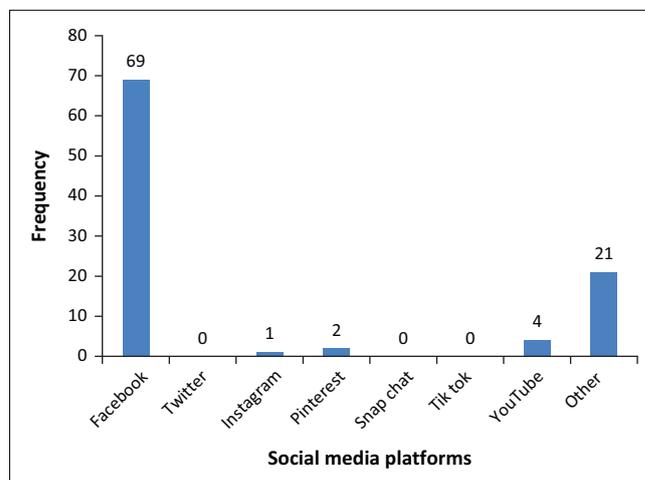

FIGURE 1: Social media platform(s) used by librarians for public library services (*N* = 69).

indicated having 0–2 years experience in using social media for provision of library information services.

This result revealed that most of the respondents have considerably long years of experience in using social media for the provision of library information services. The result lends support to Ajibade's (2018) statement that TAM's strength suggests that other external factors influence users to accept a technology other than PU and PEU variables. It is based on the theory that such factors include acquired IT skills and experience in using the system. Other factors here could also include institutional mandates on the social media platform of choice to be used to engage user-based communities.

Librarians were asked to indicate what they use social media for. As presented in Figure 2, analysis of the findings reveals that social media is good for communication, where 12 librarians indicated that social media allowed them to communicate with their patrons quicker compared with waiting for patrons to come physically to the libraries before they could get any updates. For example, L28 indicated that 'we can reach a wider audience; we can also reach patrons quicker to convey messages instead of waiting on their next library visit', and L21 commented that social media assisted them in 'reaching a wider audience and during COVID-19 lockdown we kept patrons informed.' This confirms Ezeani and Igwesi's (2012) statement that in the 21st century, libraries are adopting the latest technological trends to make their services more user-centred, going from being physical spaces where users need to walk in to get information to cyberspaces where users can access and communicate whilst contributing to the content. Librarians mentioned that social media is good for marketing and promoting library services, with 23 responses (the highest number) received. For example, L6 responded that 'most of our patrons are using social media; it is good for us to market our library', with L16 mentioning that social media assists them in 'promoting the library' and 'wider marketing of library services to the community' (L19). Luo et al. (2013) and Harvey (2016), respectively, agreed that libraries are using social media to market to active users and
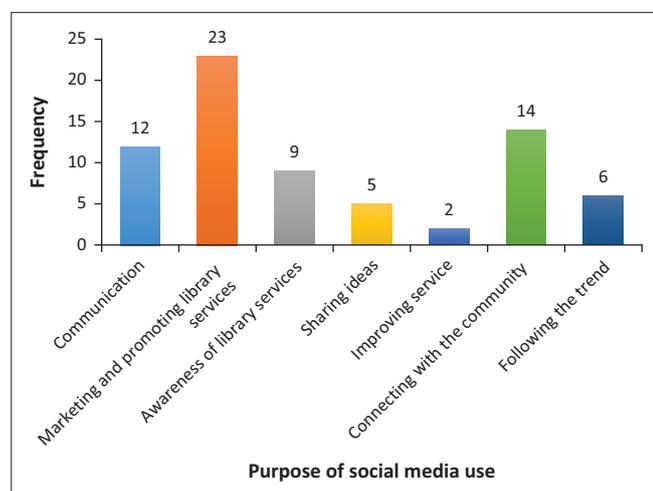
potential users, especially the young generation of users. Nine librarians agreed that social media 'promotes great awareness' (L54). Mozila (2019) defined library marketing as activities undertaken by libraries in creating awareness and promoting services and products that are offered by libraries. Libraries are creating 'awareness and making libraries visible' (L3), and 'keeping the community aware of services that are offered by libraries and keep in check what the community is saying about the library' (L15).

Five librarians get ideas for library displays and other ways of promoting library services, programmes, events and materials on social media. L2 indicated that 'it is exciting to see what happens at other libraries. Social media gives us a lot of ideas of how we can improve our library in terms of displays and what books are popular.' Bradley (2015) and Jain (2015) mentioned that social media is a new window for the marketing of library and information services as it offers libraries an opportunity to go beyond just being in physical buildings and to being part of the world's online conversations. Only two librarians mentioned that social media assists them in improving customer services. L4 response was that they get 'positive comments from the public about the service', and L10 also mentioned that they get 'positive feedback from our users [and] friends.' Canty (2013) mentioned that social media is a good platform to improve customer service as it allows two-way online communication between libraries and library users. The responses by respondents are a confirmation of Luo et al.'s (2013) statement that libraries are successfully utilising social media platforms to communicate with library users.

Fourteen librarians connect with communities. However, connecting with communities did not only mean communities where libraries are physically based but also online communities, which included other libraries in other provinces. L39 commented that 'it helps in connecting with other libraries and with the public as well', and L47 mentioned that they use social media for 'introducing patrons to staff and creating a sense of community.' Lastly, six respondents also indicated that being active on social media makes them feel like they are being modern and moving with the times, as most businesses in the world are moving to the same space. L20's response was that being on social media 'modernises the libraries as libraries seem to be moving with the times as well'. Cavanagh's (2016) research revealed that public librarians are active on social media (Twitter) so they can be seen as relevant by their users. L31 mentioned that 'most patrons use social media these days so we had to follow the trend'.

Types of services offered on libraries' social media page(s)

Librarians were requested to select from the provided list the types of services that they offer to users on social media page(s). Study results presented in Figure 3 shows that 22 (33.8%) libraries indicated that they offer circulation
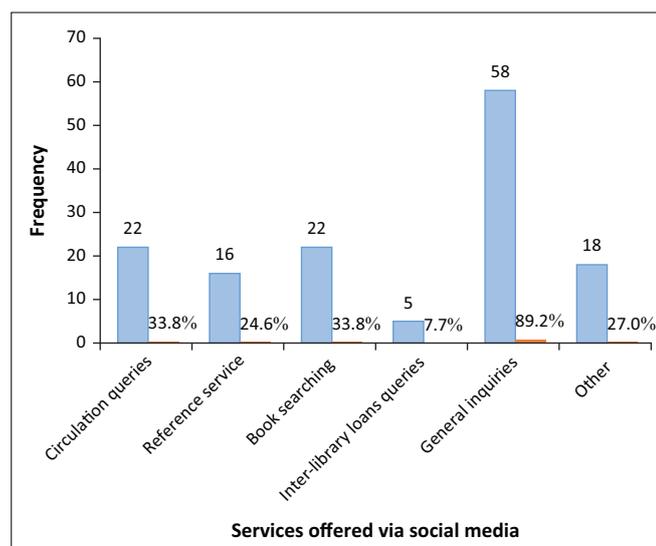
FIGURE 2: Public libraries' use of social media ($N = 64$).

FIGURE 3: Types of services offered on social media page(s) (*n* = 58).

inquiries on social media, 16 (24.6%) libraries offer reference services, another 22 (33.8%) do book searching services, only five (7.7%) offer interlibrary loans inquiries, whilst 58 (89.2%) of libraries offer general inquiry services and 18 (27.0%) indicated that they offer other types of services, which included replying to users' comments, replying to users' inbox messages, inbox renewals and monitoring complaints.

Averweg (2011) suggested that any public service aims to improve the communities; therefore, public service organisations need to utilise Internet technology to improve the quality of the service, efficiency and effectiveness to the public. An article from *The New Age* (2016) advised businesses and organisations to constantly monitor social media as consumers and customers these days go to these platforms to complain about products or features of a product, as opposed to lodging a complaint directly with the company or organisation. City of Cape Town Libraries offer more than one type of service on social media.

Librarians' overall experiences in using social media for library work purposes

Libraries were requested to report their overall experiences in using social media for library work purposes. There were 16 (23.18%) responses to this question; eight (50%) respondents reported good experiences and eight (50%) respondents reported negative experiences. Amongst the good experiences, respondents mentioned that social media is a good tool that assists librarians in marketing libraries and that it works without giving them any problems. They also mentioned that social media has assisted them with reaching out to communities and informing them about the library, allowing libraries to create an awareness of library services to the community at large. Respondents also mentioned that social media is an eye-opener for their libraries. L21 mentioned that 'users are sending suggestions on how libraries can improve services via social media', proving that library users are indeed engaging with libraries via social media.

An equal number of respondents reported on the negative experiences they had with using social media for library work purposes. Such experiences included issues with a slow network, lack of guidance on issues of copyright, restrictions in the sense that Facebook is the only approved social network for use by libraries, time required to come up with content, the community's lack of interest in following libraries' social media pages, and the lack of equipment for taking photos and videos of library programmes. L7 specifically mentioned that 'not all staff is clued up or interested on using social media for work purposes'. Ajibade (2018) mentioned that people's acceptance of an organisation's technological system is mostly influenced by company rules rather than being influenced by an individual's friends or colleagues. With this, staff are likely to reject the system as it was not influenced by personal relations. According to Davis (1989), people's attitude towards the use of a technological system is influenced by how they perceive the system. Davis (1989) continues by mentioning that if a person perceives that a system is easy to use and that it is useful in enhancing their job performance, they are likely to change their attitude towards that system.

Conclusion

The results of the study have evidenced that the City of Cape Town Libraries employ the use of social media as a medium for the extension of public library services to their service communities. Facebook is the most used social media platform by the City of Cape Town Libraries, and this is accounted for by internal policy documents, which favour the use of this platform over others. This policy preference from the COCTLIS adds an extra layer of the variable to TAM's existing two constructs of PU and perceived ease of use. Institutional policies in this case mandate the preference of a platform that the COCTLIS librarians and users must perceive useful and easy to utilise. This third construct from the study's findings is referred to as *preference of choice*.

The study reveals that the City of Cape Town's librarians have a positive perception and acceptance of using social media to perform library-related duties such as marketing and promoting library services, communicating with users and connecting and engaging with the communities. According to a report by Statistics South Africa (2020), more than 50% of South Africa's population are below the age of 30. This makes the use of social media, which studies have reported being commonly used by adolescents and young adults (Anderson & Jian 2018; Heffer et al. 2019; Wong, Merchant & Moreno 2014) well suited for the provision of public library services to South Africa's youthful population. The study's findings further revealed that libraries are providing different types of services on social media to democratise access to information and bridge geographical distances. Matobako and Nwagwu's (2018) reported that Web 2.0 applications are meant to provide an opportunity for libraries to bridge the geographical distances between them and the communities.

Recommendations

The study recommends that public libraries should democratise the utilisation of social media platforms to include those that situate more with library user's preferences rather than the use of a single social media platform. The study also recommends that libraries need to look at ways in which they could further expand the services they offer through social media to further improve the provision of information services to communities.

Significance of the results

This article assessed the response of City of Cape Town librarians to the introduction of social media as a marketing and information provision tool. There have been several studies on the use of social media in libraries (Islam & Habiba 2015; Jones & Harvey 2016; Nduka 2018), however, studies focusing on public libraries have not been reported. Also, there is a dearth of literature from South Africa on use of social media for library marketing; hence, the results of this study make a significant contribution to the expansion of knowledge and literature on social media and use of library marketing.

Study limitations

This study has highlighted the use of social media for library services at the City of Cape Town Libraries and the findings reported therein should be taken in light of the following limitations. Library users were not part of this study, as the number approved was only 11, which would not be representative of the hundreds of thousands of library users that make up the user population. Further studies should be considered to determine library users' perceptions of social media use for library services and if their information needs are being met through social media by libraries. The reports in this study are not an official City of Cape Town policy.

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Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this research are those of authors and do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions and official policies of any affiliated institution.

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