Understanding the Awareness of Social Media Integration in Libraries: A Study of Library Professionals in Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the level of awareness of social media integration in libraries. The results were obtained through a survey of 224 library professionals in universities in Karnataka, which assessed their awareness of social media applications, their use in library operations and services, and related policies and acts. The findings indicate that a significant proportion of library professionals have some level of awareness of social media applications, with somewhat aware being the most common level of awareness. However, a smaller proportion is extremely aware or not at all aware. Additionally, the majorities of library professionals are not familiar with any policy or act governing the use of social media applications in the workplace. These results have implications for designing training programs and policies aimed at enhancing social media skills among library professionals and promoting responsible and effective use of social media in libraries.

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Awareness, Library Professionals, Universities, Karnataka.

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, there is a significant change happening in the library and information profession regarding how information is provided to users, especially in terms of how librarians communicate and interact with them. With the progress in media and communication technologies, academic libraries can extend their services beyond their physical locations. As a result, librarians in developing countries are now required to keep up with the latest trends in adopting Web technology to provide efficient service delivery. Libraries are primarily established to provide information services to various groups of users. In the context of an academic environment, libraries function as learning institutions that encourage academic and research endeavors by offering access to top-notch information resources through various channels (Manjunatha & Shivalingaiah, 2004). The use of social media to disseminate information online is rapidly becoming widespread in all areas of library and information services. Furthermore, social media is increasingly being used by librarians as the preferred method to create both social and professional

networks. It is also being utilized to communicate with potential library users and to extend information services to remote users, particularly within the academic community.

Social media have been recognized by many (Bradley & McDonald, 2011; Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011) to include any Internet-based or mobile application that operates for collaboration, which allows participants to connect, create, comment, view, share, rate, discover, profile, and exchange user-generated content. Chu and Du (2013) described social media as "collaborative environments employing web 2.0 technologies". Considering the inter-relatedness of social networking, Web 2.0, and social media, Choi (2012) summarized social media as "all Web 2.0 and social networking tools that enable content creation, sharing, discovering and exchange of user-generated content, with the main focus on their participatory nature". In the information profession, particularly in libraries, universities, and colleges, it is the platform mostly suited for individuals to interact, disseminate, and share information among themselves (Sahu, 2013). Librarians can take on a new role with social media by engaging with users in a social context. By reading and participating in blogs, group postings, and message boards, librarians can become active participants who can anticipate and provide advice to patrons as needed. By linking to patron profiles, the library can maintain a presence in the minds of users, which may potentially increase interactions. (Courtney, 2007). However, despite the enormous advantages of social media in library information dissemination, researchers like Akporhonor and Olise (2015) and Anunobi and Ogbonna (2012) have continuously raised "issues such as poor awareness of librarians to social media, poor infrastructure, and low bandwidth" as hindrances to effective use of social media adoption and use in the library environment. It is against this background that this study was carried out to explore the awareness of social media applications among university library professionals in Karnatak.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social media, according to Suraweera et al. (2010), refers to a process of relationship building among a group with a common interest. Collins and Quan-Haase (2014) argued the emergence of a debate in library literature concerning the advantages and disadvantages of adopting social media applications in academic libraries. The researchers examined the ubiquity of social media through a longitudinal study of the adoption rates and usage patterns of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr at academic libraries in the province of Ontario in Canada from April 2010 to April 2012. The study found large discrepancies in adoption rates of social media applications across libraries, with two-thirds of Ontario academic libraries maintaining at least one social media application, with Twitter and Facebook being the popular social media tools. The researchers submitted that YouTube was by far the most effective means of reaching patrons, despite its low adoption rate and usage.

According to Rogers (2012), social media is information content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies. In its most basic sense, social media is a shift in how people discover, read, and share news, information, and content. It's a fusion of sociology and technology that transforms monologue (one-to-many) into dialogue (many-to-many) and is the democratization of information that transforms people from content readers into publishers. Social media networks are good at knowledge gathering. They have been utilized in the research of social sciences to gather professional knowledge and responses from research objects (Poynter, 2010). With millions of users, SNS offers opportunities for libraries to reach out to communities and gather knowledge from the interaction between librarians and users (O'Dell, 2010). Users can help create new library services by

contributing their knowledge through an online network (Casey & Savastinuk, 2006). Social media networks are efficient for communication. Research finds that low self-disclosure on social media makes it easier for users to launch conversations with acquaintances (McElvain & Smyth, 2006). Ezeani and Eke (2010) posited that the most applicable Web 2.0 technology for library services is social networking tools. These tools will allow librarians to interact with their users to study their needs and provide feedback. These tools can also give students the ability to post or upload photographs thus providing an archival area for these pictures.

Ashraf and Haneefa (2016) conducted a significant study focused on the scholarly use of social media at the University of Calicut. The primary emphasis of their research was on the necessity of popularizing social media platforms among students due to the positive influence it exhibited on their research activities. The study recognized the evolving role of social media beyond its conventional use for social interactions, highlighting its potential as a valuable tool for academic and research-related purposes. The researchers likely delved into various aspects of social media usage among students, exploring how these platforms could enhance and contribute to the academic experiences of the University of Calicut's student body. Social media, in this context, may encompass a range of platforms such as academic networks, collaborative research spaces, and platforms for sharing and disseminating scholarly content.

In their 2017 study focused on Facebook usage among library and information science professionals at the University of Delhi, Singh and Kumar shed light on critical aspects related to the awareness and utilization of the social networking site within the academic and professional context. The research findings underscored the imperative to create awareness among library professionals regarding the potential of Facebook as a platform for promoting library services. The study pointed out that, despite the widespread popularity of Facebook, there was a discernible lack of awareness among library and information science professionals at the University of Delhi about its utility in promoting library services. This highlights a gap in knowledge and understanding, emphasizing the need for targeted initiatives aimed at informing and educating professionals within the library domain about the diverse applications and benefits of utilizing Facebook as a tool for service promotion.

After reviewing the literature, it is came to know that none of the studies have been carried out on the awareness of social media integration in libraries. Therefore, the present study has been carried out to understand the awareness of Library Professionals in Karnataka on social media integration in libraries.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out the level of awareness of social media integration among library professionals in Karnataka.
- To identify the awareness about the use of social media applications in library operations and services.
- To determine the awareness of tagging/user comment/user reviews which are possible through social media applications in the library catalogue.
- To identify the awareness of any policy or act referring to the use of social media applications at the workplace.

4. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The scope of the study was exploring the awareness of social media integration libraries among university library professionals in Karnataka. The study focused on library professionals working in various universities in Karnataka. The study employed a quantitative research approach, and data was collected using questionnaires. The research involved a sample of 224 library professionals from different universities (state universities, private universities, deemed to be universities and central universities) across Karnataka. The data collected was analyzed using statistical tools and techniques to draw conclusions and provide recommendations. Overall, the study contributed to the understanding of the current state of awareness of social media integration among library professionals in universities in Karnataka. The findings of the study provided intuitions into the opportunities and challenges associated with social media applications and informed the development of effective strategies for promoting social media awareness, and usage in library services and resources.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1. Gender-wise distribution of data

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	138	61.60
Female	86	38.39
Total	224	100

Table 1 provides information about the distribution of respondents by gender. The table shows that there were 138 male respondents and 86 female respondents. The percentage column shows that 61.60% of the respondents are male, and 38.39% are female. Overall, this table suggests that the study population had more male respondents than female respondents. This information can be useful for researchers in understanding the demographics of the study population or how gender may be related to other variables of interest.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by age group and gender

Gender	Age-group				Total
	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	
Male	48 (34.78%)	52 (37.68%)	25 (18.11%)	13 (9.42%)	138 (61.60%)
Female	24 (27.90%)	30 (34.88%)	17 (19.76%)	15 (17.44%)	86 (38.39%)
Total	72 (32.14%)	82 (36.60%)	42 (18.75%)	28 (12.5%)	224 100.0%

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by gender and age group. The table presents the frequency and percentage of respondents in each cell of the table, as well as the total number of respondents. It is observed from the study that 48 male respondents (34.78% of all respondents) are in the 21-30 age group, 52 male respondents (37.68%) are in the 31-40 age group, 25 male respondents (18.11%) are in the 41-50 age-group, and 13 male respondents (9.42%) are in the 51-60 age-group.

The same information is shown for the female respondents. For example, 24 female respondents (27.90%) are in the 21-30 age group, 30 female respondents (34.88%) are in the 31-40 age group, 17 female respondents (19.76%) are in the 41-50 age group, and 15 female respondents (17.44%) are in the 51-60 age-group. The total row and column show the total number and percentage of respondents in each age group and gender category. It is observed from the table that the majority of respondents in both gender groups are in the 31-40 age group. Male respondents are more prevalent in all age groups, with the highest percentage in the 31-40 age group. Female respondents are slightly more represented in the 31-40 age group compared to other age groups. The 21-30 age group has a significant representation of both genders.

Table 3. Awareness about social media integration in Libraries and Information Centres

Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all Aware	11	4.91
Slightly Aware	42	18.75
Somewhat Aware	22	9.82
Moderately Aware	107	47.76
Extremely Aware	42	18.75
Total	**224**	**100**

The level of awareness about the existence of social media applications among library professionals, with frequencies and percentages shown in Table 3. A significant proportion of respondents fall into the "Moderately Aware" category, with 47.76% of participants having a moderate level of awareness about social media integration in libraries. The "Slightly Aware" and "Extremely Aware" categories are tied at 18.75%, indicating that there is a fairly balanced distribution of respondents with a relatively lower and higher level of awareness, respectively.

A small percentage (4.91%) of respondents reported being "Not at all Aware," suggesting a minority who have no awareness of social media integration in libraries. The study indicates that, in general, library professionals in Karnataka have a moderate to high level of awareness about social media integration in libraries. The combined percentages of respondents in the "Moderately Aware" and "Extremely Aware" categories (66.51%) suggest that a significant majority of participants have at least a moderate level of awareness.

Overall, this table provides insights into the level of awareness among library professionals about the existence of social media applications. The results suggest a positive trend in awareness levels, indicating that a considerable number of library professionals in Karnataka are informed about the integration of social media in library services. This information can be useful for designing training programs or other initiatives aimed at enhancing the social media skills of library professionals.
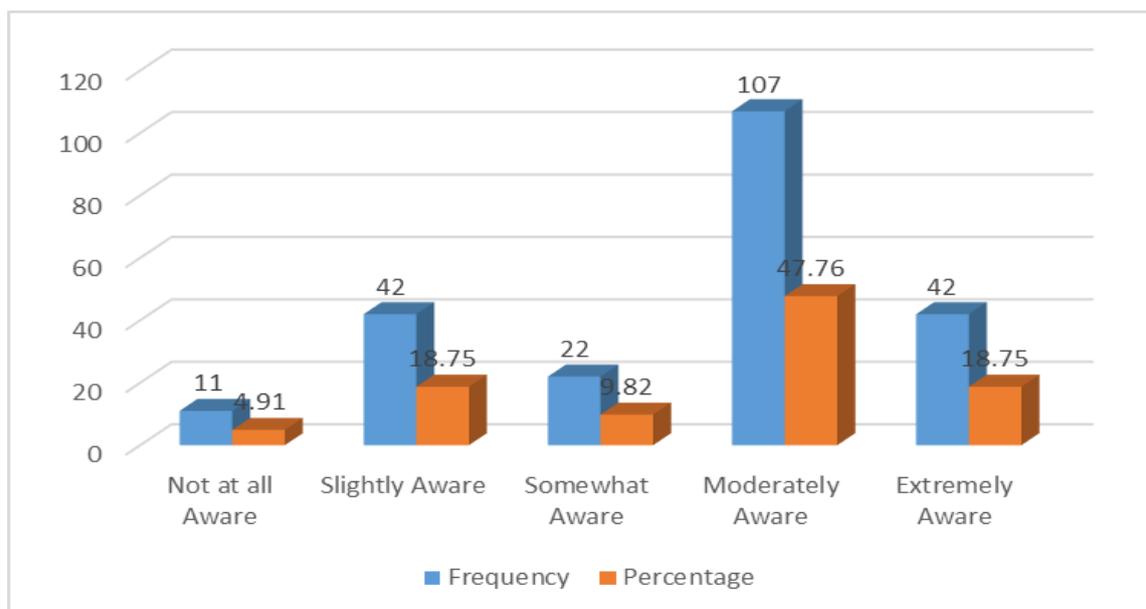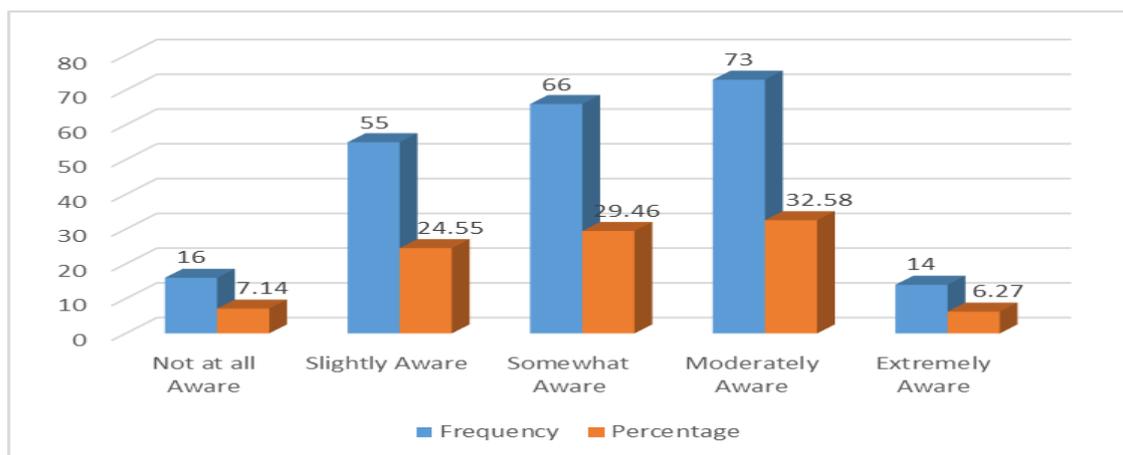
Figure 1. Awareness of Integration of Social Media

Table 4. Awareness about the use of social media applications in library operations and services

Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all Aware	16	7.14
Slightly Aware	55	24.55
Somewhat Aware	66	29.46
Moderately Aware	73	32.58
Extremely Aware	14	6.27
Total	224	100

Table 4 shows the awareness of the use of social media applications in library operations and services. Out of the 224 respondents, 7.12% reported being not at all aware of the use of social media applications in library operations and services, while the majority of respondents (32.58%) reported being Moderately aware. The remaining respondents reported being slightly aware (24.55%), somewhat aware (29.44%), and extremely aware (6.27%). The cumulative percentage column shows the increasing percentage of respondents with each level of awareness, reaching 100% for the extremely aware category. Overall, the results indicate that a large proportion of respondents have at least some level of awareness of the use of social media applications in library operations and services. However, a small proportion of respondents are unaware of this use, indicating a need for more efforts to promote the use of social media in libraries.

The results highlight the need for targeted efforts to enhance awareness among library professionals regarding the specific applications and operational aspects of social media in libraries. Understanding the factors influencing awareness levels can guide the development of training programs and resources to address the specific needs of those less aware.

Figure 2. Awareness of social media applications in library operations and services

Table 5. Awareness of tagging/user comments/user reviews which are possible through social media applications in the library catalogue

Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely Aware	12	5.35
Moderately Aware	51	22.76
Somewhat Aware	73	32.58
Slightly Aware	64	28.57
Not at all Aware	24	10.71
Total	**224**	**100**

Table 5 shows the level of awareness about tagging, user comments, and user reviews which are possible through social media applications in library catalogues, with frequencies and percentages. The frequency column indicates the number of respondents who fall into each level of awareness, and the percentage column shows the proportion of respondents who fall into each level of awareness, out of the total number of respondents. From the table, we can see that the most common level of awareness among library professionals is Somewhat Aware, with 73 respondents, representing 32.58% of the total sample. The next most common levels of awareness are Slightly Aware, with 64 respondents (28.57%), and Moderately Aware, with 51 respondents (10.71%). The least common levels of awareness are Not at all Aware, with 24 respondents (5.7%), and Extremely Aware, with 12 respondents (5.35%).

Overall, this table provides insights into the level of awareness among library professionals about the possibilities of tagging, user comments, and user reviews which are possible through social media applications in library catalogues. The results suggest that a significant proportion of library professionals are aware of these features, but a smaller proportion are extremely aware or not at all aware. This information can be useful for designing training programs or other initiatives aimed at enhancing the social media skills of library professionals and encouraging them to use these features to improve the library catalogue.

Table 6. Awareness of any policy or act referring to the use of social media applications at the workplace

Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Slightly Aware	31	13.83
Not at all Aware	193	86.16
Total	224	100.0

Table 6 shows the level of awareness about any policy or act referring to the use of social media applications at the workplace, with frequencies and percentages. The data set includes a total of 224 respondents. The levels of awareness listed in the table are Not at all Aware and Slightly Aware. The frequency column indicates the number of respondents who fall into each level of awareness, and the percentage column shows the proportion of respondents who fall into each level of awareness, out of the total number of respondents. From the table, we can see that the majority of library professionals are not at all aware of any policy or act referring to the use of social media applications at the workplace, with 193 respondents, representing 86.16% of the total sample. Only 58 respondents, representing 13.83% of the sample, reported being slightly aware of any such policy or act.

Overall, this table suggests that the majority of library professionals are not familiar with any policy or act governing the use of social media applications in the workplace. This information can be useful for designing policies and guidelines aimed at helping library professionals use social media applications responsibly and effectively while minimizing risks and maximizing benefits. It also highlights the need for organizations to develop effective training programs to raise awareness among library professionals about policies and acts related to the use of social media applications in the workplace.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study investigated the level of awareness among library professionals regarding social media applications in library operations and services. The study utilized a survey questionnaire, and the results were presented in several tables. The findings showed that a significant proportion of library professionals have some level of awareness about social media, but a smaller proportion are extremely aware or not at all aware. Most respondents are moderately aware of using social media applications in library operations and services. However, a small proportion of respondents are unaware of this use, indicating a need for more efforts to promote the use of social media in libraries. Furthermore, the majority of library professionals are not familiar with any policy or act governing the use of social media applications at the workplace, highlighting the need for organizations to develop effective training programs to raise awareness among library professionals about policies and acts related to the use of social media applications at the workplace. Overall, the study suggests that there is room for improvement in enhancing the social media skills of library professionals, and the findings can be useful for designing training programs or other initiatives aimed at promoting the use of social media in libraries.

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