

Utilization of Social Media Platforms among Academic Libraries in Promoting Library Resources and Services in Qatar

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Abstract: In this new era, social media has altered how we communicate, share information, and interact. Regardless of users' location or preferred method of learning regarding in addition using library system and materials, social media has the potential to greatly enhance connections between libraries and information centers and their consumers. Academic libraries, traditionally viewed as knowledge repositories, are increasingly embracing social media platforms to improve their services, stimulate collaboration, and engage with their customers in meaningful ways. Incorporating digital networking to library strategies not only allows for real-time communication but also fosters information literacy, stimulates community engagement, and aids in the dissemination of research. This research aimed to determine the use of social media platforms in promoting library resources and services among academic libraries in Qatar. Specifically, it attempts to respond to the following questions: 1. What is the respondents' demographic profile in terms of 1.1 Age, 1.2 Gender, 1.3 Educational Attainment, and 1.4 Types of Libraries 2. Which social media sites do the respondents used to advertise library resources and services? 3. What is the respondent's level of utilization of social media platforms in promoting library resources and services? 4. What is the respondent's level of promoting social media platforms in library resources and services? 5. Is there a significant difference in the respondents' level of utilization of social media when grouped according to profile variables? 6. Is there a significant difference in the respondents' level of promoting social media when grouped according to profile variables? 7. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' level of utilization of social media platforms and the promotion of library resources and services? 8. What action plan can be proposed based on the results of the study? The study's key conclusions are as follows: The age range of the twenty responders was 36-45. They were mostly female, from the school library, and held bachelor's degrees. Most utilized Facebook as a social media channel to advertise library services and resources. The degree to which the respondents used social media to advertise library resources and services was "very high". "Very high" was the respondent's level of promotion of social media platforms in library resources and services. When respondents are categorized by age, gender, educational attainment, and library type, there is no discernible variation in their use of social media platforms. Age, gender, educational attainment, and library type do not significantly affect the respondents' use of social media platforms. There is a significant correlation between the respondents' level of utilization of social media platforms and the promotion of library resources and services. An action plan was formulated to retain the high utilization of social media platforms in promoting library resources and services. Based on the salient findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: The majority of respondents were aged 26-45, female, had a bachelor's degree and were working in a school library in Qatar. Facebook and Instagram are the most utilized social media platforms in promoting library resources and services in academic libraries in Qatar. Most academic libraries in Qatar highly utilized social media platforms in promoting library resources and services. This suggests that social media plays a crucial role in enhancing library visibility, engagement, and accessibility for patrons. The respondents actively use the social media platform to promote the library resources and services in an academic library in Qatar. This underscores the importance of social media in enhancing library outreach and engagement. Regardless of their background, respondents share a similar perspective on utilizing social media platforms for library resources and services. Regardless of the respondents' profiles, they share similar views on promoting library resources and services through social media platforms. The higher the utilization of social media platforms, the higher the promotion of library resources and services in an academic library in Qatar. The action plan needs to be implemented to retain the high utilization of social media platforms in promoting library resources and services.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, social media has altered how we communicate, share information, and interact with one another. According to Chore 2023, social media is considered the main tool for spreading information. Regardless of users' location or preferred method of learning about and using library services and resources, social media has the potential to greatly enhance connections between libraries and information centers and their consumers.

Academic libraries, traditionally viewed as knowledge repositories, are increasingly embracing social media platforms to improve their services, stimulate collaboration, and engage with their users in meaningful ways. Integrating social media into library operations not only allows for real-time communication but also fosters information literacy, stimulates community engagement, and aids in the dissemination of research. Libraries have an advantage in building a solid relationship with users through creativity, integrity, and accessibility thanks to social media features like simple installation, account creation, maintenance, limitless connections, entertainment, creativity, and timeless access (Madhusudhan & Soni, 2024).

As academic libraries strive to maintain their viability by supporting their parent institutions' teaching and learning, research, and community outreach aims, the adoption and use of social media as a new channel of communication with library users has gained momentum. Furthermore, because of their interactive character, social media provide opportunities for librarians to touch base with numerous library users at the same time, interrelate with them, and seek their ideas and feedback (Appel et al. 2020). Related studies and literature show that there are limited studies conducted on the use of social media platforms among academic libraries, specifically in Qatar.

Therefore, this research aims to analyze the ways in which academic libraries in Qatar utilize social media platforms to advertise their resources and services. By evaluating the methods and tactics used by these libraries, we intend to find best practices that may be shared with other institutions looking to improve their online presence. Hoping to provide significant insights into how social media marketing affects library usage and outreach, allowing libraries to better interact with their customers and meet their information requirements in the digital age. Finally, these findings will add to the continuing discussion concerning the role of social media in promoting library services and resources in the academic community.

➤ *Operational Framework*

The study's operational framework was designed using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The operational model depicts the variables of the study and their interrelationships. The operational model presents the variables of the study, which include utilization and promotion and their interrelationships. The primary independent variables are the demographic profile of the respondents and the level of utilization of social media

platforms in academic libraries, while the dependent variables are promoting library resources and services on social media platforms.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND STUDY

➤ *Social Media*

According to Saidu and Sani (2022), the evolution of social media began in 1978, In Ward Christensen and Randy Suess built the first social media platform, Bulletin Board System (BBS), which was used to announce meetings and share information by posting it on BBS. It marked the birth of the virtual community and the first dial-up connection in history. Following the launch and popularity of the internet (WWW), Beverly Hills Internet (BHI) introduced Geocities as a web hosting service that allows internet users to create simple websites for themselves.

In the modern digital age, social media has become an essential tool for communication and networking. It allows people to connect with others around the world in real-time and share information instantly. It has revolutionized the way we interact and stay informed.

Social media has the potential to greatly enhance the interactions between libraries and information centers and their patrons, regardless of users' location or how they choose to learn about and use library services and resources, according to Chore (2023), who identified social media as the key instrument for disseminating information. Libraries have long made information accessible, and social media is beginning to play a significant role in marketing that information to library customers as well as in positioning the library as a central community gathering place.

Social media provides libraries with more ways to connect with their patrons, target specific demographics, and let them engage with the library.

Social media is all about connecting people with information, which is the library's entire mission. Social media makes it easier to connect with user groups and provide them with pertinent information in an approachable way Tendenge (2019). Taylor and Francis Group (2014). According to Saidu and Sani (2022), social media is utilized to do housekeeping tasks in libraries such as charging and discharging library resources; improving patron feedback to improve library service evaluation; and inexpensively promoting events, activities, and services.

➤ *Social Media Platforms*

• *Facebook*

According to Omini and Osulale (2019), Facebook has become very popular with young people and is commonplace where students, librarians, and other patrons of academic libraries can easily share information. According to Saidu and Sani (2022), academic libraries utilize this network to connect some of their specialized library applications—like WorldCat, JSTOR search, and others—to Facebook in order to alert users to the academic library's helpful hidden gems.

Since it will aid in their marketing efforts, academic libraries ought to have a Facebook profile with a large following. Academic libraries may be able to promote for less money by using social network advertising. Khan and Bhatti found that respondents had a positive attitude on the use of social media to promote library resources and services. They suggested that libraries establish a web page, link to internet services, and develop a social media page. (Chore, 2023)

- *Instagram*

Instagram, a photo-sharing website owned by Facebook, offers filters that users may use to make their photos look more professional or unique. Connecting accounts on Flickr, Facebook, or Twitter allows the enhanced photos to be shared on other social networking sites. (Chore, 2023).

- *YouTube*

As a marketing tool, libraries can set up a YouTube channel and post videos of noteworthy events that have happened there. Readers' curiosity will be piqued by presentations and demonstrations of subscribing databases, guides on how to use sources, and movies on book comments. A virtual tour of the library that streams videos will grab readers' attention and, in turn, draw more people to the resources and services offered by the library. (Ternenge, 2019) According to Grebenyuk (2024), video content on YouTube not only effectively draws attention to library resources and services but also helps form a positive image of libraries. This approach is especially relevant in the context of the rapidly changing preferences of modern users, who are increasingly oriented towards visual perception and the availability of information through new media.

- *WhatsApp*

In some other parts of Africa, the use of WhatsApp as an online library reference service is widely known. Ansari and Tripathi (2017), as cited by Chaputula (2020), discovered that users' attitudes towards the use of WhatsApp in the provision of library services are favorable, as they view it as a vehicle for the provision of better services. Using WhatsApp in academic libraries has several advantages, such as lowering space expenses, improving the promotion of library services and goods, and reducing time while looking for, accessing, and using information. Although there were several explanations offered for the creation of the WhatsApp service, they all appeared to center on the library's wish to assist patrons who live far away. This is consistent with contemporary worldwide patterns in the delivery of library services, wherein libraries are implementing a range of ICT devices to connect with customers who live far away while also offering 24/7 access to library services.

- *LinkedIn*

LinkedIn is the biggest professional social network. In addition to social networks that people use to keep in touch with friends, LinkedIn aims to link professionals worldwide and increase their popularity and effectiveness. LinkedIn allows users to connect with like-minded individuals and exchange resumes and employment histories. For others, a LinkedIn user might seek focused discussions, collaborate, or establish a community. Libraries also utilize LinkedIn to

establish connections with the local professional community. They also review books on marketing, provide the community with books, and post useful content about business and finance on the library's LinkedIn profile (Ganeshnath, 2021). According to Kale et al. (2024), LinkedIn is a useful tool for networking with professionals and recent graduates, despite its lower user base. Effective use of social media requires posting a variety of content, such as courses, resource highlights, and event updates. Using visual content, such as slideshows and movies, significantly increases engagement rates.

- *Blog*

A blog, also known as a website, is an online journal style or website that shows information in reverse chronological order, with the first or topmost appearance of recent posts or subjects. Blog pages are web platforms of social media where a writer or group of writers and readers or audience contribute their opinions on a topic or issue, including news as it may apply (Ganeshnath, 2021). The blog's transparency is essential to the communication between writers and readers. According to Vucenovic (2021), the shift to online communication has unavoidably brought about changes, including a new "explosion" in the number of people who began writing, reading, and interacting with others online or in public. According to Vucenovic (2021), Lee King (2007) qualifies active solicitation of library users to participate as merely asking them to do anything, such as sending a direct or active invitation. He mentions a library blog, for example, where we may publish questions as frequently as possible, encourage users to visit the library, click on a link, and ask for their participation in each article. Given the ongoing need for library staff to advance their careers and come up with fresh ideas for drawing in and motivating new patrons, it makes sense that librarians have resorted to a vibrant blogosphere.

- *Twitter or X*

Twitter is a microblogging site where posts are limited to 140 characters. Because of the short messages and the speed at which updates appear, account holders and followers are less likely to establish personal connections than Facebook or Google+ users (Chore 2023). In Saleh and Rifaid's study (2023), the National Library of Indonesia, with an remarkable follower base of 51.7 thousand individuals, has the potential to yield a profound impact on reaching the widest possible audience. The National Library of Indonesia may effectively establish itself as a reliable data source, a hub for knowledge sharing, and an avenue for audience engagement through providing a steady flow of interesting and educational tweets.

➤ *Promoting Library Resources and Services*

According to Waral and Saravanan (2020) research, some of the key social media activities that advertise library goods and services include communicating, highlighting new arrivals, issuing warnings, linking to online resources, and book arrivals. As per Akagha (2021), promoting library reference services on social media platforms is another efficient and successful method of catering to user preferences.

There are also challenges in using social media platforms to promote library resources and services; it deters librarians from using social media. According to Okolo (2020), the challenges of using social media are as follows: 1. Too many social media tools to learn. 2. The website is difficult to understand. 3. Available information is not authentic. 4. Lack of knowledge of how to use it. 5. low interest of librarians in learning and utilizing social media. These are just a few he tackled in his study. In addition to posing new challenges, extraordinary events such as the COVID-19 pandemic have shown that the most effective ways for libraries to respond to crises are through information and communication technologies, active community involvement, and a proactive approach (Mansourian, 2020).

Lastly, it is critical to stress that libraries should carefully monitor communication, respond to comments promptly and frequently, offer multiform content when feasible to encourage more users to contribute, etc. When using these technologies, it is also critical to consider privacy and the protection of users' personal information. Because there is always a chance that someone could gain unauthorized access to user data, it is necessary to educate users about the main risks and protective measures to ensure more secure use of these services and features.

Social media are important tools for communication and engagement, helping people connect, share information, and promote ideas or services. According to Saidu and Sani (2022), Chore (2023), and Ternenge (2019), social media has made a greater impact on library resources and services by providing a new way for libraries to interact with patrons and disseminate information. The use of social media in libraries has also led to increased engagement and collaboration among library staff and patrons. Additionally, social media has helped libraries reach a wider audience and stay relevant in an increasingly digital world.

Currently, the library may communicate with its patrons through a variety of social media platforms, and vice versa. For library patrons, this has significantly increased access to resources and services. According to Omini and Osualale (2019), Saidu and Sani (2020), Chore (2023), Ternenge (2019), Grebenyuk (2024), Chaptula (2020), Ganeshnath (2021), Kale (2024), and Vucenovic (2021), Facebook, the most popular social media platform, followed by WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter or X, Blog, LinkedIn, and Instagram, made information sharing much easier. These social media sites have their own unique methods for distributing information to their subscribers, whether it be through text-only content, photographs, videos, or everything. Every social media site has capabilities that academic libraries can use to inform and disseminate information to their clientele.

It may not be simple to market or promote library materials and services on social media platforms, according to Okolo (2020) and Mansourian (2020). Librarians and administrators should always take the dangers of social media promotion into account. To guarantee that libraries maintain a positive online presence, they underlined the significance of creating a strategic plan and guidelines for social media

marketing. They also recommended routinely tracking and assessing the success of social media marketing initiatives in order to make the required modifications for improved user engagement. Moreover, Mansourian (2020) suggested educating employees on how to interact with customers online and use social media for marketing. Libraries may increase their reach and influence in the digital era by putting these tactics into practice.

➤ *Research Design*

This study employed the descriptive-correlational research design. Descriptive research produces a precise and objective depiction of the subject's current condition, which forms the foundation for additional analysis or decision-making, claim Stangor and Wallinga (2019). In contrast, the correlational technique measures two or more pertinent variables and evaluates the relationship between or among them. It detailed the respondents' degree of social media platform usage in particular. Additionally, it investigated the correlations between and among the variables of library resource and service promotion and level of utilization.

III. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to determine the use of social media platforms in promoting library resources and services among academic libraries in Qatar. Specifically, it will seek to answer the following questions: 1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of 1.1 Age, 1.2 Gender, 1.3 Educational Attainment, and 1.4 Types of Libraries 2. What social media platforms are used by the respondents in promoting library resources and services? 3. What is the respondent's level of utilization of social media platforms in promoting library resources and services 4. What is the respondent's level of promoting social media platforms in library resources and services? 5. Is there a significant difference in the respondents' level of utilization of social media when grouped according to profile variables? 6. Is there a significant difference in the respondents' level of promoting social media when grouped according to profile variables? 7. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' level of utilization of social media platforms and the promotion of library resources and services? 8. What action plan can be proposed based on the results of the study?

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There is no significant difference in the respondents' level of promotion of library resources and services when grouped according to profile variables. Ho3: There is no significant relationship between the level utilization of social media platforms and level of promotion of library resources and services.

The primary data of the study were the response of the respondents working in academic libraries in Qatar. Only the empirical data generated from them were statistically treated and analyzed in this study.

The population of the study was 58 librarians working in academic libraries in Qatar. Using the Raosoft Calculator with a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level, a sample size of 51 respondents was taken. The actual selection was done using simple random sampling.

This study utilized a self-made questionnaire based on the information taken from several concepts and research literature. The questionnaire was divided into three (4) parts. Part I focused on the respondents' demographic profiles. Part II on the different social media platforms being used. Part III level of utilization of social media platforms in promoting library resources and services. Part IV on the level of promotion of social media platforms. Questionnaires were validated by experts in research, statistics, and library science. For content validity and reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was used; for utilization: 0.894 and for promotion: 0.817.

➤ Findings

The salient findings of the study are as follows:1. Twenty respondents were aged 36 to 45; majority were female, had bachelor's degrees, and were from the school library.2. The majority used Facebook as a social media platform to promote library resources and services.3. The respondents' level of utilization of social media platforms in promoting library resources and services got an average weighted mean of 3.85 interpreted as "Very high".4. The respondents' level of promoting social media platforms in library resources and services got an average weighted of 3.68 interpreted as "Very high".5. The respondents' level of utilization of social media platforms in promoting library resources and services when grouped according to age with the ($p=0.313>0.05$), gender ($p=0.273>0.05$), educational attainment ($p=0.452>0.05$), and type of library ($p=0.165>0.05$). This shows that there is no significant difference in the respondents' level of utilization of social media platforms when grouped according to profile variables.6. The respondents' level of promoting social media platforms in promoting library resources and services when grouped according to age ($p=0.166>0.05$), gender ($p=0.231>0.05$), educational attainment ($p=0.673>0.05$), and type of library ($p=0.058>0.05$). Shows that there is no significant difference in respondents' level of promotion of social media platforms when grouped according to profile variables.7. There is a significant relationship between the respondents' level of utilization of social media platforms and the promotion of library resources and services with a p-value of 0.004, which is less than the 0.01 level of significance. 8.

An action plan was formulated to retain the high utilization of social media platforms in promoting library resources and services.

➤ Conclusions

Based on the salient findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- The majority of respondents were aged 26-45, female, had a bachelor's degree and were working in a school library in Qatar.
- Facebook and Instagram are the most utilized social media platforms in promoting library resources and services in academic libraries in Qatar.
- Most academic libraries in Qatar highly utilized social media platforms in promoting library resources and services. This suggests that social media plays a crucial role in enhancing library visibility, engagement, and accessibility for patrons.
- The respondents actively use the social media platform to promote the library resources and services in an academic library in Qatar. This underscores the importance of social media in enhancing library outreach and engagement.
- Regardless of their background, respondents share a similar perspective on utilizing social media platforms for library resources and services.
- Regardless of the respondents' profiles, they share similar views on promoting library resources and services through social media platforms.
- The higher the utilization of social media platforms, the higher the promotion of library resources and services in an academic library in Qatar.
- The action plan needs to be implemented to retain the high utilization of social media platforms in promoting library resources and services.

➤ Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

- To foster diversity and inclusivity, academic libraries should consider hiring more male librarians. A diverse team allows the library to better support a broad range of students and faculty. Additionally, male librarians contribute unique perspectives and experiences, enriching the library's learning environment.
- For effective social media utilization, librarians must identify the platforms most used by their patrons. This insight allows them to customize content and engagement strategies to reach a broader audience. By staying updated on community preferences and trends, librarians can strengthen connections with patrons and maintain engagement with the library's online presence.
- To effectively promote library resources and services on social media, librarians should regularly share updates on activities, new books, and announcements. Engaging with followers through prompt responses and visually appealing content helps attract attention. Maintaining a consistent online presence and interacting with the community allows the library to reach a broader audience and highlight its value to patrons.

- Libraries in Qatar should use varied social media platforms like TikTok aside from Facebook to showcase their library resources and services.
- Librarians should know the most popular platforms their audience uses for efficient resource allocation, maximizing the impact of social media efforts.
- To promote the social media platforms used by academic libraries, the librarians need to consistently post or share their activities, and digital resources, and engage their patrons to attract and retain followers.
- Academic libraries in Qatar should make active use of social media to promote their resources and services. They can do this by posting frequent updates, producing interesting visual content, promoting digital resources, holding live sessions, educating staff on social media management, and evaluating engagement metrics to further develop their tactics.
- An action plan may be implemented, monitored, and evaluated by the librarians to ensure its effectiveness in promoting the services and resources of the library.

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