

Social Media Usage Among Users of Sabah State Library, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of Information Technology and the rise of the digital era since the year 2000 has been a challenging mission for libraries all over the world to be still relevant in providing information in all kinds of practices. Since the year 2020, the social media platform has grown rapidly and it has been the most visited site on the internet. Sabah State Library as a responsible library for all the districts in Sabah, Malaysia, needs to take the challenge in order to remain relevant in this field. Therefore, librarians, library staff and the users need to be supportive and cooperative in implementing this new trends to achieve an impactful consequence as anticipated. The outcome of the study on the social media usage among users of the Sabah State Library, Malaysia are discussed in this paper.

INTRODUCTION

Social media is often defined by its user-generated content, which is evident on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and others. These platforms offer various features that promote social interaction, enabling users to share thoughts, express emotions through photos, music, videos, and send private messages. Researchers have noted that these are among the most visited websites on the internet, having grown significantly in recent years. According to Statista Research Department (statista.com), as of January 2024, 83.1% of the Malaysian population are active social media users, with Facebook being the most popular platform among Malaysians.

Social media is also widely used in Malaysia. A study was conducted by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) in 2018 to monitor communications and multimedia activities in Malaysia. The study conducted in that particular year found out about twenty-four point six (24.6) million were social networking users, and ninety-seven-point three percent (97.3%) owned a Facebook account, followed by Instagram account fifty-seven percent (57.0%), Google+ thirty-one-point three percent (31.3%), Twitter twenty-three-point eight percent (23.8%) and LinkedIn thirteen

point three percent (13.3%) (MCMC, 2018). At the same time, there are a few studies on social media in academic libraries been conducted. However, not much research has been carried out on public libraries especially in Malaysia and specifically in Sabah. There was research conducted in Malaysia regarding social media usage in Academic Libraries in Malaysia (At et al., 2009). Unfortunately, their findings were too outdated since social media usage in Malaysia has grown rapidly since then.

Social media refers to two-way communication via the internet that allows library users to communicate, seek information, make enquiries, and reference the librarians. Social media can be defined as two-way communication through the Internet that enables social interaction (Xie & Stevenson, 2014). They added that social media is a compelling tool for people to communicate and interact with each other. On the other hand, Bradley (2019) defines social media as a mobile technology or web-based usage which transforms communication into an interactive dialogue. Social media consists of two social words and media. Media is an instrument of communication; therefore, social media can be defined as an instrument of communication within the social aspect (Wasike, 2013).

Sabah State Library (SSL) is a public library under the state government in Sabah, Malaysia. Currently, SSL involves an extensive network comprising a Headquarters, 3 Regional Libraries, 26 branches, 74 Rural Libraries (state), 13 mobile libraries, and 8 Desanet. This organization has a vision of literacy culture towards community welfare and its mission of empowering library services to form a reading and knowledgeable community. Services that SSL offers via the Facebook platform include FAQs, a reference desk, information to users related to the library, and promotion of library services, activities, and events.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perceptions and Acceptance of Librarians Towards Social Media

Libraries need a marketing strategy to promote their services even though they use social media as a tool. In conjunction, librarians need to learn the marketing techniques to implement social media as a tool to be successful. Ofori et al., (2020) inform that, the importance of marketing in libraries is to compete with other online information providers and remain relevant as the main information provider. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that librarians also confront a few problems in marketing their library services via social media. They also mentioned that librarians face the hinder on the success of marketing, including a lack of knowledge of marketing strategy among library staff, a lack of funds, and a lack of marketing policy to guide marketing activities in the libraries.

Similarly, research conducted to investigate libraries' perception of the importance of social media marketing and the findings have revealed that the challenges include a lack of staff resources, skills, and expertise. Choi and Joo (2018) express that a few newly identified challenges are the controls by upper administration, system issues, and lack of user engagement. On the other hand, AlAwadhi and Al-Daihani (2019) in their study highlight that one of the findings was on poor management support in ensuring the success of using social media as a marketing tool among the libraries. Therefore, all those findings might be a wake-up call for the libraries' management to take this marketing tool seriously and decrease their hesitation to expand the budget to ensure its successful implementation. Similarly, Chiparausha et al., (2022) in their study, examining the use of social media by librarians at universities in Zimbabwe revealed that the librarians perceived social media tools as useful and easy-to-use tools for service delivery. They also mentioned that social influence in using social media for delivery services at the library has a moderate effect on the academic library; however, the library staff felt that their supervisors did not provide enough facilities or training to use social media applications.

Communication Tools in Public Library

In the digital age, social media has become an integral part of our lives. Today, people use technology and social media to communicate with one another. Social media has emerged as a prevalent platform for interaction and communication through internet applications. When it comes to the context of librarianship, the use of social media in a library is not only meant for searching books and journals or other materials but also as a medium for knowledge sharing, interactions, and creating communities (Fong et al., 2020).

In Malaysia university library, research has been done to implement a prototype mobile library application (app) designed using an in-house open-source library system (Ajab Mohideen et al., 2022). The findings from this research show that the library staff enjoyed using the application, and it was tested using the user acceptance test (UAT) and system acceptance test (SAT). The library staff also found the application as functional, accessible, useful, and appealing. The result on this study shows how much the libraries in Malaysia, especially in Sabah, actively upgrading their digital services to the users to fulfil the users' needs.

Another research examined the emergence of social media technologies (SMTs) with their implications for academic library services in developing countries. Oyetola et al. (2023) revealed that there are other types of SMTs relevant to academic libraries, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and others, but the researcher highlighted that very few studies have been done linking SMT and librarianships, maybe because of a lack of awareness of SMTs' importance in libraries. The study aims to explore the factors influencing intentions to use library social media marketing accounts from users' perspectives to help libraries using social media in providing targeted information services to users in meeting their information needs. They inform that attitude completely mediates perceived usefulness and use intention, while perceived usefulness partially mediates perceived ease of use and attitude.

Social media can significantly strengthen the connection between libraries and their users, regardless of users' locations or their methods of discovering and using library services and resources. The development of these tools is progressing rapidly, and they are expected to play an increasingly important role in outreach and service delivery for libraries (Oyetola et al., 2023). To effectively organize, plan, and implement social networks in libraries and information centers, adequate training and expertise are essential. Library professionals need to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to stay updated with evolving media technologies, including the growing prevalence of social networks and their advanced capabilities, to effectively meet the needs of 21st-century library users in a constantly evolving digital landscape.

Public Library Social Media Usage

In 21st century, social media is adopted in many organizations as a marketing tool, including libraries (Ofori et al., 2020; AlAwadhi & Al-Daihani, 2019; Shafawi & Hassan, 2018). Although many findings have proven the advantages of adopting social media in libraries (Fong et al., 2020; Chaputula et al., 2020; Young & Rossmann, 2015; Smeaton & Davis, 2014; Vanwynsberghe et al., 2014), there are libraries hesitate to do so, and many libraries did create an account for their library but failed to actively using it (Fasola, 2015). These can be the reasons why the users are not interested in following the library page (Istiana, 2017). In other words, it can be assumed that the social media usage rate by the libraries can impact the users' interest and satisfaction towards the library's social media sites. Furthermore, digital literacy and the digital divide are also contributing to inactive library social media sites, because there are all the challenges encountered by the librarians in order for them to be actively updating the library's social media site (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019; Xie & Stevenson, 2014; Baro et al., 2014).

As public libraries have traditionally connected people with information, social media now prompts them to reassess their role as providers of public knowledge (Anttiroiko & Savolainen, 2007). Modern librarians must manage and disseminate information in various formats beyond print, and be adapt in using all forms of media, including digital and social platforms. Furthermore, librarians are increasingly tasked with bridging the gap between social media and users, ensuring that these media sources are utilized effectively and efficiently (Callahan, 1991). This leads to a discussion about media literacy, which we specifically refer to as "social media literacy" (SML). SML encompasses not only the practical and critical cognitive skills needed to use social media but also the motivation to use these platforms effectively and appropriately for online interaction and communication (Vanwynsberghe & Verdegem, 2013). To achieve this, librarians must be skilled in using social media.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative research approach, employing a survey within a positivist framework that address the research objectives. The questionnaire was developed in a Google Form and was distributed to the respondents through library users emails and WhatsApp applications. The target population was the library social media users of the Sabah State Library. Four hundred (400) respondents participated in this study. Dual language (English and Malay) were used in the questionnaire since respondents from rural areas might only understand their native language and Malay language.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Response Rate

A total of 400 sets of questionnaires were distributed among the respondents who are all Facebook users of Sabah State Library and follow the Sabah State Library Facebook page. Data were entered with a return rate of 96.5% (386 of the responded questionnaires were returned out of 400). The data was reviewed to identify and correct any entry errors by checking for 'out of range values' using the 'Descriptive' and 'Frequencies' commands. All responses were complete with no missing values. A response rate of 70% or higher is generally agreed upon as necessary to ensure that the sample is adequately representative of the target population from which it was drawn (Patel et al., 2003).

As shown in Table 1, the highest rate was from the physically distribution (n=200) or 51.8%, distributed and via social media distribution (n=186) or 48.2%, similarly to the usable responses. In total, 386 usable questionnaires were obtained, representing 96.5% of the distributed questionnaires. This response rate exceeds the recommended sample size of 379 suggested by Raosoft Calculator Application and Barlett et al. (2001).

Table 1: Response Rate

Type of Distribution Method	Total Distributed		Total Returned		Total Usable	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Social Media Distribution	200	50	186	46.5	186	46.5
Physical Distribution	200	50	200	50	200	50
Total	400	100	386	96.5	386	96.5

Demographic Analysis

As shown in Figure 1 and 2, out of 386 users in the sample, 67.6% (n=261) were female whereas 32.4% (n=125) were male. In terms of age of the respondents, 28% (n=108) that are ages more than 36-45 years old. The second highest were ages between 26-35 years old that are about 26% (n=100), while 17.6% (n=68) reported to being between the ages of 46-55, and 13% (n=50) were ages between range 56-65. In other hand, 11% (n=43) reported were ages between range 19-25, only 3% (n=12) is age under 18 years old and 1.55% (n=5) were ages above 66 years old.

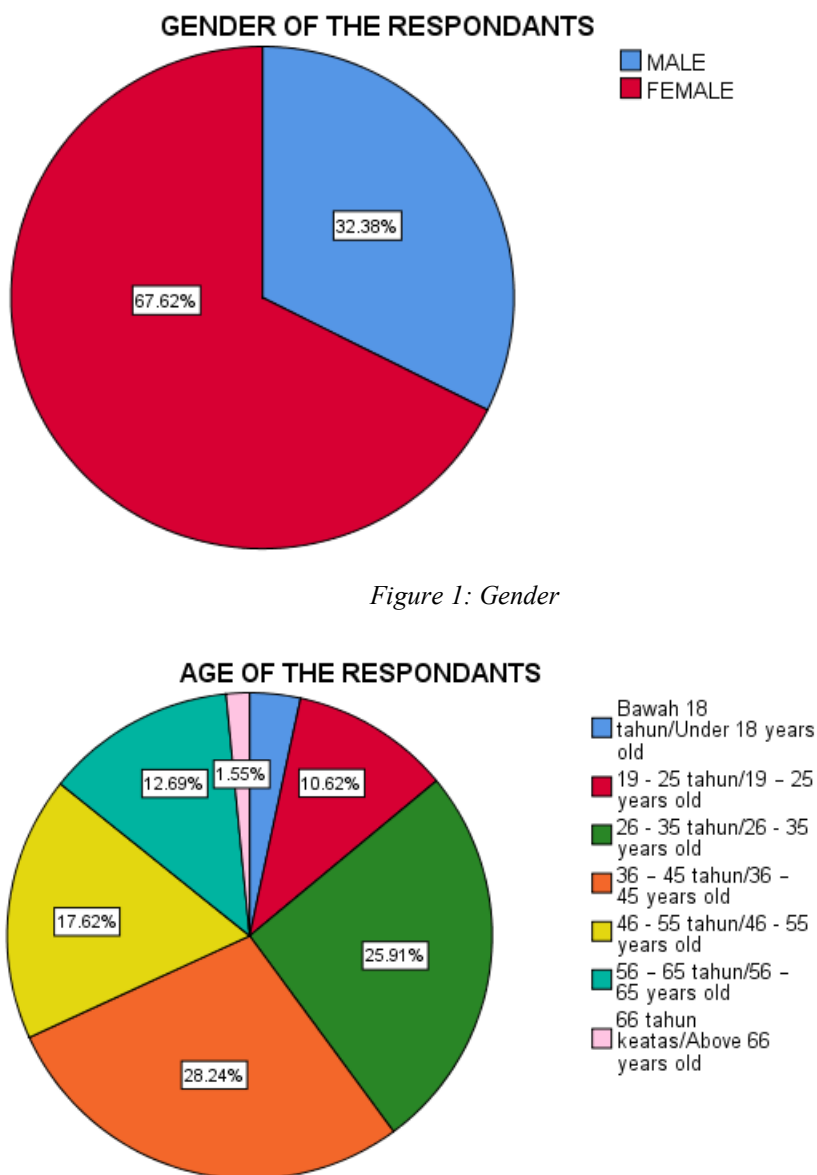


Figure 1: Gender

Figure 2: Age

As exhibited in Table 2, it shows the numbers of usage frequency of the social media among the respective users participated in the study. Most of the users are using social media everyday with 92.2% (n=356), followed by 5.7% (n=22) users who are using social media few times a week, then, about 1.3% (n=5) users that use social media only few times in a month and 0.8% (n=3) users that are using social media only few times a year.

Table 2: Social Media Usage

Social Media Usage	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Everyday	356	92.2	92.2	92.2
Few Times A Week	22	5.7	5.7	97.9
Few Times A Month	5	1.3	1.3	99.2
Few Times A Year	3	.8	.8	100/0
Total	386	100.0	100.0	

Library Social Media Sites

Table 3 shows the details related to the minimum value, maximum value, mean and standard deviation on each item of the Library Social Media Sites results.

Table 3: Minimum value, maximum value, mean and standard deviation each item of Library Social Media Sites

Descriptive Analysis					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
(LIBRARYSM1) I am aware of the library's social media site for library branch in my area	386	1	5	3.66	1.278
(LIBRARYSM2) Good services provided in library's social media site	385	1	5	3.73	1.010
(LIBRARYSM3) The library branch updated their Facebook page regularly	386	1	5	3.55	.958
(LIBRARYSM4) There are many activities promoted in the library's Facebook page and I	386	1	5	3.53	1.042

always got the notification					
(LIBRARYSM5) If there are any inquiries related to the library, I will ask directly via Facebook for a quick respond	386	1	5	3.37	1.074
(LIBRARYSM6) My inquiry via Facebook is responded immediately	386	1	5	3.31	.949
(LIBRARYSM7) I feel secure to access the social media	386	1	5	3.48	.976
(LIBRARYSM8) I am afraid of my privacy being exposed when using social media to communicate publicly	386	1	5	3.91	1.014
Valid N (listwise)	385				

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Findings from this study provide some avenues to briefly consider the research recommendations for the Sabah State Library and future research. The study discovered that, the library has to create a media team to hold the responsibilities of updating the social media sites, responding the enquiries and create content for their social media platform. This is due to the current findings, which state that the library needs to update their social media platform, more often. Based on the findings, the users' reaction, and intention to use the social media as a platform to any inquiries is also very low which gives a sign to the library that something need to be done in order to gain users trust at all times.

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